Year 9 English Examinations: Reading and Writing

For the Year 9 English exam, you will be asked to answer **one** task. The exam length will be **90 minutes**. The answer you produce will be used to assess your **reading** level *and* your **writing** level. You will have to complete some independent research to be able to answer the task effectively. The task is as follows:

*Choose a poem that deals with the theme of love. Write a critical response to the poem, showing how the poet coveys their ideas. You should consider the following: language, structure, imagery, tone, cultural context, the different ideas conveyed.*

To prepare for the exam you will need to choose a poem that deals with the theme of love. You will be allowed to take a copy of this poem into the exam. **You must not annotate or write notes on the copy of the poem that you take into the exam**. However, you will need know and understand your poem well so that you can write about it effectively. Use the following guidelines to help you prepare.

Guidelines

* Choose a poem that you are able to tackle effectively. Choose something that will challenge you and that you will have lots to write about. However, don’t be too ambitious.
* You should check with your English teacher that your poem is appropriate.
* Before you analyse your poem in detail, you should begin by trying to understand the main ideas in the poem. Read it through a few times and perhaps discuss some of your ideas with a friend.
* Remember – you will be assessed on **reading** *and* **writing**. You should therefore make sure your thoroughly understand the English reading and writing assessment criteria which you can find in your English folder. Use this criteria to help you prepare for the exam.

Use the English assessment criteria for reading and writing, along with the following notes, to help you get the best possible level in the exam.

*Reading*

*AF2 – You will have to be able to discuss the ideas in your poem in an imaginative way. What are the main ideas in the poem? You will need to be able to support your points about the poem with quotations and form a clear line of thought in your response. The best answers will show a mature, extensive understanding of the poem.*

*AF3 – You will have to look below the surface and try to think about the deeper meaning of the poem. What is the message behind the poem? The best answers will explore complicated layers of meaning in a sophisticated way.*

*AF4 – You will need to discuss the structure of the poem in depth. Look at the form of your poem. What is unusual about it? Look at the rhythm and rhyme. The best answers will show how the structure of the poem links to the themes and ideas in the poem.*

*AF5 – You will need to explore the language in the poem in depth. You should be able to use the correct terminology to discuss the different techniques the poet uses. How do these different language features contribute to the overall ideas and themes in the poem? The best answers will explore the effect of language on the reader.*

*AF6 – You will need to think about the poet, their purpose and their viewpoints. Why has the poem been written? What is the effect of the poem on the reader? The best answers will follow the development of ideas throughout the poem, their effect on the reader and evaluate how this effect has been achieved.*

*AF7 – You should also investigate the time, culture and place that the poet lived. What effect might these things have had on how the poem was written? The best answers will show how the background of the poem produces meaning.*

*Writing*

*AF1 – Does your writing show imagination and thoughtful ideas? The best answers will be written with confidence and form convincing arguments about the poem.*

*AF2 –Is your writing original and engaging? The best answers will be written in a formal style appropriate for a critical response.*

*AF3 – Is your writing well organised? You should clearly organise your arguments and ideas. The best answers will be clearly signposted so your reader can follow your viewpoints easily.*

*AF4 – Are your paragraphs structured appropriately for a critical response? In the best answers the structure of your paragraphs will help support your arguments – think about using ‘point, example, explanation’.*

*AF5 – Have you used a variety of sentence structures correctly to keep your writing engaging? The best answers will use sentences that are appropriate for a critical response.*

*AF6 – Have you correctly used a range of punctuation appropriate for a critical response? The best answers will show a confident use of ambitious punctuation.*

*AF7 – Have you used a range of challenging and ambitious vocabulary throughout your response? The best answers will use a wide range of vocabulary that is appropriate for a critical response.*

*AF8 – Is all of your spelling correct?. The best answers will use consistently accurate spelling – even for the more ambitious vocabulary.*

There is a lot to think about here… so get started! Good luck!