**1.Get organised!**

Make sure that you **plan ahead** and organise your study time. Check the assessment dates given to you by the teacher, or the exam timetable published by SQA. English tends to be one of the first exams, so be sure to take this into account when planning.

**Create a study timetable**, allocating time to each of your subjects, ensuring that enough time is given to those subjects you feel need extra attention.

**Check your materials**; make sure that for English you have a copy of all of the texts you will need to learn for the exam, your jotter and any other notes that you have taken over the course of the year, copies of your past essays as well as your profile sheet so that you know what your strengths and development needs are, and past papers for practice.

Finally, be sure that you **understand the exam process**; how many papers there are, how long each paper lasts, the marks available for each paper, and what (if any) of your course work also contributes to your overall grade.

**2. The RUAE paper**

This is notoriously the part of the English exam that students find the hardest, but you can set yourself up for success by following some of these tips:

* **Read newspaper articles daily** – look out for unusual language or interesting description and make a mental note. This will help to prepare you for the exam as you will become more familiar with the style of writing, you will broaden your own vocabulary and knowledge of language, and you’ll increase your general knowledge.
* **Learn the question strategies** – you will have been taught a strategy or approach for answering each of the different types of RUAE question (own words, summarising, word choice, imagery, sentence structure, tone, linking, conclusion and comparison). It is important that you know each strategy and make use of it when answering. This will help to ensure that you score the maximum number of marks available for each question and will provide you with a ‘starting point’ for those tricky questions.
* **Practise, practise, practise** – try to work through as many past paper examples as you can. These will mirror closely your final exam and give you the best indicator of your current progress.
* **Make your own** – Why not make your own RUAE paper by selecting an article and creating questions on the passage from what you have noticed during your reading? This ‘backwards’ approach to learning often helps you to gain a more in depth understanding of the process and the expectations of the exam.

**3. The Scottish Text**

Every pupil studying for National 5 and Higher English will have studied a Scottish text in class as preparation for the exam. You will need to have a sound knowledge and understanding of the text as you are not allowed to take this into the exam. You will be provided with an extract from the text and will have to answer selected questions, demonstrating your understanding of the extract, but also your understanding of the text as a whole/series of texts. To do this you should ensure the following:

* Be able to **identify the key scenes** from your text (if a longer text) and also the **key themes** or **important characters**
* Be able to explain how these themes are made clear through the text – using a mind-map can be an effective way to study for this and help you to organise your thoughts and ideas
* Be able to provide evidence to support your idea by including **quotations** – using post-its or flashcards is a clever idea for learning these

Make sure that you have a good understanding of **how to approach the final question** and be sure to follow the structure given to you by your teacher. This will help ensure you score the maximum marks available.

Lastly, it’s the same again – **practise, practise and more practise**.

**4. The Essay**

You will have studied at least one other text in class to use for the critical essay section of the paper. Like the Scottish text, you will need to have a sound knowledge and understanding of the text(s) as you are not allowed to take this/these into the exam

In class you will have covered a great deal of learning connected to the text and you should have copious **notes/information that you can read over** when revising.

You should know your text inside and out – **create mind maps** for each of the main characters, or key themes, with all that you know. Then go back and try to **add in quotations** to support each of the points you have written.

**Learn your quotations** – just like for the Scottish text, post-its and flashcards can be helpful study aids. Stick post-its around your room in places you will see them (eg. on a mirror) and read them aloud each time you see them. Create flashcards with quotes and get an adult to test you with them. Some pupils even record themselves reading the quotations and play it on repeat throughout the day (or while sleeping). Try a range of methods and see what works for you.

You will undoubtedly have completed practice essays in class (possibly under timed conditions) and have been given detailed feedback. You should take another look at these essays, perhaps attempting the same task again with the aim to improve on the previous version.

You will not know what the essay question will be until you are in the exam, however you can plan for a variety of different scenarios in advance. Why not look at the questions included in past papers and **create mini plans** for each one? Alternatively, chose one of the questions at random and give yourself 45minutes to attempt an answer.