

Senior secondary

# English: Revision units

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## Scholar study workbook



The Open  
University



Keeping Girls in School scholarship programme  
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# 'Keeping Girls in School' Scholarship Programme

## MSCE Resources: 2014–15

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# MCSE English Revision

For your English revision, you need to concentrate on:

- knowledge of the subject in both English Language and Literature;
  - in English Language this means e.g. **knowledge of grammar** and **knowledge of vocabulary**;
  - in English Literature, this includes **knowledge of the plots and the characters, the themes and the settings** in the books you have studied;
- skills in the **comprehension** of a piece of writing;
- skills in **composition**: writing a story or writing a factual composition or writing about one of the books you have studied.

# Revision E1: Introducing English language

This unit is about key ideas in English grammar.

## Parts of speech

You need to be able to look at a sentence in English and name parts of speech such as verbs, adverbs, nouns, pronouns, adjectives, prepositions and conjunctions.

### Activity 1

- 1 Name all the parts of speech in the following three sentences. First try to do so on your own. If you're not sure about any of the sentences, work with one of the other scholars to see if you can come up with the answers between you.

He ran quickly along the dark path

She gave her daughter a scarf and a new dress

My neighbour is a nice old lady

Now look at the examples in Unit E1 English Language and decide if your answers are correct. (You can then check the correct answers which are at the bottom of the next page of this guide.)

- 2 Give a definition for all the parts of speech you studied in Unit 1.

Example

An **adjective** **tells** you **more** **about** a **noun**.

## Revision of verb tenses

You need to be able to understand tenses of verbs and know whether a verb is in the past, present or future tense.

### Activity 2

Look at the following paragraph about Shemu Joyah, taken from The Sunday Times, and identify the **verb tenses** in it. Remember to include all the forms of the verb 'to be'.

To do so, underline all the verbs and decide whether each one is past, present or future. Give a reason for why each verb tense is used.

Again, if you're not sure about any of the sentences, work with another scholar to see if you can come up with the answers between you.

Film producer Shemu Joyah is arguably one of the best film talents Malawi has. He displayed great potential with his first movie Seasons of a Life, which screened at several international film festivals including the Zanzibar International Film Festival (Ziff) where it won the Ziff Chairman's Award and Verona Jury Award, among others. It also won the Special Schools Award in Verona, Italy. Joyah is now back with news of his new movie, which, if all goes according to plan, will be released in May.

## Revision of other parts of speech

### Activity 3

- 1 Look at the paragraph about Shemu Joyah again and, working by yourself, underline all the **adjectives** in the first sentence.
- 2 See if you can find any **adverbs** in the rest of the paragraph.

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Signed (by Tutor): ..... Date: .....

- 1 The adjectives in the passage are: **best, great, first, several, international, new.**
- 2 The adverb in the passage is: 'arguably'.

### Answers to Activity 3

will be released	future tense
goes	present tense
is	present tense
won	past tense
won	past tense
screened	past tense
displayed	past tense
has	present tense
is	present tense

The verbs, with the tense of each, in the passage are:

### Answers to Activity 2

My neighbour (noun) is (verb) a nice (opinion adjective) old (fact) new (adjective) dress (noun).  
 She (pronoun) gave (verb) her daughter (noun) a scarf (noun) and a (adjective) path (noun).  
 He (pronoun) ran (verb) quickly (adverb) along (preposition) the dark (adjective) lady (noun).

### Answers to Activity 1

# Revision E2: Introducing literature in English

This unit is about key ideas about literature, specialist words used for literature, and also includes some ideas about writing.

## Key ideas and specialist words

When writing about literature, some specialist words are important. These include: genre, plot, character, setting, theme, simile and metaphor. What do these words mean?

### Activity 1

---

Write down the specialist words given above and explain what each one means.

Start simply with:

**Character** means...

Put each of the words into a sentence to help you understand the meaning, for example:

The **plot** of *Romeo and Juliet* is very sad.

## Plot

It is important for you to know all of the set texts very well. Some of them are long and might seem quite complicated but revision work on the plot will help you to understand what happens and why, so that you can then write about them.

### Activity 2

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What is the plot of *Romeo and Juliet*? Try to tell the story in five sentences. Check your summary of the plot with another Scholar.

You could start like this:

*Romeo and Juliet*: The story of Romeo and Juliet is like that of many other teenagers who fall in love even though their two families hate each other. ...

To help you remember the plot, try drawing five pictures, one for each of your sentences. Your first drawing could be of the two families, the Montagues and the Capulets, hating and fighting each other. What would your second picture be? Now if you were to tell the story in ten sentences, what would you add in? What new pictures would you draw?

## Character

Part of what can be difficult in understanding a set text is getting to know all the characters in it and what each one is really like. It is important that when you revise the set texts, you know who is who in the stories and how you would describe each of the characters.

### Activity 3

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Who are the main characters in *Romeo and Juliet*? Can you write a list?

How many names are on it? Make sure you have included all the important characters. Share your list with another scholar and compare them.

Now take your list of characters and try to write five sentences for each character to explain what kind of person he or she is. With each character you write about, try to think:

- if you know someone like that;
- how you feel about each of the characters;
- about something each character has done and how that helps to explain the kind of person they are.

### Setting

Now think about *Smouldering Charcoal*. We will start with character again and then look at setting.

#### Activity 4

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Who are the main characters in *Smouldering Charcoal*? Explain what kind of person he or she is. What is the setting for *Smouldering Charcoal* and how does the setting explain what happens in the story (i.e. the plot)?

### Composition

Composition is important for the MCSE English examination. Writing about a poem or play or creating a story is something most of us enjoy doing. Think about the kinds of story you like to hear and to tell. Are they funny or sad? Most of the stories we like to hear about and like to write about are about our own ordinary lives – you don't have to write anything very unusual.

It may be possible to work in your Study Group or in a tutorial to spend some time working with your tutor and other Scholars to write the first paragraph of a story together. Starting a story is often the most difficult part.

#### Activity 5

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So work with your Study Group or with another Scholar to write the first paragraph of a story. If you are doing this with one other person, perhaps you could write the first sentence and then she writes the second and so on.

When your first paragraph is finished, stop. Take that first paragraph home with you and finish writing your story there.

The next time you are in your Study Group, compare your finished stories.

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Signed (by Tutor): ..... Date: .....

# Revision E3: Note-making and comprehension

This unit is about understanding writing and summarising pieces of writing.

## Writing summary

For the examination, you need to be able to write a summary of a passage and to give it a title. In order to do that, you need to find the most important points in the passage. You can do this by underlining the important points, by looking at each paragraph for one or two important points, etc.

### Activity 1

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Look at the passage below. Working by yourself or with another scholar, decide on what are the most important points in the passage. You might want to write them as a list.

Then write your own summary by yourself. You need to use your own words. Remember that your summary should be about  $\frac{1}{4}$  of the original passage. This passage is just over 200 words long, so your summary should be about 50 words. You might want to write the summary at home: you do need to do the writing by yourself.

Lake Malawi (also known as Lake Nyasa in most countries, or Lake Nyassa, Lake Niassa, or Lago Niassa in Mozambique), is an African Great Lake and the southernmost lake in the East African Rift system. This lake, the third largest in Africa and the eighth largest lake in the world, is located between Malawi, Mozambique, and Tanzania.

It is the second deepest lake in Africa, although its placid northern shore gives no hint of its depth. This great lake's tropical waters are reportedly the habitat of more species of fish than those of any other body of freshwater on Earth.

Lake Malawi was officially declared a reserve by the Government of Mozambique on June 10, 2011 in an effort to protect one of the largest and most bio-diverse freshwater lakes in the world.

Lake Malawi or Lake Nyaza is between 560 and 580 kilometres long, and about 75 kilometres wide at its widest point. The total surface area of this lake is about 29,600 square kilometres (11,400 sq mi). This lake has shorelines on western Mozambique, eastern Malawi, and southern Tanzania. The largest river flowing into this lake is the Ruhuhu River. This large freshwater lake has an outlet at its southern end, which is the Shire River, that flows into the very large Zambezi River in Mozambique.

When you have written your summary – perhaps the next time you are in the Study Group, compare your summary with those of other Scholars. What title did you give yours? Do you think that was a better title than others?

## Comprehension

Comprehension is an important part of MCSE English. Remember that you don't need to understand every word of a passage in order to be able to answer questions about it. Don't get stuck because some of the words look complicated. The first question asked is usually about the beginning of the passage, the second question about something further on in the passage, etc. That can help you to look in the right places for the answers. Read the questions before you read the passage, so that you start right away to understand what is important in the passage. In order to help you do this, we have put the questions first!

### Activity 1

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- 1 Where is the man standing when the storyteller sees him again?
- 2 Give three adjectives which are used to describe the man. What do you think they tell you about the man?
- 3 What words in the second paragraph describe the setting? How do you think you, the reader, are supposed to feel about the setting?
- 4 How close does the storyteller get to the man?

When I came down low enough upon the zigzag descent to see him again, I saw that he was standing between the rails on the way by which the train had lately passed, in an attitude as if he were waiting for me to appear. He had his left hand at his chin, and that left elbow rested on his right hand, crossed over his breast. His attitude was one of such expectation and watchfulness that I stopped a moment, wondering at it.

I resumed my downward way, and stepping out upon the level of the railroad, and drawing nearer to him, saw that he was a dark sallow man, with a dark beard and rather heavy eyebrows. His post was in as solitary and dismal a place as ever I saw. On either side, a dripping-wet wall of jagged stone, excluding all view but a strip of sky. So little sunlight ever found its way to this spot, that it had an earthy, deadly smell; and so much cold wind rushed through it, that it struck chill to me, as if I had left the natural world.

Before he stirred, I was near enough to him to have touched him. Not even then removing his eyes from mine, he stepped back one step, and lifted his hand.

(from *The Signal-Man* by Charles Dickens)

### Activity 2

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Now try to make up one or two questions of your own about the passage. Work with another Scholar if you find that helpful.

1 ...

2 ...

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Signed (by Tutor): ..... Date: .....

# Revision E4: English language and literature

## Composition

For English Language Paper 2 you need to choose one type of composition to write – a factual composition OR an imaginative story. You may already know which kind of composition you prefer but it's probably important to revise both, as it may turn out that in the exam you don't like the topics you're given for one or the other. Remember as well that you're often given several pointers to help you in a factual composition but quite often given just a title in a story.

Look back to all the notes given in Unit E4 to help you with composition –they're all useful!

## Report writing

### Activity 1

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In order to practise report writing for the composition part of the exam, imagine that you have been asked to write a report for the head teacher of your School Experience when you have just finished your School Experience.

Your report needs to be a factual report of 350–500 words based on your experiences of the past year. You need to detail clearly:

- what you have done in the school and what you have learned;
- what challenges you have faced and what obstacles you have overcome;
- why your School Experience has been successful.

You may want to include one or two **quotations** (for example from your class teacher or Mentor)

You may want to end with one or two **recommendations** for the next scholar at the school

You may want to use certain **phrases** given in Unit 4, such as 'This report has been compiled because of...' or 'In conclusion, this report has outlined the evidence...'.

## Story writing

### Activity 2

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Choose one of the two options below and write a 250–500 word composition.

- Write a story which begins with one of the characters running away from home, and at the end, returning home
- Write a story in which a tragic death occurs

Remember: the best stories come out of your own experience (though you don't need to be in the story), are not too complicated, have a good plot, setting and interesting characters, and a strong ending. A good story usually has some problem or conflict in it which may or may not be resolved at the end of the story.

You may want to talk through your ideas for the story with another Scholar or your tutor. You may want to jot down some notes. Remember: feelings and emotions are important but a story also needs a good structure to it, which needs to be planned.

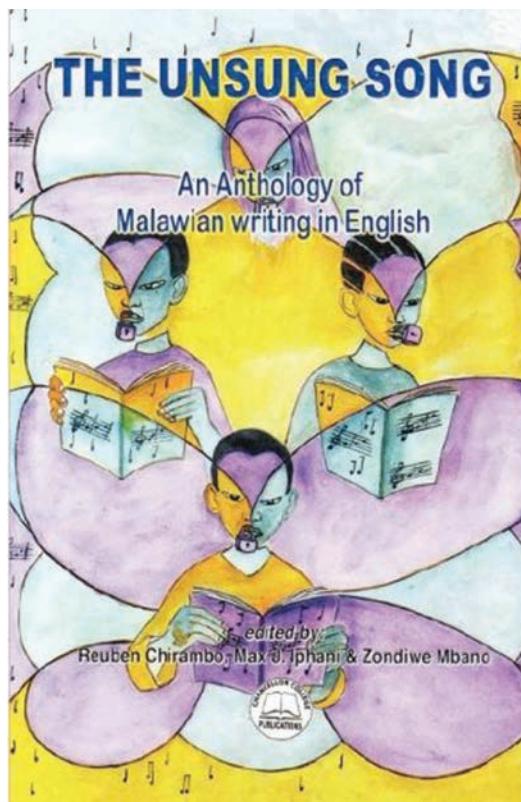
### Activity 3

Take the other story writing topic from the two listed above (the one you didn't choose first) and write a composition of 350–500 words in the time allocated to this for the examination. That will mean writing the story in 1 hour 10 minutes. Look at the guidance in Unit E4 about using planning time, making notes and checking through your work for errors before time is up.

### Poetry

There are two places in the exam papers where you will be dealing with poetry – in the multiple-choice questions in Literature Paper 1 and in short questions in Literature Paper 4.

Look back to Unit E4. You're not going to know which poem is in the exam, so your revision needs to focus generally on looking at any of the poems and being able to write about it. Work with other scholars from your Study Group on this poetry revision. Each pair of scholars in the group could look at different stories or poems and then compare and exchange notes.



Signed (by Scholar): ..... Date: .....

Signed (by Tutor): ..... Date: .....

# Revision E5: Modern African fiction

*Looking for a Rain God* is a series of short stories. You need to think about each one in terms of plot, character, setting and themes. You may have found some of the language difficult in these stories but remember that you don't need to understand every word. Why not work in your Study Group to revise all the stories in *Looking for a Rain God*?

## Activity 1

---

Share out the stories in *Looking for a Rain God* across your Study Group when you meet. You may want to work in pairs. For the stories your pair has been given, try to tell the story of each one in 10 sentences. When you are ready, read the 10 sentences out about each of the stories you have been given. While you are reading your sentences out, the other Scholars should sit and make notes. When they are reading their out, you should be making notes. You should all end up with plot summaries of all the stories.

As Unit E5 reminds you, plot is important, but character, setting and theme are even more important in the exams.

## Activity 2

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For each of the stories in *Looking for a Rain God*, make sure you know where it is set and what the themes are in the story. Look at the table given in Unit E5 to help you do this. Again, you may first want to do this revision together with other Scholars in your Study Group. Then you need to look at the stories again to make sure that you understand the theme and setting for each story.

## Character

You have done work on character in Unit E2. Build on this learning so that you use diagrams – for example, a spidergram or pictures and short notes – to revise the main characters in all the stories in *Looking for a Rain God*.

For further revision, go back to **Unit E5, Section B**.

There you will find extensive notes on *Smouldering Charcoal* and a series of sample questions from Paper 1 and Paper 4. Make sure that you go carefully through all those questions and answer them all yourself.

Then work with another scholar to make up some new practice questions. Check them with your Tutor.

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Signed (by Tutor): ..... Date: .....

# Revision E6: *Romeo and Juliet*

You have already done work on *Romeo and Juliet* in Unit E2, including revision of plot, character and themes in the play. And you've already studied E6. So this is now your final revision on *Romeo and Juliet*, to understand it in depth. Don't let the difficult language put you off. Remember, it's an old play but it's also a play about two teenagers in love.

## Activity 1

You have the plot summaries of Acts 1 to 5 in Unit E6. Working with another Scholar, take it in turns to test each other on the plot. For example:

- Have your fellow Scholar test you on the plot of Act 1. She can look at the plot summary of Act 1 in Unit E6 while you tell her what happens without you looking at any notes.
- She must correct any mistakes and tell you anything you miss out (and you must make a note of these).
- Then, you look at the plot summary of Act 2 in Unit E6 and she tells you what happened.
- Keep on until you have summarised all the acts.
- Do the whole activity again until you are both confident about the plots of all five acts.

## Character, setting and theme

Think again about character, setting and theme in *Romeo and Juliet*. The setting is Verona in the houses of two powerful, aristocratic families. The themes are: loyalty; secrecy; death; and tragic, young love.

## Activity 2

Setting aside Romeo and Juliet themselves, choose your favourite character in *Romeo and Juliet* and make some notes on what it is about the character that you find appealing. Then explain your choice to your Study Group in one minute. You must give evidence to support your claim. Try to cover as many of the characters as you can across the whole Study Group.

## Activity 3

There are notes in Unit E6 on how Juliet and Romeo change and develop in the course of the play. Choose either Romeo or Juliet and write a summary of the ways in which the character develops. Make sure you give examples from the play to support your claims. Compare your summary with others in the Study Group.

## Activity 4

Look again at all the questions on the play included in Unit E6. Go through all of the questions again, including the exam practice questions. Check your answers.

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Signed (by Tutor): ..... Date: .....



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