



EdExcel IGCSE English Language A Paper 2 – Question 1 Prose – Rapid Revision Guide

TEXT	MAIN THEMES & QUOTES	CHARACTERS & CHARACTER TYPES	SYMBOLISM & MOTIFS	NARRATIVE PERSPECTIVE	STRUCTURE & PLOT DEVICES	WRITER'S MESSAGE/HIDDEN MEANING	GRADE 9 ZOOM-OUT IDEA	EXAM QUESTION FOCUSES
THE STORY OF AN HOUR	Freedom: "free, free, free!" Oppression: "no powerful will bending hers" Female strength: "goddess of Victory"	Louise Mallard = oppressed individual who becomes empowered. Brently Mallard = symbolic representation of patriarchal authority rather than a fully developed character. Josephine = caring but conventional figure.	Open window = freedom and opportunity. Spring imagery = rebirth and renewal. Heart trouble = emotional and social oppression. Stairs = transition from restriction to freedom.	Third-person limited focused almost entirely on Louise. Readers experience her emotional transformation directly.	Circular structure begins and ends with heart trouble. Dramatic irony (reader understands more than characters). Twist ending destroys newfound freedom. Rapid emotional shift creates impact.	Marriage is presented as restrictive. Women are capable of strength when given freedom. Society misunderstands women's desires and identities.	Chopin critiques Victorian gender roles and suggests true female freedom is difficult to achieve in a patriarchal society.	Freedom Independence Marriage Power Identity Women's roles
THE NECKLACE	Materialism: "she suffered endlessly" Status: "popular, envied, attractive" Appearance vs reality	Mathilde = tragic flaw character driven by vanity. Monsieur Loisel = practical and selfless foil. Madame Forestier = catalyst for downfall.	Necklace = illusion, status, superficial values. Ball = fantasy and escape. Mirror imagery = self-image and vanity.	Third-person omniscient. Allows readers to understand Mathilde's dissatisfaction and flawed thinking.	Linear plot. Foreshadowing of twist ending. Dramatic irony throughout. Final revelation redefines the entire story.	Obsession with wealth creates suffering. Social ambition can be destructive. Appearances are deceptive.	Maupassant criticises a society that values status and appearance more than honesty or contentment.	Wealth Poverty Appearance vs Reality Pride Ambition
SIGNIFICANT CIGARETTES	Belonging: "something to hold on to" Migration Identity Hope and uncertainty	Lev = outsider/migrant seeking opportunity. Lydia = fellow traveller and foil. Both are vulnerable but hopeful.	Cigarettes = home, memory, comfort. £20 note = opportunity and England's promise. Stork = migration and hope. Darkness = uncertainty.	Third-person closely focused on Lev. Allows readers to share his anxieties and hopes.	Journey structure mirrors emotional journey. Opening chapter structure. Frequent memories interrupt present narrative.	Leaving home creates conflict between hope and belonging. Migration requires sacrifice.	Identity is shaped by both the place we leave behind and the future we pursue.	Home Belonging Migration Identity Hope
WHISTLE AND I'LL COME TO YOU	Fear Isolation Supernatural Tension	Arthur Kipps = rational man challenged by fear. Spider = source of comfort and reality. Woman in Black = unseen supernatural threat.	Darkness = fear and uncertainty. Torch = logic and reason. Wind = supernatural danger. Nursery = innocence corrupted.	First-person narration. Creates immediacy and uncertainty. Readers experience events alongside Kipps.	Rising tension throughout. Mystery deepens gradually. Climax followed by brief relief. Classic Gothic structure.	Human reason has limits. Some fears cannot be explained logically.	Hill explores how isolation and fear can overwhelm rational thinking.	Fear Tension Isolation Supernatural Suspense
NIGHT	Parenting Mental health Fear Recovery	Narrator = vulnerable young person struggling with intrusive thoughts. Father = supportive figure who provides understanding and reassurance.	Night = fear, anxiety, isolation. Snow = important life-changing moments. Darkness = psychological uncertainty.	First-person retrospective narration. Adult narrator reflects on childhood experiences with hindsight.	Moves from anxiety to resolution. Reflective structure. Confession acts as a turning point.	Compassion and understanding help people overcome suffering. Listening can be healing.	Human connection is often the antidote to fear and emotional isolation.	Family Fear Mental health Growing up Relationships



EdExcel IGCSE English Language A Paper 2 – Question 1 Poetry – Rapid Revision Guide

POEM	MAIN THEME & KEY QUOTE	HIDDEN MESSAGE / WRITER'S INTENTION	SYMBOLISM & MOTIFS	LANGUAGE TECHNIQUES & QUOTES	STRUCTURE TECHNIQUES & QUOTES	TONE JOURNEY	GRADE 9 ZOOM-OUT IDEA
DISABLED	Reality of War, loss, isolation, betrayal "waiting for dark" "legless"	Owen may be challenging the lies of patriotic propaganda and the abandonment of injured soldiers, exposing the true cost of war.	Darkness = death/despair Wheelchair = imprisonment Lost legs = lost identity	Contrast between past and present "blood-smear down his leg" "girls glanced lovelier"	Cyclical structure opening/ending alone Flashbacks throughout poem contrast past and present	Pride → Regret → Isolation → Despair	Society glorifies war but ignores its lifelong consequences.
OUT, OUT—	Fragility of Life, death, indifference of society "Little—less—nothing!"	Frost suggests life can end suddenly and the world moves on regardless.	Buzz saw = industrial danger Sunset = approaching death	Personification: "snarled and rattled" "leaped out at the boy's hand"	Single narrative stanza mirrors unstoppable movement towards tragedy Foreshadowing: "Call it a day"	Calm → Tension → Tragedy → Indifference	Human life is frighteningly fragile and often treated as insignificant by society.
AN UNKNOWN GIRL	Identity & Belonging, cultural heritage "I am clinging" "longing"	Alvi explores the struggle/complexity of living between cultures and searching for identity/desire to reconnect with heritage.	Henna = connection to heritage Peacock = India Fading stain = fading connection	Metaphor: "new brown veins" "colours leave the street" Imagery of bazaar	Repeated refrain returns to: "an unknown girl is hennaing my hand" Free verse ending looks forward	Fascination → Connection → Longing	Cultural identity can feel temporary, fragile and difficult to hold onto.
BRIGHT LIGHTS OF SARAJEVO	Hope Amid War, resilience "stroller's pace" "holds her hand"	Harrison suggests human kindness/humanity and love survive even in the darkest circumstances (war).	Bright lights = hope Stars = beauty Bread queue = suffering	Romantic language: "tender radar" "flirtatious ploys" War imagery: "shell scars"	Begins with hardship/destruction and ends with human connection Juxtaposition of war and romance	Despair → Humanity → Hope	Ordinary human relationships become acts of resistance against the horrors of war.
STILL I RISE	Oppression, Resilience & Self-Worth "I rise" "I'm a black ocean"	Angelou celebrates overcoming oppression and reclaiming identity and power. Any attempts to suppress people will ultimately fail	Dust = resilience, Moon/Sun = certainty, Ocean = unstoppable strength/power	Repetition of: "I rise" builds momentum and power like waves of an ocean Rhetorical questions reflect resistance against oppression Direct address illustrates defiance	Repeated refrain builds momentum Escalating confidence throughout poem	Defiant → Powerful → Triumphant	Oppression cannot permanently suppress dignity or self-belief.