GCSE Writing

Summer 2023

In our GCSE writing course we will be using the AQA GCSE syllabus to help the students craft their own responses to a mixture of creative and non-fiction writing prompts typical of a GCSE exam. We will look at different writing techniques that should be employed and discuss the ways in which students can make their writing stand out to examiners, keeping their writing fluent and original throughout. The first **two weeks** will be **creative writing,** the second **two weeks** with be **non-fiction** and our final lesson will feature a writing workshop and a mock exam. Each lesson will focus on one past paper- the students should not look at past papers before the lesson as we will be covering it together in class.

*Week 1:* **Creative Writing- Text Prompt**

This first lesson will focus on the first question type common in the GCSE writing exam- the text prompt. We will consider how to use the exposition given by the paper to come up with interesting plots, characters and writing styles, thinking about the importance of giving the examiner something fresh and unexpected.

*Week 2:* **Creative Writing- Picture Prompt**

In this lesson we will look at the other common question type of GCSE writing- writing based upon a picture. We will think about how to pull concrete storylines, characters and ideas from something as abstract as an image on the page. We will learn about free-writing and how to use descriptive and linguistic techniques to bring an image to life.

*Week 3:* **Non-fiction Writing- Articles & Essays**

In this lesson we will shift our focus to the non-fiction part of the GCSE writing exam, beginning with articles and essays. We will think about structure, the importance of an introduction, and how to build an argument in a watertight way. We will also discuss the importance of tone in this lesson and practice debate skills.

*Week 4:* **Non-fiction Writing- Letters & Reviews**

In this lesson we will look at the more unorthodox non-fiction prompts the exam sometimes requires students to fulfil, thinking about reviews, complaints, letters- all the formats the exam requires which are more unusual. We will workshop some of these and the students will complete some group work coming up with their own ideas for unusual prompts.

*Week 5:* **Mock Exam**

This lesson will be a mock exam to help test the students’ skills, enabling them to showcase all they have learnt about GCSE writing over the past nine sessions. They will be asked to complete mock GCSE paper under timed conditions, answering a creative or a non-fiction prompt. They will have their exam graded and returned to them after the lesson and can use these mocks to track their progress and work out their strengths and areas of improvement in writing. They should aim to use as many different advanced writing techniques, high-level vocab examples and interesting structural devices as possible- all of which we will have covered in the preceding weeks.