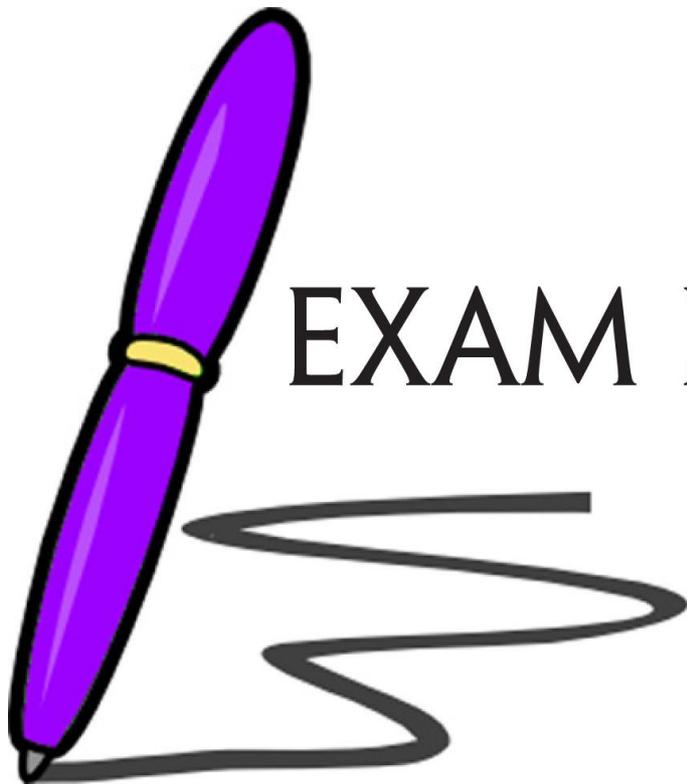




**THE
ST LEONARDS
ACADEMY**



EXAM LITERACY **GUIDE**

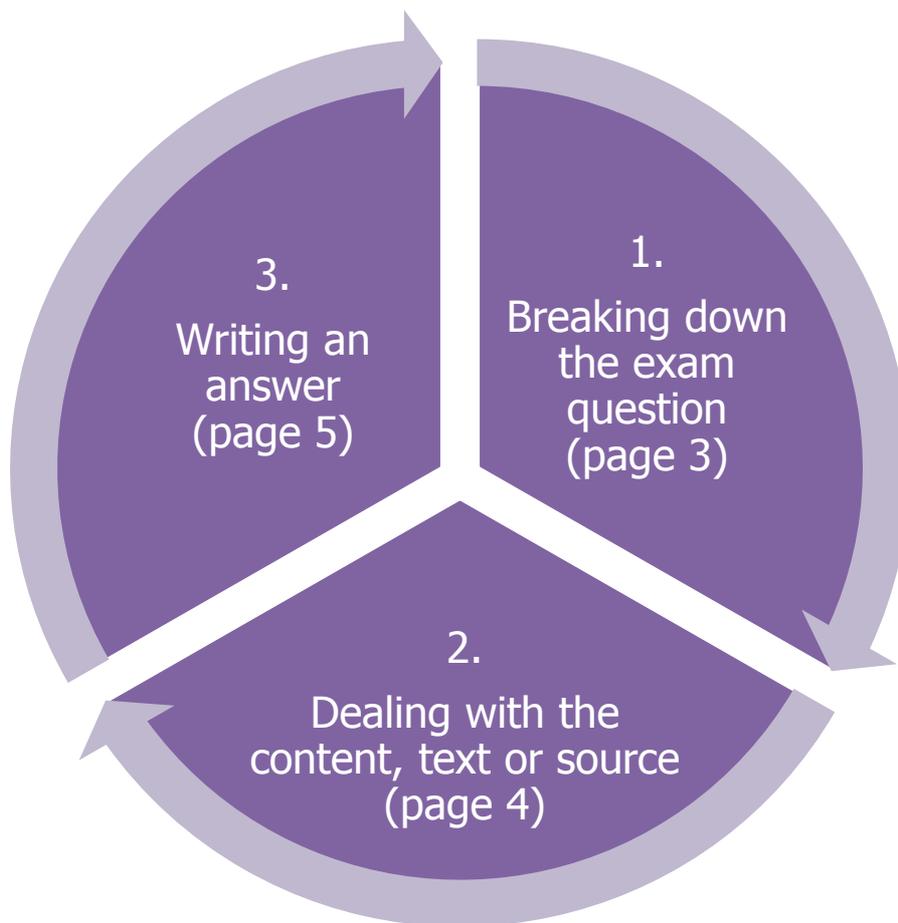
PRIDE THROUGH SUCCESS

Exam Literacy – Why focus on it?

Focusing on exam literacy in your GCSE preparation lessons:

- gives students a process and set of steps to follow in an exam
- builds resilience and confidence in exams
- improves the quality and grade of students' written answers

Strategies for teaching exam literacy can be broken down into the following areas.



1. Breaking Down the Exam Question

It is extremely important that every department across the Academy is **consistent** in the way they teach students to approach exam papers and break down the questions and tasks within.

Each and **every exam question**, no matter the subject or topic, must be broken down using the following guidelines.

Command words are the words in the exam question that 'tell' students what to do in their answer (e.g. 'describe', 'explain' etc.).

- In practice papers and walking talking mock papers, command words must always be **circled**.
- In other exam prep resources, such as power points, command words must appear in **red**.

Compare the use of **diamond** with the use of **graphite**. **explaining** each use in terms of the **bonding** and **structure**. In your answer you should use information from the diagrams above.

(6)

Topic words are the words in the exam question that refer to **the topic** students should base their answer on (e.g. biological 'adaptations', 'themes' in a novel etc.)

- In practice papers and walking talking mock papers, topic words must always be **underlined**.
- In other exam prep resources, such as power points, topic words must appear in **blue**.

Refer to the number of **marks** given for the question.

- In practice papers, marks must always be **boxed**.

3. Writing an Answer

Writing an answer is the final and last step in responding to an exam question. Students should be aware of and able to use a range of strategies to help them fully link their response to the question, express their ideas clearly and demonstrate subject-specific content knowledge.

1. Linking the written response to the question

In order to focus their answer clearly on the topic expressed in the exam question, students should try to **use the words from the question** to formulate **the first sentence** of their response.

Example question: **Describe** the **reasons why** a child may **refuse food**.

First sentence of answer:

*Firstly, **one reason that a child may refuse food is because** they may be teething and experiencing pain or discomfort in their mouth.*

2. Expressing ideas clearly

Students should be taught and encouraged to use **connectives** in longer written responses to exam questions in order to show a deeper and more sophisticated understanding of the information, content knowledge or ideas they are expressing.

Order/Sequencing of information/ideas:

<i>Firstly</i>	<i>Secondly</i>	<i>Thirdly</i>
<i>In addition</i>	<i>Next</i>	<i>Additionally</i>
<i>Subsequently</i>	<i>Finally</i>	<i>Lastly</i>
<i>To begin</i>	<i>In conclusion</i>	

Links/Relationships between information/ideas:

<i>As a result</i>	<i>Furthermore</i>	<i>Nevertheless</i>
<i>Moreover</i>	<i>Consequently</i>	<i>So</i>
<i>For example</i>	<i>Overall</i>	<i>Therefore</i>

Comparisons between information:

<i>Similarly</i>	<i>Likewise</i>	<i>However</i>
<i>In contrast</i>	<i>Whereas</i>	<i>Alternatively</i>
<i>In the same way</i>	<i>On the other hand</i>	

3. Demonstrating subject-specific content knowledge

Finally, students should learn and memorise **subject-specific vocabulary** to use in their written answers on a range of possible topics, as it encourages pupils to give more in-depth and specific responses – leading to higher marks.

