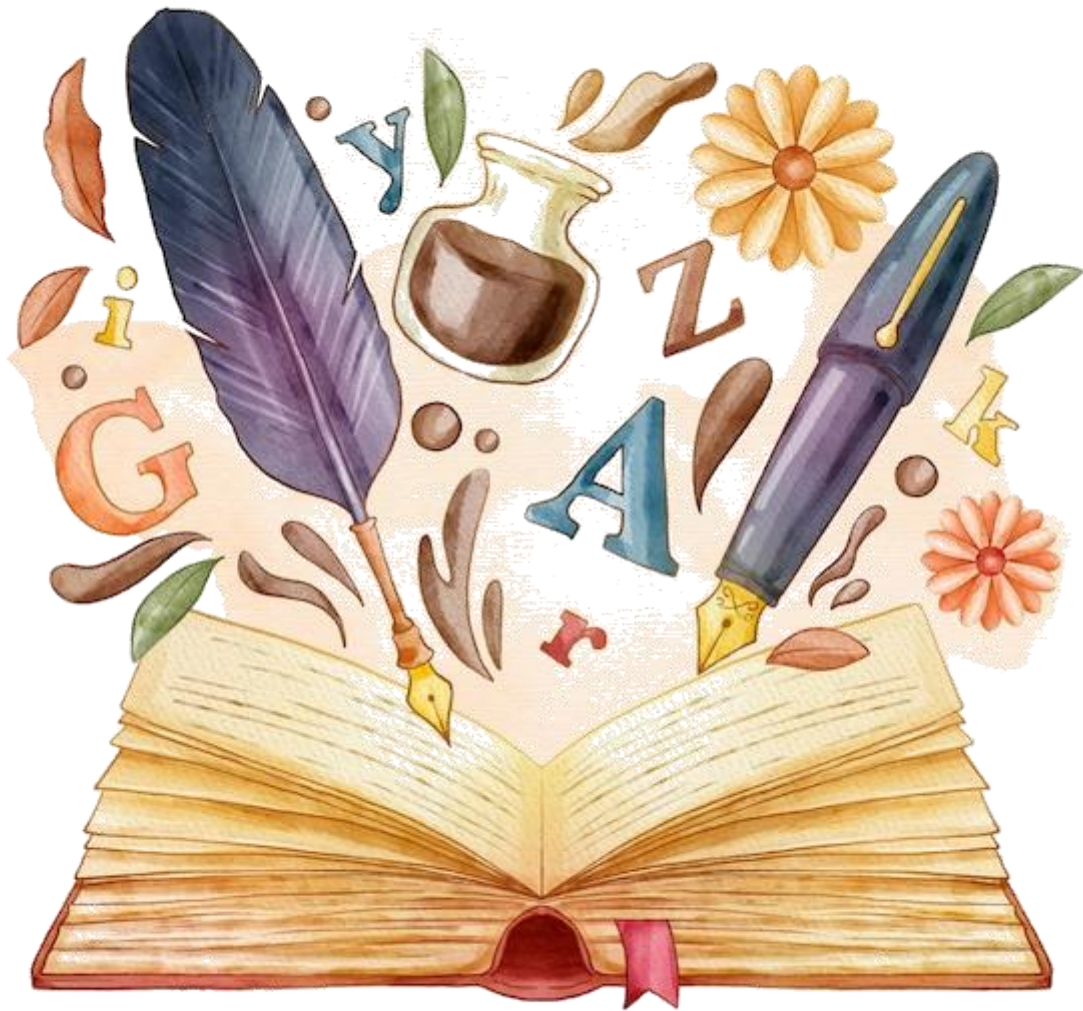


How to revise



GCSE English Language and Literature

Exam information

Dates of exams:

- English Literature Paper 1: Monday 11th May 2026 9am
- English Literature Paper 2: Tuesday 19th May 2026 9am
- English Language Paper 1: Thursday 21st May 2026 9am
- English Language Paper 2: Friday 5th June 2026 9am

English Literature

Exam board: Edexcel

You have two GCSE English Literature exams. The breakdown of the exams are detailed below:

Paper 1: Shakespeare and the 19th century novel	Paper 2: Modern texts and poetry
<p>Section A: Shakespeare</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Macbeth</i> OR <i>Romeo and Juliet</i> <p>Part (a):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Extract given – write about the effect of language, structure and form in the extract <p>Part (b):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Write about elsewhere in the play, linking to relevant context• 40 marks <p>Section B: Post-1914 British Drama or Fiction</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>An Inspector Calls</i>• Choice of two questions – only answer one• 40 marks, including 8 marks for SPAG <p>1 hour 45 minutes</p>	<p>Section A: 19th century novel</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde</i> OR <i>A Christmas Carol</i> <p>Part (a):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Extract given – write about the effect of language, structure and form in the extract <p>Part (b):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Write about elsewhere in the novel, linking to writer's intention• 40 marks <p>Section B: Poetry</p> <p>Part (a):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Conflict poetry• One poem will be printed, you choose the second poem to compare but this will not be printed• 20 marks <p>Part (b):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Unseen poetry• Two unseen poems are printed to compare• 20 marks <p>2 hours 15 minutes</p>

English Language
Exam board: AQA

You have two GCSE English Language exams. The breakdown of the exams are detailed below:

Paper 1: Explorations in creative reading and writing	Paper 2: Writers' viewpoints and perspectives
<p>Section A: Reading</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• One fiction extract from 20th or 21st century• Q1 – 4 multiple choice questions• Q2 – How has the writer used language to describe...• Q3 – How has the writer structured the text to create....• Q4 – How far do you agree and/or disagree?• 40 marks <p>Section B: Creative Writing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Choice of two questions• Descriptive or narrative writing• 40 marks <p>1 hour 45 minutes</p>	<p>Section A: Reading</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Two non-fiction texts, one from 19th century and one from either 20th or 21st century• Q1 – 8 true or false questions (4 true)• Q2 – Compare with inference• Q3 – How has the writer used language to describe...• Q4 – comparing writers' feelings and perspectives• 40 marks <p>Section B: Opinion Writing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• One question• Write your viewpoint in response to a topic• 40 marks <p>1 hours 45 minutes</p>

In this guide, you will see lots of useful revision strategies you can try at home as well as some useful links to support you.

If you have any questions, please make sure you ask your English teacher who is more than happy to help.









Good luck, Year 11. And happy revising!

Creating a revision timetable

You cannot revise everything all in one go, so you need to break down your GCSE English Literature into manageable chunks. Only allocate 30 minutes of revision at a time. It's important to do little and often rather than hours on end. It's also very easy for students to fill their timetable solidly with revision but you must remember those important rest breaks.

Revision should be interleaved. This means topics should be mixed up so you revise short bursts of multiple topics rather than focusing on one topic fully before moving on to the next one. Research suggests that students who adapt this interleaving approach are more successful in retrieving the information in final assessments.

Have a look at an example timetable below which you may wish to use as a guide. But the important thing to remember is to find a timetable that works for you. If you need to change things, don't worry.

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
	 How are ideas of power presented in Macbeth?		 AIC quotations	
	 Cousin Kate		 How does Dickens present Scrooge in Stave One of the novella?	
Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
	 What kinds of conflict are presented in Exposure?		 Do you respect Gerald as a character? Why / not ?	
	 ACC quotations		 War Photographer	

If you are unsure how to organise your revision, please speak to your English Teacher or Professional Tutor for support.

For further information and support on creating a revision timetable, follow this link:

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/articles/zn3497h>

Revision strategy 1: Flashcards

Flashcards are a quick way of testing yourself on the knowledge you need for your English Language and Literature exams. All you need is a set of cards. Here are some suggestions how to help you:

- Language/structure terminology on one side with definitions/examples on the other
- Quotations from Literature texts on one side, analysis of methods on the other
- Key words/themes of Literature texts on one side, examples where this is seen in the text on the other
- Wording of Language questions on one side, how to structure an answer on the other
- Characters or poems from Literature texts on one side, 3-4 quotes on the other

Why is Mercutio an important character in 'Romeo and Juliet'?

1. He is funny and witty: audience entertainment
2. He is outside of the Capulet/Montague houses, therefore shows that Romeo is also affected by male friendships, not just the feud.
3. He curses both houses -- links to the theme of fate.
4. He offers another perspective on love: he is more cynical about it and mocks Romeo.

Three key Mr Birling quotes

1. "I'm talking as a hard-headed practical man of business"
2. "It's my duty to keep labour costs down"
3. "I can't accept any responsibility"



"I fear too early for my mind misgives some consequence yet hanging in the stars" Romeo

- Give yourself a decent pause before flipping straight over to the answer. The work your brain does during this moment actually strengthens your brain, even if you don't get it right!
- Prioritise the ones you cannot do. If you don't get the answer, revisit that card again at the end of your revision session, have another try at recalling the answer.
- Do keep going over all your cards, even the ones you are best at. Revisiting this information is still valuable.
- Get other people to test you!

For more information and support on how to use this revision strategy, use this link:

<https://thinkstudent.co.uk/how-to-make-effective-flashcards/>

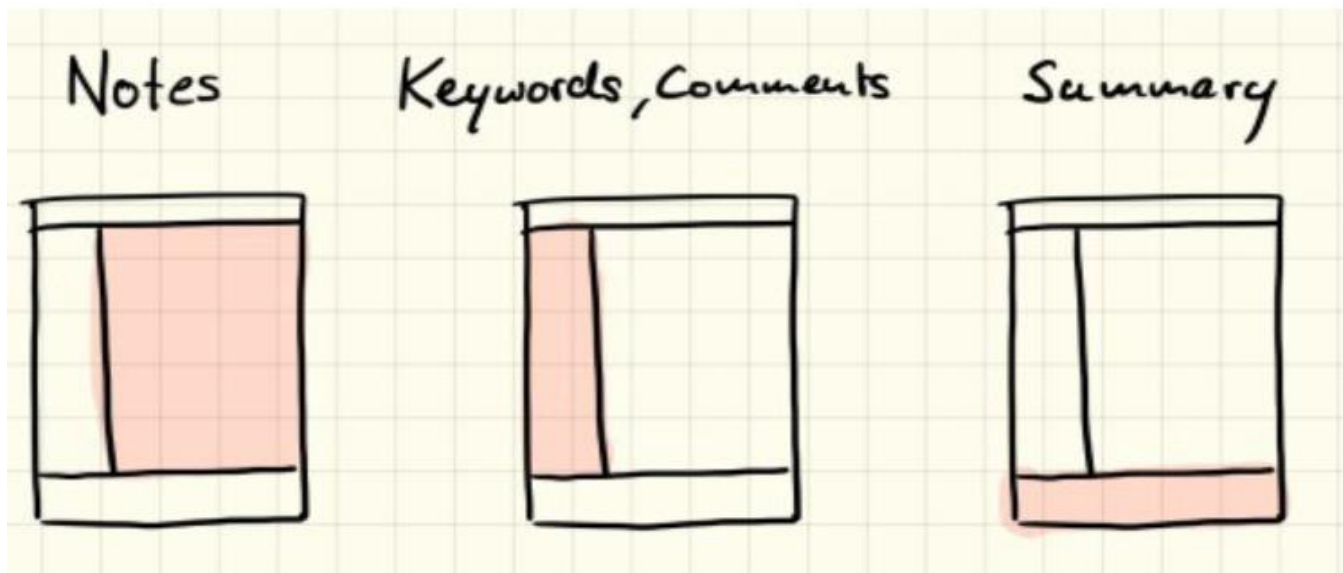
Top tip:

Research has shown that using images alongside text is really powerful for retaining information. Try turning your quotes into images and then use them as prompts.

Revision strategy 2: Cornell notes

Cornell note taking is a simple way of organising and summarising your notes from your exercise books.

All you need is an A4 piece of paper divided into the following sections:



Notes Column:

- Bullet point notes as you study
- Add diagrams / sub-bullets as appropriate
- Highlight key information

Cue Column:

- Write retrieval questions linking to the notes. These help organize your notes, and you can quiz yourself when revising
- Note key vocabulary in another colour.

Summary Section:

- Complete this at least a day after your main notes
- Summarise the key points very simply- when revising you can use these summaries to navigate your notes

Here are some suggestions of how you could use Cornell notes to help you:

- Character pages: key vocabulary/quotes and notes to support this.
- Context of a text: key words to do with context and detailed notes of the information which inspired the writing of the text.
- Poem pages: choose 4-5 key quotes and add detailed notes on the methods used and their effect.
- Theme pages: choose a theme from your text and write down key quotes/characters linked to that theme, then add detailed notes on how that quote/character links to the theme and writer's purpose.

For more information and support on how to use this revision strategy, use this link:

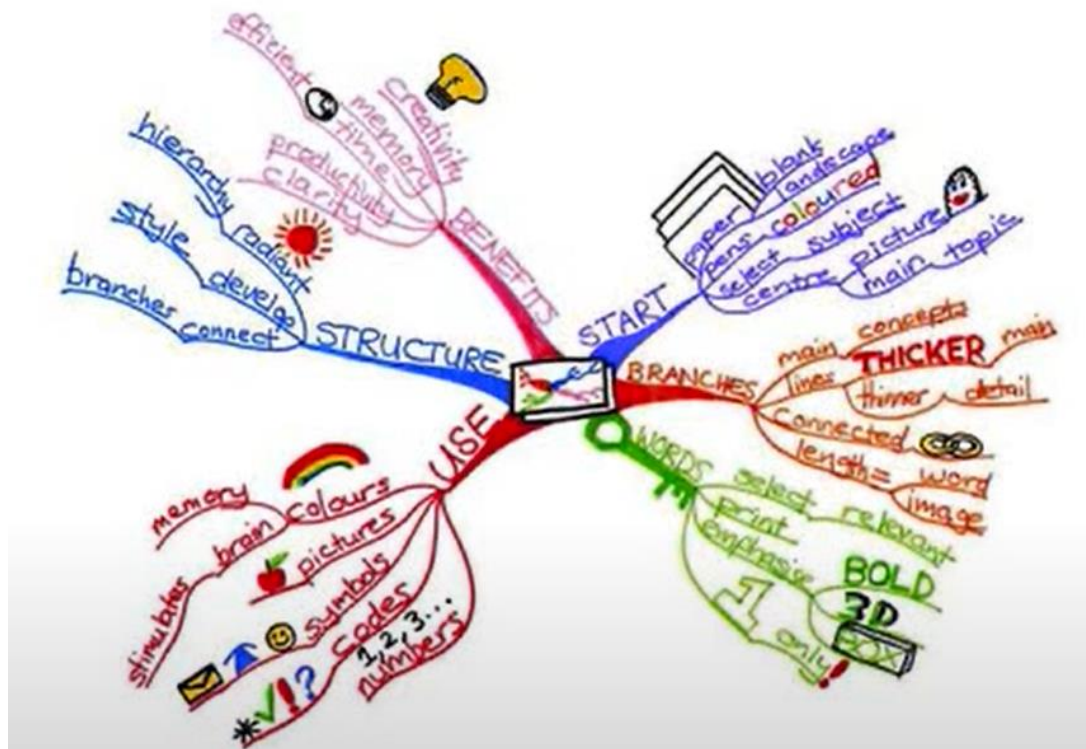
<https://www.goodnotes.com/blog/cornell-notes>

Top tip:

Remember to summarise your information in the bottom section using your own words. If you are creating poem pages, summarise what the poem is about. If you are creating character pages, summarise how that character fits in the plot.

Revision strategy 3: Mind maps

Mind mapping is a revision strategy which allows you to explore ideas in detail and make connections between parts of your text. Remember that this is not just a spider diagram.



You can create mind maps for any theme or character of any text. Cover key parts and test your memory. Re-create it from memory.

Here are some suggestions to help you plan your mind map:

- Character from any text with branches of quotes and analysis.
- Theme from any text with branches of characters and quotes.
- A cluster of poems (e.g. war poetry) with branches of poems, ideas and quotes.
- A text with branches of context, characters and quotes.

For more information and support on how to use this revision strategy, use this link:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wLWV0XN7K1g>

Top tip:

Remember to use colours to help categorise your ideas. You could also use images to help with retrieval.

Revision strategy 5: Practice questions and extracts

This is a useful way of familiarising yourself with the structure of exam questions and builds your writing stamina when answering questions in timed conditions. Even if you do not write up a complete response, you can always write a paragraph about one of your main ideas and/or just focus on the planning process. Good answers always have a plan because it allows you to structure your thoughts before your writing.

Language reading practice – creating your own questions

For Paper 1, read the first page of a novel and create your own questions using the sentence stems of the questions:

- Q1 – 4 multiple choice questions
- Q2 – How has the writer used language to describe...
- Q3 – How has the writer structured the text to create...
- Q4 – How far do you agree and/or disagree

Choose a stimulus and write a description OR story about it.

For Paper 2, read a couple of articles online about a similar topic and create your own questions using the sentence stems of the questions:

- Q1 – 8 true or false questions (4 true)
- Q2 – Compare with inference
- Q3 – How has the writer used language to describe...
- Q4 – Comparing writers' feelings and perspectives

Look at a news story online and write a speech, article or letter expressing your viewpoint of the topic.

Literature essay practice – creating your own questions

Most Literature essay questions will be on character or theme.

How does writer present character/theme in text?

Generate different essay titles using this skeleton. For example:

- How does Shakespeare present Lady Macbeth in Macbeth?
- How does Priestley present the theme of responsibility in An Inspector Calls?
- How do Agard and Zephaniah present anger in Half-Caste and No Problem?

Use this to create essay plans of four/five paragraphs (including quotes). Practise writing paragraphs in response to these questions.

Language and Literature past papers

You can always access lots of past papers from the Edexcel and AQA websites, SharePoint and your English teacher.

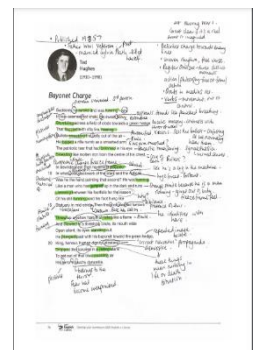
Annotation of poems and extracts

Print out a fiction or non-fiction extract and annotate it for language techniques and their effect. Or if it is a non-fiction article, how does the writer use techniques to express their viewpoint?

You could also choose key extracts from your Shakespeare and 19th Century text and annotate these – you know you will get an extract in the exam.

You could also get a blank copy of one of the Anthology poems. Annotate it once with your revision notes, then get a second copy of the blank poem and annotate from memory. Compare and add anything you missed in a different colour.

Choose an unseen poem – there are loads of poetry books in the library or online. Identify what it is about and consider how it has made you feel after reading it. Annotate the poem once you have read it for any methods used by the poet to express their ideas.



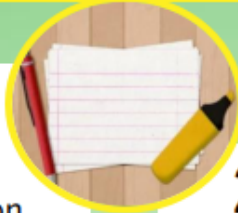
Top tip:

Ask your English teacher if you can have a copy of any exam questions you have completed at school and see if you can improve them at home.

HOW TO REVISE...

English Language

1. Flashcards



- Write your terminology on one side and have the definition and/or an example on the other.
- **TIP: use images**

2. Creative writing



- Find an image on the internet or choose a photo on your phone and write the opening of a description.
- Consider your use of language.
- Plan a description using the DROP, SHIFT, ZOOM structure

3. SPAG practice



- Practice using a range of punctuation accurately in sentences.
- Test yourself on any spellings inaccuracies you have made in your English book.

4. Knowledge and Graphic Organisers



- Knowledge organisers are a way of writing down as much as you can from memory. You could write down everything you need to know about each question of the two language papers.
- Venn diagrams could be used when looking at two non-fiction texts for Paper 2 to compare their attitudes (Q4) and/or information (Q2).

5. Practice questions and extracts



- Choose a fiction or non-fiction text and make your own questions.
- Find past papers on the AQA website or SharePoint.

6. Read the news



- Read through BBC news and see what events are happening in the world.
- Choose a news story and write an article, speech or letter expressing your viewpoint about this topic.

HOW TO REVISE...

English Literature

1. Flashcards



- Create questions on one side with the answer on the other
- Key quotes with analysis
- Key vocabulary and links
- **TIP: use images**

2. Cornell notes



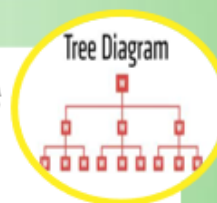
- Summarise key information on characters and themes
- Use key quotes or vocab in the margin with detailed analysis/notes on the side

3. Mind maps

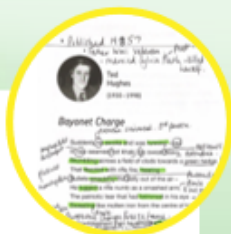


- Create a mind-map for a character or a theme.
- Cover key parts and test your memory.
- Re-create it from memory.

4. Knowledge and Graphic Organisers



5. Practice questions and extracts



- Choose a key extract from the text and write a response to this.
- Consider a theme of your text and write about how the writer addresses this in their text.

- Knowledge organisers are a way of writing down as much as you can from memory
- Venn diagrams are useful for comparing poems
- Flowcharts can be used for sequencing events
- Tree diagrams can be used one to group concepts or explore the hierarchy of ideas



HOW TO REVISE...

Macbeth

Seneca

Select quizzes and test yourself on topics



Sparknotes

No Fear Shakespeare, script with modern version of the play
Analysis of key quotes, characters and scenes

BBC Bitesize

Provides you with information and quizzes



Mr Bruff

English teacher making videos on Macbeth

British Library

Explore the British Library for wider reading and ideas about Macbeth



Click
link
here

SharePoint

Lots of resources and information to support you with your revision



HOW TO REVISE...

The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde

Seneca

Select quizzes and test yourself on topics



Sparknotes

Full text online
Analysis of key quotes, characters and scenes

BBC Bitesize

Provides you with information and quizzes



Mr Bruff

English teacher making videos on Jekyll and Hyde

British Library

Explore the British Library for wider reading and ideas about Jekyll and Hyde



Click
link
here

SharePoint

Lots of resources and information to support you with your revision



HOW TO REVISE...

A Christmas Carol

Seneca

Select quizzes and test yourself on topics



Sparknotes

Full text online
Analysis of key quotes, characters and scenes

BBC Bitesize

Provides you with information and quizzes



Mr Bruff

English teacher making videos on A Christmas Carol

British Library

Explore the British Library for wider reading and ideas about A Christmas Carol



Click
link
here

SharePoint

Lots of resources and information to support you with your revision



HOW TO REVISE...

An Inspector Calls

Seneca

Select quizzes and test yourself on topics



Sparknotes

Full text summary
Analysis of key quotes, characters and scenes

BBC Bitesize

Provides you with information and quizzes



Mr Bruff

English teacher making videos on An Inspector Calls

British Library

Explore the British Library for wider reading and ideas about An Inspector Calls.



Click
link
here

SharePoint

Lots of resources and information to support you with your revision



HOW TO REVISE...

Conflict Poetry

Massolit

Mini lectures about the main ideas and contexts of the poems



Oak National Academy

Online lessons about the Conflict poems.

BBC Bitesize

Provides you with information and quizzes



Mr Bruff

English teacher making videos on Conflict poems

YouTube Tutorial

Notes on mind maps for each of the Conflict poems



SharePoint

Lots of resources and information to support you with your revision

P O E T R Y

HOW TO REVISE... Unseen poetry

Seneca

Select quizzes and test yourself on topics



Quizlet

Flashcards of poetic terms

BBC Bitesize

Provides you with information and quizzes



Mr Bruff

English teacher making videos on Unseen poetry

AQA

Find example past papers

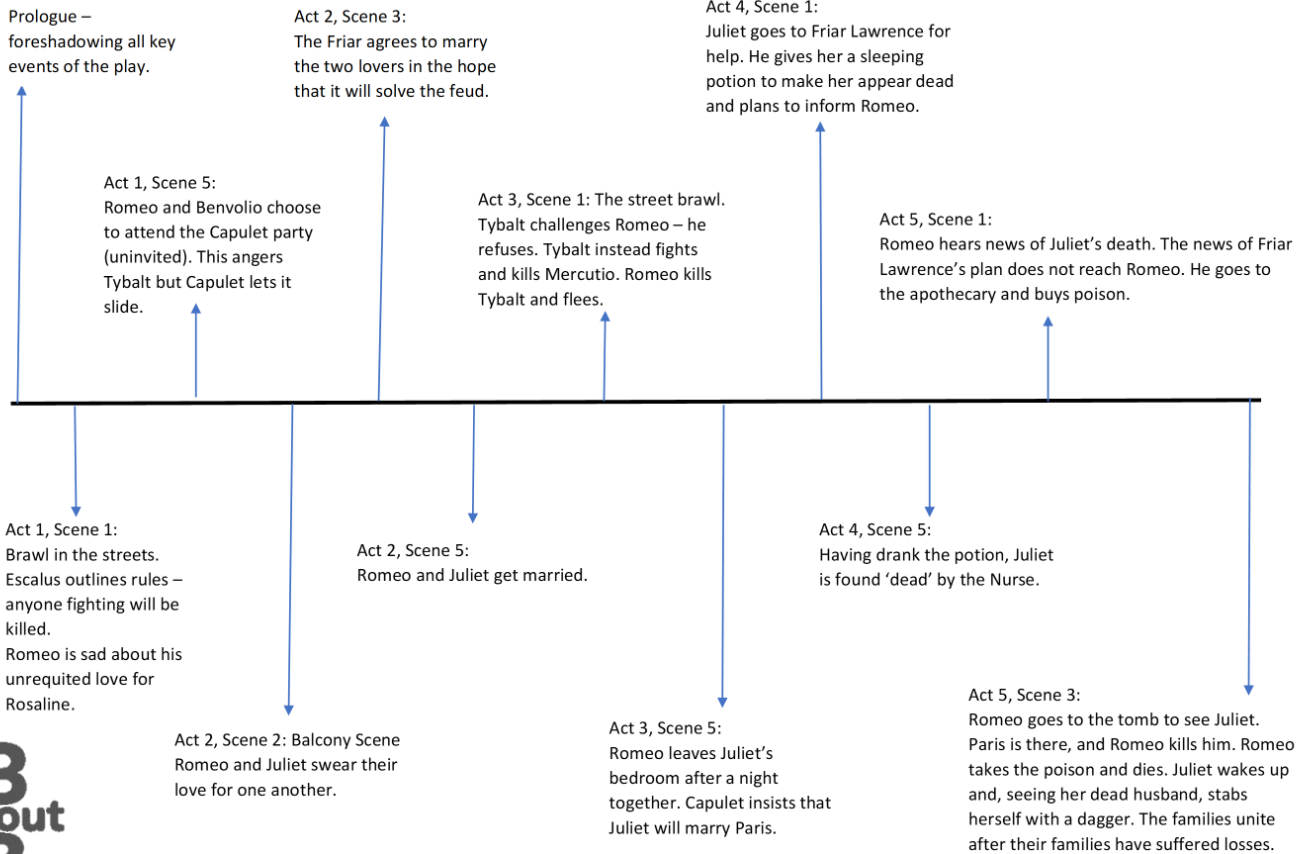


Click
link
here








SharePoint

Lots of resources and information to support you with
your revision

ROMEO AND JULIET



Key themes:

- Love 
- Impulsivity 
- Conflict 
- Death 
- Fate 
- Societal expectations 
- Time 

Revision platforms:



BBC Bitesize



Seneca Learning



Revision World



Oak National Academy