



Accelerating Progress: English

Tutor support manual

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Section 1: Introduction

Course aims and overview



Accelerating Progress

Accelerating Progress courses have been designed to support learners through GCSE courses and boost their grades, especially for marginal learners around the Grade 4 and Grade 5 borderline. These courses have been written by subject experts, all of whom are practising teachers in their respective subjects.

Accelerating Progress courses aim to:

- develop the essential subject-specific skills required to gain a good pass in GCSE examinations
- provide opportunities to practise these skills in contextual situations
- boost learners' grades and confidence in the subject

The courses contain a curriculum of challenges divided up into modules based on key aspects of the GCSE English specification.

English course overview

This course is designed to support students through GCSE English courses and boost their grades by developing higher-order reading and critical thinking skills. This will support learners in formulating and expressing their own opinions – one of the key requirements of the new GCSE.

About the author

Tom Walker is an experienced English language and English literature teacher at Key Stages 3, 4 and 5. He has been working in Bristol schools since 2007 and is currently a head of Post-16, teaching A-level literature and Law, as well as teaching at Key Stage 4.

In his early career, Tom was second in department and then head of department for English. He led the English team through a number of curriculum changes and to improved outcomes for the department, specifically with marginal learners around what was the C/D borderline.

During this time, Tom also set the groundwork in preparation for the current GCSE specification for English language and literature, and took an active role in strategies for raising attainment within the school as a whole.

Tom is also a Specialist Leader in Education, specialising in raising attainment in English with marginal learners, and has worked with other schools in this role. In his current position as Head of Post-16, he is directly responsible for leading on Teaching and Learning, and raising attainment. Tom has had much experience of curriculum provision and progression pathways for students in GCSE and Post-16 studies.

Section 1: Introduction

Introduction to the modules



Modules

The Accelerating Progress: English course contains challenges across five modules. These modules reflect the key aspects of the GCSE specification.

Module 1: Developing your voice

The aim of this module is voice development whilst at the same time improving a range of other English skills such as spelling and vocabulary. Activities include analysing sentence structure in passages of writing, and delivering a persuasive or informative speech to a group of adults.

Module 2: Developing your understanding

The aim of this module is to develop understanding within a range of different contexts, such as reading and writing clear instructions and creating instructional videos. Learners will develop their understanding by considering how they learn new techniques as well as how they learned techniques at which they are competent.

Module 3: Developing your writing

The aim of this module is to develop writing skills, improve grammar and develop the use of language and structure for effect. There is an emphasis on writing for different purposes and learners will gain an understanding of writing for different audiences.

Module 4: Knowing the world

The aim of this module is to focus on developing understanding of writing using a range of different contexts. Learners will study different kinds of texts such as historical and other non-fiction and be encouraged towards purposeful outcomes.

Module 5: Knowing about fiction

The aim of this module is to develop knowledge of fiction. Learners will be expected to read texts, describe characters and understand such things as figurative language, mood, plot and narrative. A range of texts are covered in this module: whole novels, poetry, comics and period literature.

Sections

Each module is split into two sections – Section A and Section B:

- Section A comprises shorter challenges that develop the skills, knowledge and understanding required for the module topic
- Section B comprises extended challenges that stretch the learner's independent thinking skills and further develop the learning from the section A challenges

Section 2: Skills development

English skills overview



Subject-specific skills

Learners will develop the following skills as they complete the Accelerating Progress: English challenges. These skills can be divided into four categories: reading skills; writing skills; thinking skills; and speaking and listening skills.

Many of the skills feature in more than one category; these skills are marked *

Reading skills

- Articulating a personal response*
- Considering audience*
- Considering purpose*
- Evaluating effects*
- Evaluating information*
- Explaining the effect of language
- Explaining the writer's choices
- Improving your understanding when reading
- Making comparisons*
- Retrieving information when reading

Writing skills

- Articulating a personal response*
- Considering audience*
- Considering purpose*
- Improving your understanding of spelling
- Increasing vocabulary
- Using language for effect*
- Using structure for effect
- Varying your language when writing

Thinking skills

- Articulating a personal response*
- Considering audience*
- Considering context
- Considering purpose*
- Evaluating effects*
- Evaluating information*
- Making comparisons*
- Making links

Speaking and listening skills

- Articulating a personal response*
- Considering audience*
- Listening
- Presentation skills
- Using language for effect*

Section 2: Skills development

Mapping modules to skills



Module 1: Developing your voice

English skills	Section A										Section B				
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	1	2	3	4	5
Articulating a personal response															
Considering audience											✓	✓	✓		
Considering context															
Considering purpose						✓		✓							
Evaluating effects															
Evaluating information															
Explaining the effect of language															
Explaining the writer's choices					✓								✓		
Improving your understanding of spelling			✓	✓							✓	✓			
Improving your understanding when reading	✓	✓									✓		✓		
Increasing vocabulary	✓	✓									✓			✓	
Listening									✓						
Making comparisons														✓	
Making links															
Presentation skills									✓	✓					✓
Retrieving information when reading		✓													
Using language for effect															
Using structure for effect						✓	✓					✓		✓	
Varying your language when writing	✓	✓									✓			✓	

Section 3: Tutor notes

Introduction to the tutor notes



This section contains tutor notes to support tutors in delivering all of the challenges in Accelerating Progress: English. These notes have been developed to support non-specialists in delivering the course content.

For each challenge, the following information is given:

- 1 Module, section and challenge reference
- 2 Challenge title
- 3 Challenge text (as it appears for learners in the learner workbook and e-portfolio system)
- 4 Learning aims of the challenge
- 5 Short challenge reference (eg 1A1)
- 6 The approximate amount of time the challenge will take to complete
- 7 Skills that learners will develop through this challenge
- 8 Notes for tutors on the suggested approach to the challenge
- 9 Suggested resources that can be used to support the delivery of the challenge, including learner resources available via the learner workbooks and e-portfolio

Tutor notes for Module 1 Developing your voice

1 **Module 1: Developing your voice, Section A, Challenge 1**

2	Challenge title	Improving your vocabulary		2
3	Challenge	Look through your written work (use as many different subjects as you can). Find a selection of words that you use a lot in your written work. Write the definition of these words and find words that have the same meaning. Create example sentences that use these synonyms. Show evidence that you have used these synonyms in your own writing.		
4	Learning aims	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To encourage students to identify small steps that they can take in order to improve their vocabulary and to develop their reflective skills Students need to learn in context and across different subjects 		
5	Challenge ref.	1A1	Challenge time	approx. 2.5 hours
7	Skills	Improving your understanding when reading; Increasing vocabulary; Varying your language when writing		

8 **Suggested approach**

Students should be expected to locate and select the words themselves, but some examples might be used to model what they are looking for when they read their work.

Examples include:

- good
- interesting
- very

It is important for them to recognise that they may use different synonyms in different contexts, so a range of synonyms for each word can be explored.

In order to find synonyms, learners should be encouraged to use actual resources rather than just using the internet. There are a lot of online resources for building vocabulary, but the challenge is about recognising the words that they need to improve.

9 **Suggested resources**

The following learner resources are provided for this challenge:

- Challenge walkthrough 1A1

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Tutor notes for Module 1

Developing your voice



Module 1: Developing your voice, Section A, Challenge 1

Challenge title	Improving your vocabulary		
Challenge	Look through your written work (use as many different subjects as you can). Find a selection of words that you use a lot in your written work. Write the definition of these words and find words that have the same meaning. Create example sentences that use these synonyms. Show evidence that you have used these synonyms in your own writing.		
Learning aims	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• To encourage students to identify small steps that they can take in order to improve their vocabulary and to develop their reflective skills• Students need to learn in context and across different subjects		
Challenge ref.	1A1	Challenge time	approx. 2.5 hours
Skills	Improving your understanding when reading; Increasing vocabulary; Varying your language when writing		

Suggested approach

Students should be expected to locate and select the words themselves, but some examples might be used to model what they are looking for when they read their work.

Examples include:

- good
- interesting
- very

It is important for them to recognise that they may use different synonyms in different contexts, so a range of synonyms for each word can be explored.

In order to find synonyms, learners should be encouraged to use actual resources rather than just using the internet. There are a lot of online resources for building vocabulary, but the challenge is about recognising the words that they need to improve.

Suggested resources

The following learner resources are provided for this challenge:

- Challenge walkthrough 1A1

Tutor notes for Module 2

Developing your understanding



Module 2: Developing your understanding, Section B, Challenge 5

Challenge title	Older texts		
Challenge	<p>Choose a key scene from a Shakespeare play and develop a new way to perform it so that a younger audience understands:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • what is happening in the scene • what the key themes of the scene are • what the main characters are feeling or thinking <p>You may choose to change the language and the way it is performed. Perform the piece and evaluate it using a questionnaire.</p>		
Learning aims	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To encourage students to read closely and interpret information • To encourage students to identify key themes in important works of literature • To encourage students to consider characterisation • To encourage students to think about the context of texts and of audiences 		
Challenge ref.	2B5	Challenge time	approx. 5-10 hours
Skills	Considering audience; Explaining the effect of language; Explaining the writer's choices; Using language for effect		

i Suggested approach

All students need to study Shakespeare and will all be familiar with at least one play. They should be encouraged to work with a play that they are confident with, as the language is so challenging. They should be encouraged to select a pivotal moment in the play (eg the moment that Romeo first sees Juliet, Macbeth's wife convincing him to go through with murdering Duncan).

Students should then identify the key language and meanings that they want to communicate to their audiences, and create a set of directorial notes to help them plan the scene. The **Macbeth scene direction** resource can be used to support this part of the challenge and can easily be adapted for other Shakespeare plays.

If the students wish to change the language, be aware that websites such as Sparknotes No Fear Shakespeare (<http://nfs.sparknotes.com>) offer modern translations of the plays, so any modernisations produced by the students need to be checked to ensure that they are not plagiarised.

Students need to consider a number of dramatic techniques to emphasise key lines, including stage directions, body language and delivery of the lines.

The evaluation questionnaire should focus on the audience's ability to identify the key themes that the students were trying to convey.

📖 Suggested resources

The following learner resources are provided for this challenge:

- Challenge walkthrough 2B5
- Macbeth scene direction (p.63–67 of the learner workbook)

Tutor notes for Module 3

Developing your writing



Module 3: Developing your writing, Section A, Challenge 3

Challenge title	Develop your use of structure for effect		
Challenge	Find a story that you like. Choose the most exciting moment in that story and rewrite the 300-400 words that come just before this exciting moment. Use a range of techniques to create suspense, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • mystery • paragraphing • hints • mood 		
Learning aims	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To encourage students to identify the effect of structure in narrative • To encourage students to consider the entire plot of a story • To encourage students to consider the effect that their structural choices can have • To encourage students to explore figurative language to create mood 		
Challenge ref.	3A3	Challenge time	approx. 2.5 hours
Skills	Considering audience; Considering purpose; Using language for effect; Using structure for effect		

i Suggested approach

Students may have texts that they are working closely with in English lessons. This could be a useful starting point. The student should be able to identify key climaxes in the plot and select one of them.

Once the climax is selected, students need to identify what clues they can give to this event in the section that they are going to write. As with challenge 3A2, the mood is important in this task so students need to consider what emotions they wish their reader to have and how their structure is going to help with that.

Students should be encouraged to be as adventurous as possible with the structure. The priority is to identify the effect that structure can have, so the more experimental their writing, the more pronounced these effects can be. Encourage them in the use of ellipsis and paragraphing to change the structure dramatically. Another useful technique is to ask them to consider the look of the page. The more broken up it is, the more suspense there might be.

Sentence structure has an important impact on pace, so longer descriptive sentences are another useful technique for slowing pace and adding suspense.

📖 Suggested resources

The following learner resources are provided for this challenge:

- Challenge walkthrough 3A3

Tutor notes for Module 5

Knowing about fiction



Module 5: Knowing about fiction, Section B, Challenge 5

Challenge title	Developing your personal responses
Challenge	<p>Over a period of at least three weeks, write a set of at least five reviews. These reviews should be a personal response to something that you have read or seen and could be reviews of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • books • poems • songs • television programmes • films • plays • lectures • essays (non-fiction writing) <p>The reviews should follow a similar format and be aimed at an audience of your peers. They should be a personal response that explores:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the quality of the work • the ideas in the texts • what you felt could be improved • what other things you have seen that are similar • who you might recommend the texts to
Learning aims	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To encourage students to read regularly and take an interest in the world • To encourage students to read closely for meaning and understanding of more difficult texts • To encourage students to consider their audience when writing

Challenge ref.	5B5	Challenge time	approx. 5-10 hours
Skills	Articulating a personal response; Considering context; Considering purpose; Evaluating effects; Making comparisons; Making links		

Suggested approach

Students should be encouraged to identify a range of texts or entertainments to review, as this will encourage them to recognise the differences in reviewing different media.

The bullet points are a basic guideline and students should research review writing to identify conventions for this form of writing. Rating systems and summaries of the works can be a part of the reviews, but the exercise is designed to encourage a personal response and to develop students' abilities to make links between texts.

As with other challenges, the final format of the reviews is flexible and students can develop a web site or similar if they wish. If students decide on a more adventurous format, tutors should ensure that students are primarily focussed on the content of the reviews and not on its presentation.

Suggested resources

The following learner resources are provided for this challenge:

- Challenge walkthrough 5B5

Sample