

STUDYING AND REVIEWING ENGLISH LITERATURE

Although there is a difference in approach to the study of various forms of English Literature, for example, a Shakespearean play and a modern essay, several sensible rules apply to the study and review of all forms.

1. CLASS TIME

Give careful attention to class discussion, and ask the teacher to clarify any point not clearly understood. Remember it pays to admit an error in understanding, and to have it corrected on the spot.

2. NOTEBOOK

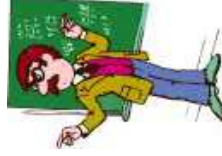
Keep an orderly notebook. Headings, dates, and underlining are useful. In your own notebook, you may underline important sentences.

3. WEEKLY REVIEWS

Carry out a regular weekly review, always using a pen or pencil and making brief notes where necessary. Ask your teacher about any difficulties arising out of this review. Check off all the points you do understand, so that you can concentrate on the remaining work - the difficulties.

4. HOMEWORK

Remember that the teacher designs and assigns particular homework questions to cover important aspects of the particular piece of literature. When reviewing, study again the points emphasized by the teacher in taking up answers to the homework questions.



5. GENERAL KNOWLEDGE

There is an accumulation of learning in literature. Include in your review what you have learned in previous years; for instance the concepts of tragedy in Shakespeare, or the meanings of terms used in drama.

6. REVIEW FOR EXAMINATIONS

When carrying out a review before examinations, be active. Use a pencil and paper instead of just re-reading. Write down important points concerning plot structure, characterizations, means of achieving emphasis. Invent questions and answers.

7. CO-OPERATION

Another excellent device, particularly for drama, short stories, and novels, is a "double-interrogation" technique, a type of "spotting" technique used by two students reviewing together. One opens the text, quotes a brief excerpt from a speech, and asks such questions who is the speaker, under which circumstances were the lines quoted.

TIPS ON IMPROVING YOUR READING

Have you ever read a textbook chapter and not been able to recall any of the material? You end up having invested many hours with no return for your investment. Try to follow these helpful steps so the time you spend is useful time.

PRE-READING

SURVEY

Spend some time getting familiar with the material you are about to study. Observe headings. Observe the structure of the chapter. Read the introduction, summary, end-of-chapter questions etc. If there are illustrations or charts, study them.

DURING READING

1. QUESTIONS

Ask yourself questions based on your survey. As you approach each section, turn the boldface heading into a question. For instance, turn a heading such as "The Genetic Code" into an active question such as, "What is the genetic code?" The question step makes you into an active, not a passive, reader - you are reading for answers.

2. READ

Read the section to find the answers to your questions. Take the material a section at a time. Vocabulary, look up any unfamiliar words.

3. RECITE

Use self-recitation as a comprehension check. Look away from the text and ask yourself the questions about what you have just read. Make the deliberate effort to recall the important points. If you can do so, you have mastered that part of the material. If not, you should re-read. The recall step is what fixes the material in your mind. It makes reviewing for exams much easier.

4. REVIEW

Periodic reviews are very helpful for retention of new materials. As you complete the work, review it briefly by giving it a quick second reading. The more you re-read, the better you will understand. Skim over the headings and recite what you previously learned.

Diagrams and illustrations are useful aids to making the text clear so pay attention to these.

There is a time for slow careful reading and re-reading, in grasping a scientific or mathematical problem, in translation from one language to another, or in studying a debatable point in English or History.

But you may be doing all your reading in low gear, wasting time and energy. Three quarters of your reading calls for fast coverage, especially in English, History, and ordinary reading for enjoyment. How can you improve?

- Does the print blur? Does reading make your head ache? Do you have difficulty in seeing print or the blackboard at the usual distance? IF SO - Have your eyes examined.
- Do you whisper the words to yourself when reading? Do your lips move as you read silently, or by putting your fingers to your throat can you feel your vocal chords vibrating? IF SO - You are holding yourself back to the speed of talking, which is about one-third normal reading speed. Change into high gear; read silently.
- Time yourself in reading a magazine article. Calculate the approximate number of words per minute you read. A high school student who normally reads fewer than 300 words per minute is handicapped by the slow reading habit - and 500 is not exceptionally fast. Do you need to read faster? IF SO - Give yourself a time test frequently. Keep a speed record. Force yourself to read by phrases rather than by single words. Go from one idea to the next. Read forward without looking back. Better to read a whole paragraph twice than to keep glancing back as you read.
- Do you need some reading specially prepared to improve your reading or listening skills? IF SO - Ask your teacher, guidance counsellor or the librarian.
- Note the time of day when you seem to be at your intellectual peak. For most people this is in the morning. Tackle the toughest work for an hour at that time.
- Relaxation is important. It is not possible to concentrate for much longer than an hour at a time, so learn to take a break and put aside time for recreation.

- Before you start a study session, print in large letters your goals for that session. Make the goals possible to achieve.
- Start work immediately when you sit at your study table. Begin by remembering what you did in your last sessions. Force yourself to stick with the job but take a definite break about every hour. Finish by remembering what you have completed. Did you reach your objectives? If not, what are you going to do about it?

KNOW HOW TO PREPARE FOR AND TAKE AN EXAMINATION

If you were given these suggestions for preparing for and taking examinations, which ones would you consider correct?

- Prepare for exams the night before the examination.
- Prepare for all types of examinations the same way.
- Anticipate and try out sample examination questions.
- Develop self-confidence by being well prepared for tests.
- Don't look over the exam; begin work on it at once.
- Don't look for a true-false scoring pattern.
- Write more on essay type questions than objective questions.
- Outline briefly your answers to essay questions.
- Don't save time for looking over your paper; use all your time to answer the questions.
- Read all directions carefully and be sure you understand before beginning your answer.

If you find 6 correct - excellent
 If you find 5 correct - good
 If you find 4 correct - fair

WHERE TO STUDY

It is important that you establish a study area for yourself in the planning stage of your course. Label your corner MINE from the word go and discuss this need with the rest of the family. Studying in one place has two main advantages. As the place becomes familiar and associated with study you will find you can settle to a studying mood very quickly. Because the place is familiar there are no novelties to distract you so that you can maintain study periods without distraction.

WRITING AN ESSAY TYPE EXAM/TEST

1. Read the **questions** carefully.
 "Every person has his or her own attitude toward wealth. In the Play, The Merchant of Venice, as in real life, characters value their wealth differently." Write a five-paragraph essay discussing the above statement.
2. **Analyze** the question.
 - Circle, highlight and define key words
 - Write synonyms
 - Brainstorm
3. **Plan** - Outline
 - Create full thesis (thesis statement and topic sentences)
 - Add details under topic sentences

DEFINITIONS OF INSTRUCTIONS

Analyze - Find the main ideas and show how they are related and why they are important.

Comment on - Discuss, criticize, or explain its meaning as completely as possible.

Compare - Emphasize similarities, but differences may be mentioned.

Contrast - Stress differences.

Criticize - Express your judgement as to the correctness or merit of the matters under consideration.

Describe - Characterize the item from several points of view. (Sometimes these questions may begin with the word "What")

Discuss - Outline the item completely, paying special attention to organization. Present pros and cons and illustrative details.

Evaluate - Give your opinion or some expert's opinion of the truth or importance of the concept. Tell the advantages and disadvantages.

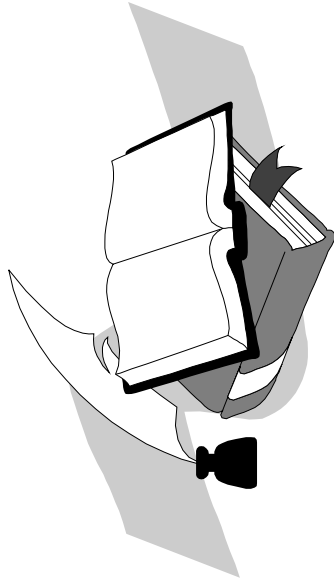
Explain - This is similar to "discussing" but there should be greater emphasis on "how" and "why."

Interpret - Give the meaning using examples and personal comments to make it clear.

Justify - Prove, or show the grounds for your conclusions. Try to present your evidence in a convincing form. (Sometimes, this appears as a "Why" or a "Prove" question.)

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**URSULINE COLLEGE CHATHAM "THE PINES"
GUIDANCE DEPARTMENT**

**85 GRAND AVENUE WEST
CHATHAM, ONTARIO**

**519-351-2987 Ext. 4018
FAX 519-354-5004**