

ENGLISH

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The thing I liked best about English was... having the chance to dig deep into my own views on a variety of topics. It was interesting to see the novels we were studying reflected in the real world and to explore the human condition. All of my other subjects were maths and sciences so it was great to use my brain in a completely different way and take a break from the seemingly endless calculations!

The best advice I can give students about English is... to perfect your own writing style rather than trying to emulate that of somebody else. Your writing will have the most insight and clarity when it is the best possible version of your natural expression. Try to avoid comparing your writing and your preparation with others. While VCE is a ranking-based system, you should only ever be 'competing' with yourself. Someone might be writing four times as many practice essays as you, because they feel they need to in order to succeed! You might not need to do this.

The best advice I got from my English teacher was... to back myself! My teacher helped me to realise that I had been writing consistently well throughout the year and that simply writing in a VCAA booklet wasn't going to change that.

One month before the final English exam, I... did a full three-hour practice exam! Coincidentally my school had scheduled our English practice exam exactly a month before the final exam which was a great way to get a feel for the final exam and for the preparation that I needed to fit in over the next month.

One week before the final English exam, I... did my second three-hour practice exam at the start of the week, then spent the week writing essays on topics that I didn't yet feel comfortable with. I didn't try anything new this week, rather, I revised my quotes and ideas from throughout the year, tweaked and refined any little lapses in expression and tried to make my essays as watertight against examiner criticism as I possibly could, 'daring them to take a mark off,' as my teacher would say.

On English exam day, I prepared myself by... eating a decent breakfast! I glanced at my notes and a few of my practice essays to ensure that my favourite quotes and phrases were stuck in my memory, ensured that I had my dictionary, ID, a full supply of pens to choose from and a full water bottle. I tried to stay calm. I made a lot of trips to the bathroom and tried to breathe deeply, joked with my friends, put a bandaid on my bleeding little finger (too many practice essays), saw my teacher, and did some more deep breathing!

After the English exam, I... had a quick chat with my teacher and then went out for lunch with my mum! Afterwards I went home and filed all of my English notes and practice essays away in my huge folder, which gave me a great sense of closure!

The best exam advice I received was... to get enough sleep! I always made sure I got a good seven to eight hours on the night before a SAC or exam.

I did not work a part-time job during year 12 because... I simply could not have fit one in! I had never worked a part-time job during school because I was heavily involved in my school's extracurricular activities. I don't think I was disadvantaged at all in terms of work experience and 'employability' by not working a part-time job. My time management skills and efficient study methods had developed throughout high school around extensive extracurricular activities, so the increased workload and pressure of Year 12 was not difficult for me to adapt to.

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