

Planning Timed Answers

GCSE English · Follows the national curriculum

Name _____ Class _____ Date _____

1. Worked example

A paper lasts 105 minutes with 80 marks. Allow 15 minutes for reading. How long per mark?

Step 1 · Working time

$$105 - 15 = 90 \text{ minutes}$$

Step 2 · Divide by marks

$$90 \div 80 = 1.125 \text{ minutes per mark}$$

Step 3 · Round sensibly

About 1 minute per mark, plus a little

Step 4 · Budget

4-mark question $\approx$ 5 min; 8-mark $\approx$ 9 min; 20-mark $\approx$ 22 min; 40-mark $\approx$ 45 min

Answer: Roughly 1 minute per mark: the writing task gets about 45 minutes.

Check: Budgets add up to about 90 minutes.

2. Now try one with the steps

Five-minute plan for a writing task: 'Write an article arguing that every school should have a four-day week.'

Step 1 · FAPR

Step 2 · Stance and headline

Step 3 · Paragraph headings

Step 4 · Last line

Answer:

3. Practice

Show your working. The marks tell you how much is expected.

1. A paper has 90 working minutes and 80 marks. Roughly how many minutes per mark? Write the number to 1 decimal place. [1]

2. At 1.25 minutes per mark, how many minutes should an 8-mark question take? Write the number. [1]

3. At 1 minute per mark, how many minutes should a 40-mark writing task take? Write the number. [1]

4. About how long should a plan for a writing task take, in minutes? Write the number. [1]

5. Why should you know your ending before you start writing? [1]

6. A 4-mark question took you 12 minutes. At 1 minute per mark, how many minutes over budget were you? Write the number. [1]

7. List the four things your plan for a viewpoint writing task should include. [2]

8. Why might two half-finished answers score more than one perfect answer and one blank? [2]

9. What should a literature essay plan contain? [2]

10. A paper is 120 minutes long. You allow 10 minutes for reading and 5 for checking. How many working minutes remain? Write the number. [1]

11. Using 105 working minutes and 70 marks, how many minutes per mark? Write the number to 1 decimal place. [1]

12. Write a five-line plan for the task: 'Write a speech for your year group arguing that homework should be banned.' [3]

13. What should you do if you have ten minutes left and your story is only half written? [2]

14. Why should proofreading focus on your own most common errors? [1]

4. Before you hand it in

Spending 20 minutes on a low-mark retrieval question.

Budget by marks and move on when the time is up.

Writing a full draft 'plan'.

Plan in headings and key words that fit in a small box.

No plan at all.

Five minutes of planning saves more time than it costs.

Skipping the final check.

Protect the last five minutes of every writing task.