

YEAR 11 BULLETIN

CARING - DETERMINED - REFLECTIVE



How to Prepare for GCSE Speaking Exams

The speaking exams this year are taking place from the **6th of May** and will run over a course of approximately two weeks.

What is needed in a speaking exam?

The speaking exam is split into three sections:

1) Read aloud (12 marks): Read aloud a short text and undertake a short, unprepared interaction relating to the text. In the read aloud task itself students will be assessed on their pronunciation and in the short interaction that follows students will be assessed on their communication.

2) Role-play (10 marks): In the role play, students will be required to give and receive information, answer and ask questions. Role plays are always transactional in nature and will be in settings such as a café, a shop, a hotel, a train station, a tourist information office or a cinema.

3) Picture Card and Conversation (28 marks): Students will be required to:

a) **describe one picture** from a choice of two (8 marks)

b) answer **two** unprepared questions related to the selected picture (4 marks)

c) participate in **a conversation extending from the broader thematic context** (16 marks).

Students know two weeks in advance of the exam what their thematic context for the picture and start of the conversation will be.

Preparing responses to conversation questions

In class, students will have received a conversation booklet and completed all their answers. The conversation answers should contain a minimum of three clauses, there should be plenty of opinions and answers should cover different time frames (past/ present/ future).

Practicing for the exam

You can ensure that your child has prepared answers to these questions, and you can listen to them practice at home. Even if you don't speak French or Spanish, the questions are also translated into English. AI tools or Google also have 'read-aloud' features so they could practise with these as well. You cannot practice too much! Confidence is absolutely key. It is worth noting that revision for the speaking exam is also fantastic preparation for the writing paper.

If you have any doubts, please contact **Mrs Bivega** (Head of Languages) or your child's languages teacher.

What can you do?

Use the speaking booklets – Encourage your child to practice answering their speaking exam questions regularly. Even if you don't speak French or Spanish, you can still help! The booklets contain English translations of the questions. Read the questions to your child and listen to their answers.

Encourage Full Answers – Ensure your child includes at least three clauses in each response, expresses opinions, and uses past, present, and future tenses.

Build Confidence Through Repetition – The more they practice, the more comfortable they will feel. Regular speaking practice will help them perform well in both the speaking and writing exams.

Mocks

Mock examinations will begin on **Monday 26th January**. All students have now received their personalised mock exam timetable. The full mock timetable is available here: [Year 11 Mock Examinations - Jan 2026.pdf](#)

Please note that **French and Spanish speaking mock exams** will take place during the week beginning **Monday 19th January**.

These mock exams are an important opportunity for students to experience formal exam conditions, identify strengths and areas for improvement, and refine their revision strategies ahead of the summer examinations.

How to plan an effective revision timetable?

Earlier this year, students were taught how to create **effective and realistic revision timetables**. These plans do not need to be perfect or visually impressive, what matters most is that they are **practical, achievable, and actually used**.

A good revision timetable helps students:

- manage their time effectively
- reduce anxiety by breaking revision into manageable chunks
- ensure all subjects receive attention

Flexibility is key. Plans may need to change, and that is completely normal. The aim is **consistent progress**, not perfection. Parents and carers can support by encouraging students to stick to their plan, adapt it when needed, and include regular breaks to stay refreshed.

When reviewing a revision timetable, the following points are particularly important:



1. Be specific.

Instead of allocating time to “English,” students should identify a clear focus, such as revising *A Christmas Carol* or *Romeo and Juliet*. Smaller, targeted tasks lead to more effective revision.

2. Commit to a task, not just ‘revise’.

For example: *Watch a video on ions and complete a Cornell notes page* or *complete the final 15 questions of a maths practice paper*. Clear actions help maintain focus and motivation.

3. Plan regular breaks.

Breaks are essential for learning. Our brains need time to rest and reset—without breaks, concentration and retention quickly decline.

4. Use mock results constructively.

Mock exams provide valuable feedback. Once received, students should use their results to adjust their revision timetable, prioritising weaker areas.

5. Build in revisiting.

Revisiting topics regularly is essential for long-term retention. A topic should appear more than once on the timetable to ensure it is securely remembered.

Once the timetable is agreed, the hard work begins. The timetable becomes a helpful tool for parents and carers too, it allows you to see what your child has committed to, when they are revising, and when they should be resting. Encouraging breaks, stepping away from revision, and checking in with a chat or cup of tea can be just as valuable as the revision itself.

How to motivate and avoid procrastination?

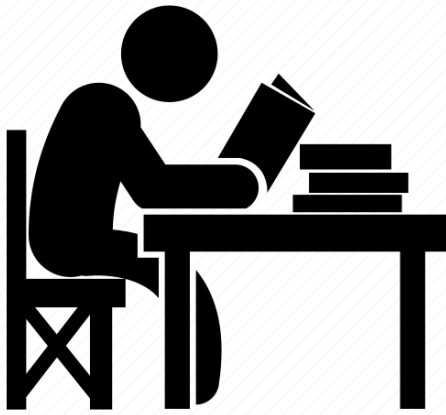
During Period 1 sessions, students learned about setting “**missions**”, short-term, achievable goals such as completing a practice paper or revising a specific topic. These missions help break exam preparation into manageable steps.

Parents and carers play a key role in supporting motivation by recognising and celebrating progress. Rewards do not need to be material; simple praise, encouragement, or acknowledgement of effort can be very powerful. Larger milestones might be marked with privileges such as choosing a family activity, enjoying a takeaway, or having extra downtime.

The focus should always be on **effort and consistency**, not just results. Celebrating progress helps build confidence, reinforces positive habits, and keeps students focused on the journey rather than the final outcome.

How can you tell if your child is revising effectively?

It can be difficult to judge whether revision is productive. The following indicators can help:



1. Minimal distractions.

Phones are one of the biggest barriers to effective revision. Even when left in the same room, they can significantly reduce focus. Removing phones during revision sessions is one of the simplest and most effective ways to improve productivity.

2. A suitable environment.

Students should work in a quiet, well-lit space, ideally away from televisions and busy family areas. School also provides a range of suitable spaces for independent study.

3. Timed, realistic sessions.

Effective revision involves short, focused sessions rather than unrealistic plans to revise all day. For example, *20 minutes revising A Christmas Carol quotes using flashcards* is far more manageable. Parents can help by encouraging students to stick to timed sessions.

4. Active revision.

Effective revision requires effort and thinking. Activities such as self-quizzing, flashcards, timed practice questions, and exam responses are far more effective than passive strategies like highlighting or copying notes.

What can you do?

1. Manage Stress

- Encourage open discussions about stress and emotions.
- Promote mindfulness, exercise, and adequate sleep.
- Ensure regular breaks and a balance between study and relaxation.

2. Support Revision Timetables

- Help create focused, manageable revision tasks (e.g., “Revise *A Christmas Carol*”).
- Encourage task-oriented goals and regular breaks.
- Adjust timetables based on mock exam results and weaker areas.

3. Motivate and Prevent Procrastination

- Help set achievable “missions” and celebrate progress.
- Reward effort with praise or extra privileges, focusing on consistency.

4. Ensure Effective Revision Habits

- Remove distractions like phones and provide a quiet study space.
- Use timed, active revision methods (e.g., practice questions, flashcards).

By staying involved, parents can help their child manage stress, stay focused, and revise effectively.

Period 6 Registers

We are continuing with our trial in registering attendance to Science period 6 sessions.

How to book a session

To book a place at a Period 6 session, please:

1. Log into the Bromcom Parent Portal or Student App.
2. Navigate to the Clubs and Trips section.
3. Select the tutoring session you wish to book (currently only science is offered as part of our trial).

A video tutorial showing how to complete the booking process can be found here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PafISpy357g>

Period 6 Timetable

The current period 6 timetable is below. We've had a great turnout to our after-school intervention and encourage as many of you to come along. The sessions run from 3.30-4.30 pm.

| Day | SUBJECT | Location |
|-----------|--|--|
| Monday | Maths | R13 |
| Tuesday | Science Chemistry: Separating Techniques – part 2 | In person: R7 |
| | | Virtual: 17:00-18:00 |
| | Business | P2 |
| | Sociology | T7 |
| Wednesday | English | R11 |
| | Computer Science | B4 |
| | French & Spanish | Languages corridor |
| | History: Weimar Germany Hitler's rise to power | B17 |
| Thursday | Psychology | TSS |
| | Geography | B16 |
| | Drama / Dance / Music | |
| | Virtual Maths Sessions | 17:00–18:00: open-invite (Foundation & Crossover topics) 18:30–19:30pm: invite-only (Higher Tier) |
| Friday | Maths (Higher) | R16 |

What to revise this week?

Each week the Bulletin will suggest some topics for revision to try and take the stress out of deciding what to revise.

Biology: 9. Ecosystems and material cycles: Ecosystems: - [BBC bitesize: Ecosystems](#)

Chemistry: 5. Groups in the periodic table: Halogens - [BBC bitesize: Group 7 - Halogens](#)

Physics: 9. Electricity - Mains electricity - [BBC bitesize: Mains electricity](#)

Geography: Ecosystems - Deciduous woodland features, adaptations, goods and services, deforestation and management-
Rev guide: p. 50-54

History: Little Crows War - [resource](#)

Business Studies: Theme 2.1 Changes in aims & objectives - CGP revision guide and Knowledge organiser questions as per homework

Psychology: Key Study: Damasio et al. (1994) – [The Brain and Neuropsychology CB P25-29](#)

Sociology: Definitions of crime and deviance- Purple book p.72 and your curriculum book