



**12+ Advice
For the
English Entrance Papers
(2025)**

Introduction

This booklet will help you prepare for the 12+ English entrance papers.

The paper will last 60 minutes and is made up of two sections, as follows:

- Section A: Comprehension
- Section B: Creative Writing.

You should spend about **30 minutes** on each section.

10 minutes should be spent planning your response to Section B.

5 minutes should be spent checking the accuracy of your writing at the end.

Further advice on the content and how to approach it can be found below.

Section A:

What will be required?

The comprehension task will require you to read a passage from a fiction text and then answer three questions on it. The questions do get progressively harder and each is worth more marks than the last. We suggest spending 10 minutes reading the extract and then spending about 1 minute per mark on each question (e.g. question 1 is worth three marks, so spend three minutes).

It is important you **read the question carefully**. The question will tell you very clearly what is expected of you. For example you may need to find the answer in particular lines and sometimes you may need to quote.

Question 1 is about retrieval of explicit information and identifying key ideas.

e.g. Find **three** examples of **imagery** used in **lines 1-5**. Or Identify **three** ways the author makes **lines 1-6 scary**.

This question is worth three marks and you only need to write three words or phrases. Bullet points are fine.

Question 2 is about identifying explicit and implicit information and identifying evidence for it.

e.g. Re-read lines 7-18, **explain** how the characters are **feeling**. Or From lines 8-20, **explain** how the setting is presented as **scary**.

This question is worth five marks and you need to give 5 points each linked to different evidence (quotation) that supports the point. Synonyms as encouraged if an atmosphere or emotion is given to you.

Question 3 is about analysis and being able to identify, extract and explore language and structure techniques.

e.g. From the **whole extract and using brief quotations**, explore how the author builds **fear**?

You may want to consider:

- Key vocabulary used by the author
- Paragraph and sentence length or punctuation used by the author

This question is worth 12 marks and so should have two paragraphs (PEE).

Some question stems for this paper are below:

Section A: Comprehension Questions (Total: 20 marks)

1. In lines a-b, find/identify **three** words or phrases that describe/create/indicate/show _____?

You can write this as bullet point answers.

(3 marks)

2. Reread lines c-d. *Explain* how _____ are feeling or Explain what _____ is thinking

Support your answer with brief quotations.

(5 marks)

3. Reread lines e-f. Using brief quotations, *explore* how the writer creates _____.

You may want to consider:

- Key vocabulary used by the author
- Paragraph and sentence length or punctuation used by the author

(12 marks)

Please see the practice papers for full examples.

Section B:

What will be required?

The creative writing task will require you to write one of the following types of text:

- A description
- A narrative

It is important you **read the question carefully**. The question will tell you very clearly what is expected of you. You will find below the wording of a question from a past paper as an example:

‘The lights sparkled in the deepening darkness.’

Use the above first sentence to begin a short story. The piece can be funny, moving, tense or frightening, but you should include interesting descriptive detail.

Marks will be awarded for thoughtful, imaginative pieces, which have accurate and varied paragraphs and sentence structures, as well as accurate spelling and punctuation.

You will be assessed on:

- Content (/10);
- Organisation (/10);
- Accuracy (/10)

You should aim to write about a page and you should not write more than two pages. You do need to edit your work.

How do I write creatively?

If we ask you to write creatively, the key points that you need to think about are set out below:

- **Do not include a lot of things happening:** focus on describing things like people, places, animals etc.
- **Structure your writing in clear paragraphs** and **decide what you are going to describe in each**
- **Use lots of vivid, descriptive language:** similes, metaphors, strong verbs, adjectives, personification etc.
- We **do not expect you to include sound effects** (e.g. sibilance or assonance) but **you may if you wish** (and we would reward you for this in the marks awarded).
- Remember to **show not tell**.

As in any piece of English writing look to use varied and accurate sentences (with differing starts) and punctuation.

How do I revise or practice?

There is no need to spend vast amounts of time on this.

It is likely you will have done some narrative (story) or descriptive writing (character and setting). **Are there any particular areas which your teacher has flagged up that you need to be careful with?**

In addition, **are there any specific grammatical areas (for example, sentence structure or spelling) which you need to be careful with?**

Check you are confident in the main grammatical areas so that you write accurately and effectively in the assessment. These areas are:

- Nouns, pronouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs;
- Simple, compound and complex sentences (including conjunctions and connectives).

It is a good idea to **do a couple of short practice pieces of writing to help prepare**. There is **no need to do more than two thirds to a page for each**. When you have done them, ask a friend or parent to have a look at them. What suggestions do they make for improving them? Then, try to improve your writing.

You will find set out below some suggested tasks which will allow you to practise for creative writing:

Descriptive writing:

- You are standing on a beach fringed with palm trees. Describe what you see, hear, taste, smell and touch;
- Think of your favourite place and describe it in detail;
- Describe a forest and make it sound mysterious and frightening.
- Describe a time when you felt overjoyed.

Narrative writing:

- Write a story in which you are trapped inside a castle;
- Write a story about someone's first day at school;
- Write a story which starts with the following line: 'It was a sunny day and everything was going well...'
- Write a story which begins: 'The lights were flickering in the dim corridor ...'