

Reading to Boost GCSE Success

Why Reading Matters for GCSEs


- Builds exam stamina and focus.
- Expands vocabulary for essays and responses.
- Improves critical thinking and interpretation skills.
- Supports stronger writing through exposure to style and structure.

5 Steps to Reading Success

- Read little and often – 10–15 mins a day.
- Vary texts – fiction, non-fiction, news, and subject-specific.
- Ask questions – Why this word? Why this perspective?
- Link to exams – practice skills needed for English Papers 1 & 2 and beyond.
- Talk – share, discuss, and explain what you've read.

Suggested Home Activities

- Read together: same article, then discuss key points.
- Vocabulary jar: collect new words, stick them up, test them weekly.
- Exam link: pick a news article and ask, 'How would this writer's viewpoint compare to another?'
- Spot the technique: find metaphors, statistics, emotive language.
- Model curiosity: parents read alongside students (show it matters).

 Quick Tip: Even 10 minutes per day = a massive difference over the year.

Reading Activity – How to read together at home

Read the extract below carefully:

A cold mist hung in the marshes, chilling me to the bone. I shivered as the wind rattled through the reeds and whispered against the river. From the distance, a figure emerged, ragged and wild-eyed, stumbling heavily through the mud. His chains clinked faintly with each step. Fear surged within me. The man's voice, hoarse and desperate, broke the silence: "Boy, bring me food!" His eyes fixed upon me like a hawk's, fierce and unyielding. My heart thudded painfully, and the world seemed to shrink to that one command, echoing in the desolate air.

Task

What is happening in the extract?

Highlight three words or phrases that stands out.

Write one sentence explaining why you think the writer chose it and what effect it has.