Good design

for ease of revision

Subheads break the content into manageable units

Content informs you about the structure and composition of the English language

Editing, summary and redrafting

Topic						Due attempt	Due complete	Self Assessment
LEAG	MIG	SDP	NEAR	WEC	WCCCA			
✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			Examinations and changes
✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			Coursework
✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			Differentiation
✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			An approach to the subject
✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			Speaking and listening
✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			Reading
✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			Ways and means
✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			Writing
✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			Practical writing

Key facts for the exam are given

11.4 The skills required

Summarising employs all the skills required for general competence in the use of language, for it is a test of reading comprehension and writing aptitude. To make a good summary you must be able:

- to understand what you read;
  - and then to express your understanding in words of your own.
- The first step in summarising is to arrive at thorough comprehension of the passage. Then, and only then, you are ready to plan and write your summary. These two operations demand:
- the judgement to distinguish between essential points (which must be included) and minor points (which must be omitted);
  - the organising ability to work out a coherent and logical plan;
  - the writing skill to frame clear sentences, correct in grammar, punctuation and spelling;
  - the word power to condense the passage while retaining its essential content, and to select appropriate expressions to reflect the 'slant' and the 'feel' of the passage.
- Each of these points is discussed and demonstrated in later sections of this chapter.

11.5 Different kinds of summary

Whole passage summary ('precis')

Note: The word *precis* (French) is still in common use as a synonym for summary.

Typical instructions: whole passage summary (precis)

Summarise (make a précis of) this passage in clear and correct English. Some words and phrases in the original writing cannot be accurately or economically replaced, but you must not copy out long expressions or whole sentences. Use your own words as far as possible. Your summary must not exceed 150 words. State at the end the exact number of words you have used.

The word limit may be expressed in other ways. For example, '... in about 150 words'. In this case, you should aim at being not more than 5 words above or below the stipulated number.

Whole passage summary requires you to include in your summary all the chief points expressed in the passage set.

Selective summary

Often, the examiners' instructions direct attention to one particular subject dealt with in the set passage or passages. In that case your answer must be based exclusively on the information that is supplied about that specified subject. No other information in the passage is relevant.

For example, the set passage might recount the history of a legal reform.

Work out problems: language, understanding, summary

20 problems allow you to:

- test the knowledge you have gained
- check your solutions against the answers at the end of the book

Worked examples:

- help you interpret questions
- show you the answers the examiners expect
- teach you correct conventions

Work out 1

Initial material presented and arranged in a way that is easy to read and understand.

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Good design

for effective revision

LEAG	MEG	SEG	NEAB	WJEC	NICCEA	Topic	Date attempted	Date completed	Self Assessment
✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Examinations and changes			
✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Coursework			
✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	'Differentiation'			
✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	An approach to the subject			
✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Speaking and listening			
✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Reading			
✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Ways and means			
✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Writing			
✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Practical writing			

Syllabus analysis

Ensures you only do the topics you need – no more, no less

Start and completion column

Keeps tabs on your progress – see at a glance which areas still need to be worked through

Self assessment

For you to note how well you've done or areas which need to be revised again

Chapter breakdown

Shows you in detail what is covered in the chapters

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S. H. Burton & J. A. Humphries

English GCSE Key Stage 4

MACMILLAN

What

the exam boards want

Topic

	LEAG	MEG	SEG	NEAB	WJEC	NICCEA
Speaking and listening						
6 Recount personal experiences	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
6 Discuss and exchange ideas	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
6 Inform and explain	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
6 Plan and present topics	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
6 Know how spoken communication varies	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
6 Complement reading and writing	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Reading						
8 Read a range of literary texts	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
8 Read a range of non-literary texts	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
7,8 Show and explain preferences	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
7,8 Give an informed response	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
8,15 Show an awareness of devices used by writers	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
11 Demonstrate the ability to draw conclusions	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
21 Show ability to select and combine information	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
8 Read 20th and pre-20th century material	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
8 Read and appreciate some of Shakespeare's work	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
5 Note some of the changes as language has evolved	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
7 Keep a reading log or diary	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

Topic

Writing		LEAG	MEG	SEG	NEAB	WJEC	NICCEA
10,14	Convey experiences and impressions	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
11,12	Understand the order and presentation of facts	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
12,13,15,16	Show a sense of audience and the awareness of style	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
12,13,15,17	Appreciate how language is used in writing	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
15,16,17	Correct, edit, redraft and revise	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
12,13,14	Make use of different forms of writing – stories, reports, advertisements, letters, etc.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
21	Research and information-retrieving	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Presentation							
19	Spell correctly	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
19	Check and correct misspellings and other weaknesses	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
20	Write fluently and legibly	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
20	Present clear and attractively finished work	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

Revision

hints for passing

- 1 It's up to you. When it comes to passing examinations, your destiny is governed mainly by your own application to the tasks in hand. Obtain your syllabus and recent examination papers from your teacher or lecturer. Before you start, check the right way to get to your destination.
- 2 Panic is the quickest way to failure. If you can keep calm under pressure, then you are fulfilling one of the main examination requirements.
- 3 Controlled breathing aids concentration. Breathe slowly up the left nostril to the count of eight, hold for eight, breathe out through the right nostril counting eight. Then repeat the process in the other direction. Oxygen is released into the brain, a sense of calmness follows and revision – or examination performance – is improved.
- 4 Always read the instructions. It is as important to know the number of questions that you have to answer as it is to know at what time the examination is over.
- 5 Think before writing. Always have in mind both the ultimate matter concerning examination questions – 'What am I required to do?' – and the all-important response – 'To *answer* the question!'
- 6 Legibility of handwriting matters. Elegance, perfect lettering and neatness, of course, help. Clarity is vital.
- 7 Timing is also vital. Work out a 'budget' that involves the minutes that you intend to give each section of the examination paper. Remember that the first ten minutes that you spend on a question probably earn far more marks than the final ten.
- 8 'Compulsion to closure' is a phrase used by salespeople who hope to complete a deal and make money. Have the same urgency of mind in wanting to complete your answer in an effective, tidy way.
- 9 Anonymity is an advantage. You are unknown to the examiner and he or she is not aware of how much or how little preparation you have done. You are known by what you write: you have a limited number of minutes to become recognised and to make an impression.
- 10 Try, above all, to *take pleasure* in completing a good examination paper and you will *give pleasure* to the person marking it. Those involved in marking often have to undertake their work when others are relaxing – on long summer evenings, for example. If you can provide the 'treat' of a clear, accurate and thoughtful examination script, then you, in turn, will be treated very well.

Exam Board Addresses

For syllabuses and past papers contact the Publications office at the following addresses:

Midland Examining Group (MEG)
c/o University of Cambridge Local
Examinations Syndicate
1 Hills Road
CAMBRIDGE
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Robert Gibson & Sons Ltd
17 Fitzroy Place
Glasgow G3 7SF
Tel. 0141 248 5674

Remember to check your syllabus
number with your teacher!

How you will be graded

Your GCSE grades will be given on a scale from U (for Unclassified) through G – F – E – D – C – B – A to A* at the highest. For many purposes, such as further education requirements, job applications and advice about Advanced Level opportunities, the grades of C and above will be taken as indicating a degree of success in the subject.

The assessment will be based on your abilities in:

- speaking and listening
- reading
- writing
- presentation

The way in which your grades are calculated is quite complicated and depends on the assessing of the so-called 'levels' that you attain on the National Curriculum ten-level scale. It may help you to think of your attainment levels in terms of the initial letters of the grades that you are finally awarded, together with an appropriate word that sums up your achievement (or lack of it).

- Levels 1 & 2: U for Unable to cope with the demands of language
- Levels 3 & 4: G for Grasp of basics
- Level 5: F for Feeling for some features of language
- Level 6: E for Exercising a limited number of skills
- Level 7: D for Development of...
C for Competence in many areas
- Level 8: B for Bonus of a full range of skills
- Level 9: A for Achievement of expertise
- Level 10: A* for Attainment of the exceptional brilliance of a star!

Introduction

The purpose of most books is to enable readers to learn more and to see aspects of life in different ways. Authors explore a subject and then invite an audience to share their thoughts. If pleasure is a by-product of this process, then that is a bonus for all concerned – reader, writer and publisher.

Work Out English attempts to do four things. Its primary function is to *inform* you about the structure and composition of the English language in general, and the demands of the authorities responsible for the GCSE Key Stage 4 examinations in particular.

Its second purpose is to *advise* you on how to approach examinations, and on the skills demanded in the composition of clear, effective writing. This book attempts to improve the ways in which you speak, listen and read as well as write, and to encourage an enlightened attitude towards the challenging matters involved in taking examinations.

Thirdly, this text *shows* you how to answer specific questions, read selected passages, and compose the sort of written material demanded by those who set examinations and who moderate coursework.

Finally, *Work Out English* endeavours to *promote success*. You are invited to take part in a series of activities that will strengthen your command of the language, give you confidence to approach the tasks of communication, and help you strive towards success in those areas of life where accuracy and the inventive use of words matter.

We hope that with this book you will be able to *work out* what hitherto may have puzzled you about the seemingly elaborate details of language and of examination requirements. We hope also that you will *work out* – in the sense of 'exercise' – your mind, using some of the techniques explained here. May the thoughts and actions that derive from your work with this book ensure that your own speaking and listening, and reading and writing, all *work out* with increasing success.

S. H. Burton and J. A. Humphries