

## Looking back over your GCSE work

Spend some time getting all your notes and other work into order, if you have not already done so.

Look back over the pieces of writing that you have done during the course, especially:

- Year 10 and 11 assignments
- exam practices
- mock exam answers.

Look at how your writing has developed. Look at the comments from your teacher.

You could make some quick notes on the following things:

- **Working in exam conditions** – What have you learned about what you need to improve in this? For example, do you read the questions carefully? Do you plan effectively? Do you spend the right amount of time on each question? There is lots of advice on this later in the guide.
- **Aspects of your writing** – What do you need to improve about the way that you write in exams? This includes all writing – about the Anthology, unseen texts, literature texts and different kinds of original writing.
- **Technical accuracy** – Marks are given – and lost – in the exam for technical accuracy (spelling and punctuation) and presentation (including handwriting). What, exactly, do you need to improve?



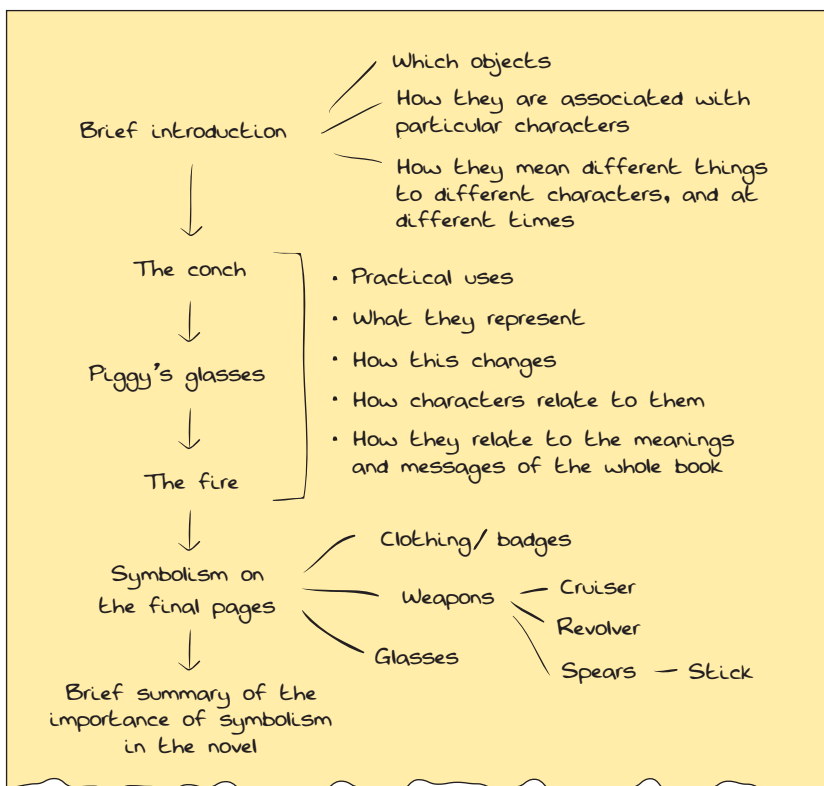
*He did not recall a single worksheet,  
but he recognised the gum*

## Practising planning and writing

### Planning

One very effective way of revising is to practise planning exam answers. Your teacher will give you sample questions to work on.

The plan you write might take the form of a flow diagram, showing the order of the points you will make. It might be a quick note of events to refer to, or pages of a novel to find quotations on. It might be a spider diagram, showing which examples or points you will refer to in each section of your essay. If you practise, you will find a method that works for you. This is an example of a useful, quick plan for an exam answer about symbolic objects in *Lord of the Flies*:





## What the examiners are looking for

**The following phrases may appear on the exam paper. You are being asked to:**

**These phrases mean you need to show that you can:**

...distinguish between fact and opinion.



...tell the difference between fact and opinion.

...evaluate how information is presented.



...comment on how effectively the writer has presented ideas and information.

...follow an argument, identifying implications and inconsistencies.



...follow a writer's argument.  
...recognise ideas in a text which are not stated directly.  
...spot weaknesses in an argument (see page 16).

...select material appropriate to purpose.



...refer to and quote details in texts, which support your ideas.

...collate material from different sources.



...find and quote details from more than one text.

...make cross-references.



...compare texts, and how they have been written.

...read items as media texts.

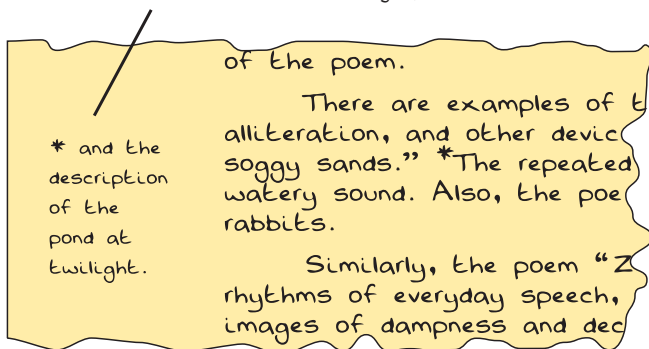


...write confidently about images, layout and presentation (see page 17).

## Checking and correcting

Leave yourself a few minutes to check your answers at the end.  
For example:

You can add extra bits in the margin, or at the end.

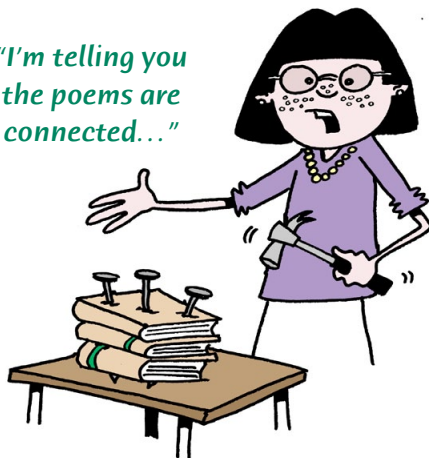


## Beginning your revision

You can do the following for each of the collections of poems that you are revising.

- Reread the poems that you have studied.
- Look back over all the notes that you have made or been given when you studied the poems, and make sure that you understand them. You need to know about the main ideas in each poem.
- It is essential that you know how the poems can be compared and connected with each other. This is something that you will have worked on in class.

*"I'm telling you the poems are connected..."*





### Less easy



Choose a main character.

On a piece of paper, do a brainstorm around the character. You should include important scenes that they are involved in and themes or ideas in the novel that they represent. Note at least five quotations which you might use in an exam if you were writing about this character. Write down how this character changes during the novel. If you find this helpful, do it for more characters.



Choose a theme or main idea in the novel. For example, it might be how people use the power they have, how people are changed by their experiences, or how they behave under pressure.

On a piece of paper, do a brainstorm around this idea. You should include scenes in which the idea is important, characters who show something about this idea, and at least five quotations which you might use in an exam if you were writing about it.

If you find this helpful, do it for more ideas.



Choose an aspect of the writer's technique in the novel. For example, it might be the use of symbols, allegory, descriptions of places and characters, or a particular narrative voice.

On a piece of paper, do a brainstorm around this technique. You should include scenes in which this technique is clear, and at least five quotations which you might use in an exam if you were writing about it. Next to each quotation, explain why you chose it to illustrate the writer's technique.