

Revision for AQA GCSE English Language

Acknowledgements

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Introduction

The GCSE English Language examination is unusual in that it does not require any revision of content. Consequently, these 'revision' materials are designed to boost students' abilities in tackling various aspects of the reading and writing sections of both papers.

It is worth bearing in mind the following when using these materials:

- Teachers can take students through the activities sequentially, or in any order they wish. They can also choose to omit certain activities and add in different ones of their own.
- Teachers can use the materials in conjunction with the sample texts and examination papers included, or with alternative texts of their own choice.
- The materials are designed to remind students about key aspects of their exams, but also to help them to engage with those aspects in ways that will improve their general understanding and confidence.
- The materials can be used in classrooms, or photocopied for students to use at home as part of their general revision.
- The materials can be shared across a school or college, with teachers and students, but cannot be disseminated more widely.
- The materials have been designed using sample materials freely available on the AQA website as models. They are not in any way endorsed by AQA and teachers should use them alongside any guidance available from the official awarding body.

Reading (50%) Read and understand a range of texts to:	
AO1	Identify and interpret explicit and implicit information and ideas Select and synthesise evidence from different texts
AO2	Explain, comment on and analyse how writers use language and structure to achieve effects and influence readers, using relevant subject terminology to support their views
AO3	Compare writers' ideas and perspectives, as well as how these are conveyed, across two or more texts
AO4	Evaluate texts critically and support this with appropriate textual references
Writing (50%)	
AO5	Communicate clearly, effectively and imaginatively, selecting and adapting tone, style and register for different forms, purposes and audiences Organise information and ideas, using structural and grammatical features to support coherence and cohesion of texts
AO6	Candidates must use a range of vocabulary and sentence structures for clarity, purpose and effect, with accurate spelling and punctuation. (This requirement must constitute 20% of the marks for each specification as a whole.)

SAMPLE PAPERS FOR AQA ENGLISH LANGUAGE GCSE (9-1)

- Paper 1: Explorations in creative reading and writing
- Paper 2: Writers' viewpoints and perspectives

Paper 1: Explorations in Creative Reading and Writing

Time: 1 hour 45 minutes

[NB. These materials have been devised following the model offered by the awarding body in their sample materials. They have not been approved by the awarding body and teachers should use them in conjunction with their own understanding of the AB's assessment criteria.]

Source A

From *The Narrow Road to the Deep North*, by Richard Flanagan

This passage is from a novel set in Tasmania, Australia. In this part of the story, set in the late 1940s, Dorrigo Evans and his family, trapped in a car, escape from a ferocious forest fire.

A fireball, the size of a trolley bus and as blue as gas flame, appeared as if by magic on the road and rolled towards them. As the Ford Mercury swerved around it and straightened back up, Dorrigo found he had no choice but to ignore the burning debris that appeared out of the smoke and hurtled at them – sticks, branches, palings – sometimes hitting and bouncing off the car. He grunted as he worked the column shift up and down, spinning the big steering wheel hard left and right, white-walled tyres squealing on bubbling black bitumen, the noise only occasionally audible in the cacophony of flame roar and wind shriek, the weird machine gun-like cracking of branches above exploding. 5

They came over a rise to see a huge burning tree falling across the road a hundred yards or so in front of them. Flames flared up high along the tree trunk as it bounced on landing, its burning crown settling in a neat front yard to create an instant bonfire that merged into a burning house. Wedging his knee into the door, Dorrigo pushed with all his strength on the brake pedal. The Ford Mercury went into a four-wheel slide, spinning sideways and skidding straight towards the tree, slewing to a halt only yards from the flaring tree trunk. 10 15

No one spoke.

Hands wet with sweat on the wheel, panting heavily, Dorrigo Evans weighed their options. They were all bad. The road out in either direction was now completely cut off – by the burning tree in front of them and the fire front behind them. He wiped his hands in turn on his shirt and trousers. They were trapped. He turned to his children in the back seat. He felt sick. They were holding each other, eyes white and large in their sooty faces. 20

Hold on, he said.

He slammed the car into reverse, backed up towards the fire front a short distance, then took off. He had enough speed up to smash down the picket fence in the garden where the burning tree crown had landed. They were heading straight into the bonfire. Yelling to the others to get down, he double-declutched the engine into first, let the clutch out and flattened the accelerator. 25

The V8¹ rose in a roar, tappets clattering, and they crashed into the burning bush at the point closest to the house, where the flames were largest but, Dorrigo had gambled, the branches would be smallest. For a moment all was fire and noise. The engine screamed with wild intent, a heat of such ferocious intensity seemed to penetrate the glass and steel that to breathe hurt, everything was a dull red; there was the crack of flame, of branches snapping, metal scratching and groaning as panels distorted and bent, of wheels losing and gaining traction. The driver's side rear window smashed. Sparks, embers and a few burning sticks flew into the car, Ella and the children began screaming as the children cowed on the far side of the rear bench seat. For a terrifying second or two the car slowed almost to a halt when something caught underneath its chassis. And then, as quickly, the bonfire was somehow behind them, and they were accelerating towards another decrepit paling fence that Dorrigo also smashed through in a momentary blizzard of breaking timber. The windscreen transformed into a white cloud of fragments, he yelled at Ella to kick it out, and when it fell away they found themselves back on the road, past the fallen tree, heading towards Hobart. He was steering with one hand, while leaning over grabbing burning sticks from the back seat with his other – his surgeon's hands he had always tried so hard to protect – and tossing them out the smashed window.

As the 1948 Ford Mercury, green paint blackened and blistering, screeched and slithered its way back down that burning mountain, Ella looked across at Dorrigo, the fingers of his left hand already swelling into blisters the size of small balloons, so badly burnt he would later need skin grafts. Such a mystery of a man, she thought, such a mystery.

[Source: ©Richard Flanagan, *The Narrow Road to the Deep North*, Vintage]

¹V8 – reference to shape and size of the car's engine

Section A: Reading

Answer all questions in this section.

You are advised to spend about 45 minutes on this section.

[N.B. Each question specifies the Assessment Objective it is being marked against. This does NOT happen in the awarding body sample materials.]

1.

- Read again the first part of the Source from lines 1 to 9.
- List four things from this part of the text about Dorrigo's car.

[4 marks, AO1]

2.

- Look in detail at this extract from lines 10 to 24 of the Source:

A fireball, the size of a trolley bus and as blue as gas flame, appeared as if by magic on the road and rolled towards them. As the Ford Mercury swerved around it and straightened back up, Dorrigo found he had no choice but to ignore the burning debris that appeared out of the smoke and hurtled at them – sticks, branches, palings – sometimes hitting and bouncing off the car. He grunted as he worked the column shift up and down, spinning the big steering wheel hard left and right, white-walled tyres squealing on bubbling black bitumen, the noise only occasionally audible in the cacophony of flame roar and wind shriek, the weird machine gun-like cracking of branches above exploding. 5

They came over a rise to see a huge burning tree falling across the road a hundred yards or so in front of them. Flames flared up high along the tree trunk as it bounced on landing, its burning crown settling in a neat front yard to create an instant bonfire that merged into a burning house. Wedging his knee into the door, Dorrigo pushed with all his strength on the brake pedal. The Ford Mercury went into a four-wheel slide, spinning sideways and skidding straight towards the tree, slewing to a halt only yards from the flaring tree trunk. 10 15

No one spoke.

Hands wet with sweat on the wheel, panting heavily, Dorrigo Evans weighed their options. They were all bad. The road out in either direction was now completely cut off – by the burning tree in front of them and the fire front behind them. He wiped his hands in turn on his shirt and trousers. They were trapped. He turned to his children in the back seat. He felt sick. They were holding each other, eyes white and large in their sooty faces. 20

Hold on, he said.

- How does the writer use language here to describe the danger faced by Dorrigo and his family?

You could include the writer's choice of:

- words and phrases
- language features and techniques
- sentence forms

[8 marks, AO2]

3.

You now need to think about the **whole** of the **Source**.

The text is from the middle section of a novel.

- How has the writer structured the text to interest you as a reader?

You could write about:

- what the writer focuses your attention on at the beginning
- how and why this focus develops and changes as the Source continues
- any other structural features that interest you.

[8 marks, AO2]

4.

Focus this part of your answer on the second part of the Source from **line 25 to the end**.

A student, having read this section of the text, said: 'The writer brings the story to life for the reader. It is as if you are inside the car with the family.'

- To what extent do you agree?

In your response you could:

- write about your own impressions of the action
- evaluate how the writer has created these impressions
- support your opinions with references to the text.

[20 marks, AO4]

Section B: Writing

You are advised to spend about 45 minutes on this section.

Write in full sentences.

You are reminded of the need to plan your answer.

You should leave enough time to check your work at the end.

5.

You are going to enter a creative writing competition.

Your entry will be judged by a panel of people your own age.

EITHER:

- Write a description suggested by this picture:

OR:



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- Write the opening of a story about an exciting rescue.

(24 marks for content and organisation
16 marks for technical accuracy)

[40 marks]

Paper 2: Writers' Viewpoints and Perspectives

Time: 1 hour 45 minutes

[NB. These materials have been devised following the model offered by the awarding body in their sample materials. They have not been approved by the awarding body and teachers should use them in conjunction with their own understanding of the AB's assessment criteria.]

Source A

Boating and Sculling¹, by Miss A.D. McKenzie (1892)

Perhaps of all the outdoor amusements, rowing is one of the healthiest for ladies, besides being one of the most enjoyable. Just at first, of course, learning to row is rather tiring, but very soon one will find how far one can go without feeling any fatigue. For a girl who is learning, the great thing is to have someone who can row well to tell her all about it; and then, if she will only row bow² and keep her eyes on stroke's³ back, without looking round every minute to see what her oar is doing – she will find she will soon get on. The great secret, of course, in rowing is not to dip the oar too deeply in the water, but merely to cover the blade, and then pull it well towards one. In going forward one ought to feather one's oar an inch above the water, and get well forward before raking another stroke. 5

Sculling is really quite as easy, if not easier, than rowing; and though at the start a beginner finds the sculls are apt to get rather unmanageable, still, after a little practice, she will much prefer it. Rowing is more one-sided than sculling, and the latter is naturally the better exercise, as both arms have a freer motion than in rowing. But, above all things, one should remember that the stretcher⁴ is made for use, not ornament, and that one cannot use it too much. So many ladies make the great mistake of merely rowing with their arms, when, if they only knew it, they could save themselves half the labour by bending forward, and bearing on the stretcher, in pulling each stroke. 15

It is essential for every English girl to learn to row, and no one can say anything against a lady rowing – though, of course, there are 'some folks' who would run down anything that a lady does in the way of athletic exercises, more for the sake of argument than anything else. Twenty years ago it was very different: it was not considered *comme il faut*⁵ for a lady to row and she never dreamt of doing so. Now, however, that everything is changed, it is clearly to be seen that it is the very best thing for her, and affords an amusement that having once gone in for, she would be very sorry to give up. 20

Living nearly all the summer by the river gives one many opportunities of observing the river world, and it is often remarked that ladies know as much about managing a boat as men. On the Thames, between Cookham and Wargrave, ladies have for some time indulged in a great deal of rowing. At the former place a few years ago, a ladies' eight⁶ was started, and the crew were all well trained, and kept good time, etc. At the Wargrave Town Regatta ladies have this last year or two come very much to the fore. Double-sculling and punting⁷ races have been competed for by them with much success. A gondola this year at Henley Regatta, pioneered by a lady, went along well and kept clear of the other boats. A ladies' eight was also to be seen paddling up and down, and the rowers here again seemed proficient in the art. Last year there appeared at Marlow Regatta an eight which had come about seven miles down the river, and had been 30

successfully steered through crowded locks; and the rowers looked none the worse for the long pull. 40

Ladies who are not adept on the water should not attempt to go out alone in boats and punts. This year at 'Henley' three most beautifully 'gowned' ladies appeared in a punt, and, as everyone knows, a punt is, for an amateur, a by no means easy thing to manage. The three fair occupants found themselves, after they had tried for some time unsuccessfully to move along, struggling in the water, with the punt gaily floating away! They had had quite enough of the river by the time they were helped and pulled onto *terra-firma*; and it was thought then by a good many who saw their deplorable condition that this would be a lesson to them for the future. But, alas! how perverse human nature is. The following day the same thoughtless three were again in their punt, running into the other boats with the sweetest unconcern, and evidently enjoying themselves very much. 45 50

1 Sculling: pulling a boat with two oars, one in each hand (in rowing, one oar is held in both hands).

2 Bow: rower at front of boat.

3 Stroke: rower at back of boat (the rowers sit facing backwards, which is why the person at the front can see the person at the back).

4 Stretcher: device inside a boat that feet are attached to; it slides back and forth with the action of rowing.

5 *Comme il faut*: French phrase, correct in behaviour.

6 Eight: the number of rowers in a boat.

7 Punting: propelling a flat-bottomed boat using a long stick, or punt.

From *Eat, Sweat, Play*, by Anna Kessel (2016)

This extract comes at the end Anna Kessel's book exploring the role that sport plays in women's lives.

So how do we create change in our own lives? I'm not talking diets, boot camps, or even joining a sports club. I'm talking about sustainable, incremental change. Change that is do-able, and change that makes us feel good – not overwhelmed with extra pressures to adopt a new lifestyle.

Sometimes it's just about making the tiniest adjustments in your brain, being open to new things. Like when my husband asked if I wanted a game of pool and, instead of running in the opposite direction as I usually would, terrified of being awful, I said yes. And so we played – and we laughed. We were both terrible, and my hands shook and wobbled inelegantly as the cue rested on my fingers, and I chipped the white up in the air, and missed the easiest of shots. 'We must be the worst sports journalist pool players ever,' I joked. 5 10

And then, something happened. Because I was having fun, I began to relax. The twenty years since I last played pool as a teenager floated away, and in my hands the cue took on a renewed purpose – and I potted a ball. I felt amazing! I punched the air! 'Are you trying to hustle me?' my husband asked, grinning. It was game on. Off we went, then, potting balls, missing balls, laughing and joking and enjoying ourselves together. Negotiating the edges of the green baize with my six-month pregnancy bump, I immediately thought of ten-times world champion snooker player Reanne Evans, an inspirational female figure battling for equality in her sport – who once won a world title while seven and a half months pregnant. How triumphant must she have felt that day? 'I did it for both of us,' she told me in 2015, 'me and my daughter. It was two against one ...' In the end my husband's skills won over, and he potted the black while I still had three balls on the table. But it didn't matter. We'd been competitive together. And it made us smile. 15 20

Writing this book helped the changes sink into my own brain. When my daughter asked me to run down the street with her, I stopped automatically saying, 'I can't because Mummy's got a baby in her tummy.' Instead I started saying, 'OK ... race you!' Out of breath, hips sore, shopping bags bumping by my side, I lollopped along with her. We both laughed our heads off, and the baby was fine. Or we'd be in the park, Ella pedaling furiously on her bike with pink stabilizers, me lightly jogging alongside her in my winter boots, or chasing after her, racing in the wintry rain with my husband, the three of us grinning with delight. And each and every time I couldn't help but marvel how physical activity brings such an unadulterated joy, unmatched by anything else. 25 30

Over the Christmas holidays I grew more and more aware of each time our family interacted with sport, as for example, my husband sat watching Tottenham on the TV, while I, an Arsenal fan, quietly seethed in the background, and Ella delighted in this game of divided loyalties between her mum and dad. She would cosy up next to my husband and cheer her head off – occasionally for Arsenal, just to see the look on his face – and ask lots of questions. She wanted to understand what was happening, and she was most fascinated that adults had to follow rules, enforced by a referee handing out punishments to those who transgressed. 'I want to be a referee, Daddy,' she told my husband, 'or a goalkeeper'. 35 40

Conscious of how much men's sport is on TV, and of the lack of female role models for my daughter to follow, I took her down to our local athletics track where elite coach Christine Bowmaker, a rare example in her sport of a female coach, had invited us to watch her training sessions. Determined to make sure that my daughter has a better relationship with sport and her own body than I ever did, I was thrilled – and awestruck – as together we watched women and girls thundering around the bends of the indoor track, leaping onto boxes and into sandpits, and powering through circuits in the weights room.

[Source: © Anna Kessel, *Eat, Sweat, Play: How Sport Can Change Our Lives*, Pan Macmillan]

Section A: Reading

Answer all questions in this section.

You are advised to spend about 45 minutes on this section.

[N.B. Each question specifies the Assessment Objective it is being marked against. This does NOT happen in the awarding body sample materials.]

1.

- Read again the first part of **Source B** from **lines 1 to 11**.
- Choose **four** statements below which are **TRUE**.
- Shade the boxes of the ones that you think are true. Choose a maximum of four statements.

[4 marks, AO1]

A	It was unusual that the author agreed to play pool with her husband.	
B	The author is good at lots of sports.	
C	The author is determined to become a good pool player.	
D	The author is asking how to bring about change that makes people feel good.	
E	The author was not very good at pool when she started playing.	
F	The author's husband is a professional pool player.	
G	The author is married to a sports journalist.	
H	The author usually accepts a new challenge.	

2.

You need to refer to **Source A** and **Source B** for this question.

- Use details from **both** Sources. Write a summary of the similarities and differences between Miss A. D. McKenzie and Anna Kessel in their approaches to sport.

[8 marks, AO1]

3.

You need only refer to **Source A**, the article about boating and sculling.

- How does Miss A. D. McKenzie use language to try to convince the reader that rowing and sculling are suitable sports for women?

[12 marks, AO2]

4.

For this question, you need to refer to the whole of **Source A** and **Source B**.

- Compare how the two writers convey their different attitudes to women and sport.

In your answer, you could:

- compare their different attitudes
- compare the methods they use to convey their attitudes
- support your ideas with references to both texts.

[16 marks, AO3]

Section B: Writing

You are advised to spend about 45 minutes on this section.

Write in full sentences.

You are reminded of the need to plan your answer.

You should leave enough time to check your work at the end.

'It's a waste of time making students play sport in school. Those who like sport will play it in their own time anyway, and everyone else is forced to do something they don't like.'

- Write an article for a broadsheet newspaper in which you explain your point of view on this statement.

(24 marks for content and organisation
16 marks for technical accuracy)

[40 marks]

ACTIVITIES TO BOOST READING

for AQA GCSE English Language, Papers 1 and 2

- Recognising what each paper requires
- Working out what to write about language
- Writing about sentences
- Writing about a single sentence
- Writing about structure
- Writing about word choice
- Critically evaluating a text
- Comparing texts: areas to consider
- Comparing texts: similarities and differences
- Working out what is important

Recognising What Each Paper Requires

Before starting to revise different aspects of the GCSE English Language papers, it is worth reminding yourself about what you will be examined on.

- In a pair, read the Assessment Objectives against which the papers are designed.
- Highlight any key words, such as ‘structure’.
- Discuss what each key word means in relation to English study and write down as concise a definition for each one as you can.
- Hold a whole class discussion about the terms in which your teacher will clarify exactly what each one means.

AO1	Identify and interpret explicit and implicit information and ideas.
	Select and synthesise evidence from different texts.
AO2	Explain, comment on and analyse how writers use language and structure to achieve effects and influence readers, using relevant subject terminology to support their views.
AO3	Compare writers’ ideas and perspectives, as well as how these are conveyed, across two or more texts.
AO4	Evaluate texts critically and support this with appropriate textual references.
AO5	Communicate clearly, effectively and imaginatively, selecting and adapting tone, style and register for different forms, purposes and audiences.
	Organise information and ideas, using structural and grammatical features to support coherence and cohesion of texts.
AO6	Candidates must use a range of vocabulary and sentence structures for clarity, purpose and effect, with accurate spelling and punctuation.

What Should I Write About Language?

There is so much that you can potentially say about the language of a piece of writing – but you can only say so much in timed conditions. So it is crucial that you identify and comment on what is important.

These questions and instructions all relate to ways of exploring the language of a text.

- Place them in terms of what you think is their order of usefulness for looking at the language in a piece of writing.
- When you have an order, see how well the first three or four in your order apply to a specific text. Re-arrange the order if you think this will help you to explore your particular text more effectively.

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Find 3 words that really stand out in your text and explain why.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Find 2 or 3 different clusters of words and explain their significance.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Look for examples of colloquial language and non-standard forms in the text. Explain their effect.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Find examples of figurative language (e.g. metaphors, similes, allusions, hyperbole, litotes, symbolism, personification). Say something significant about what you have found.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• How sophisticated is the vocabulary? Is it the same all the way through?
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Are there any interesting sound effects in this text? E.g. alliteration, assonance, consonance, onomatopoeia, interjection
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Are there any patterns in this text? E.g. repetition, pairing and opposition, juxtaposition, tricolon
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Which word classes are doing most work in this text? What exactly are they doing?
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• What is the tone of voice used in this text? Is it the same all the way through?
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• What is the level of formality in the text? Is it the same all the way through?
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Who is speaking in this text? What is interesting about their voice?

Writing About Sentences

Writing about sentences can be very difficult. Are you supposed to write about what types you can find (simple, compound, complex), how they are made up (main clauses, subordination, adverbials etc.), how they all link together, or their effect? The answer lies in a combination of the above – but with the ultimate stress on their effect.

These cards have been designed to help you think about some of the technical aspects of sentences and their effect at the same time.

- See which ones apply to an extract you are looking at.
- Identify two or three that are particularly important for your extract.

<p>Go sentences!</p> <p>It doesn't do to get too carried away when writing, but every so often a writer feels the need to express themselves in an exclamatory mood. Some say that the popularity of social media has led to this being used too much. Maybe. Maybe not!</p>	<p>Questions, questions</p> <p>Feeling in an interrogatory mood? Questions are sentences too, you know, and they can really help a writer to direct a reader in a particular way. Rhetorical questions are especially effective in this respect.</p>
<p>The fragment, or minor sentence</p> <p>This is a bold sentence indeed: a sentence that is not really a sentence because it lacks all of the required parts. It can be employed to great effect, though, because if a writer is in control, then meaning is implied, regardless of whether a sentence is complete or not. No doubt!</p>	<p>The show off</p> <p>Sometimes you just have to sit back and admire a sentence, particularly a really long one – almost certainly complex, quite possibly multi-clause – that shows perfect control, what with its fancy punctuation, its well-handled subordinate clauses, its potential use of parenthesis, and its adept use of referents.</p>
<p>Punctuated to perfection</p> <p>Sometimes it is not necessarily the words in a sentence that impress, but those little dots and dashes that help the words to make sense: punctuation, the tricky stuff without which meaning would start to crumble.</p>	<p>The holding sentence</p> <p>Sometimes the beauty of a sentence lies in it hardly being noticed. It is simply there, a bridge between other sentences. Likely to be declarative in mood, this sentence doesn't do much, but a piece of writing would fail without it.</p>
<p>The back to front</p> <p>Back to front you can make your sentences if you want to, drawing perhaps on fronted adverbials. Stylewise, this doesn't always work, but it's certainly a good option if you want to highlight a particular point.</p>	<p>Short and to the point</p> <p>What this sentence lacks in length it makes up for in impact. Most likely, technically, to be a simple sentence, this sentence is positioned carefully to really drive home a point.</p>
<p>Sentence patterns</p> <p>A writer can be an artist, painting patterns with sentence lengths and shapes. A long, complex one here, packed with subordination, a short simple one there, to drive home a point. Or maybe a series similar in type and length to create a particular rhythm. Spotting such patterns can be useful when thinking about structure: how do sentences shift as a piece of writing develops?</p>	<p>Make up your own sentence card</p>

Writing About a Single Sentence

Sometimes you might focus on writing about the effect of a single sentence.

Here's a particularly evocative sentence from *The Narrow Road to the Deep North*. (You will need to have read the whole of the extract to understand its context.)

As the Ford Mercury swerved around it and straightened back up, Dorrigo found he had no choice but to ignore the burning debris that appeared out of the smoke and hurtled at them – sticks, branches, palings – sometimes hitting and bouncing off the car.

- Below are some notes about the sentence, some technical, some about its effect. Use the notes to write an answer to the question:

How does the writer convey a sense of danger in this sentence?

You do not have to use all of the notes if you think some of them are not particularly useful to your answer.

- Next, find another sentence from the same extract that also conveys a sense of danger and write a response to the same question for that sentence.

<ul style="list-style-type: none">It is long and slithery, just like the path the car takes through the burning debris.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Placing the car at the start of the sentence in an extended adverbial clause, gives the sense that the subject (Dorrigo) is not fully in control.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Placing the objects that are hurtling at the car in parenthesis (' – sticks, branches, palings - ') increases the impression that Dorrigo has no control over what is going on – they are outside the car, just as they are outside the main part of the sentence.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">It is a complex sentence.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">It uses lots of subordination.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">The car is foregrounded in the sentence.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">The sentence uses powerful verbs to do with force and movement.

Writing About Structure

Structure refers to the way a piece of writing is built and held together.

- Use this grid to identify how a particular piece of writing is structured.
- Identify the most important elements of structure to comment on in order to answer this question:

How has the writer structured the text to interest you as a reader?

You could write about:

- what the writer focuses your attention on at the beginning
- how and why this focus develops and changes as the text continues
- any other structural features that interest you.

<p>How the text is built</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Beginning – how is the reader engaged? Foreshadowing?• Development – how does the text move on? Gradual or sudden shifts in focus? Different sentence lengths and types to signify shifts? Continuation or change in tone? Build up of suspense? Elaboration? Complication?• Ending – how does it link back to the beginning? Is there a definite conclusion or an open ending? Unexpected twist? Logical culmination?	
<p>How is the text held together (textual cohesion)?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• word clusters• patterning – repetition, contrasting pairs, tricolons, sound effects, sentence types• discourse markers – adverbials of time, synonyms, referents	

Writing About Word Choice

There are lots of different things you can say about a writer's choice of words.

- See if the statements on the cards apply to a text you are reading. You can focus on the whole text, or an extract of about 200 - 300 words.
- Choose 2-3 of the cards that you think you have most to say about and use them to write a response to this question:

How does the writer's word choice affect the meaning of this extract?

<p>A single word or phrase can play an important role in a piece of writing, perhaps shifting the emphasis suddenly, or reinforcing an important point.</p>	<p>Clusters of words linked to the same topic, or synonyms used to describe the same thing, give a real clue as to the focus and emphasis of a piece of writing.</p>
<p>While people are often told to put in more adjectives and adverbs to make a piece of writing more descriptive, more often powerful description comes from verbs and nouns.</p>	<p>Placing a particular word at the beginning of a sentence can draw attention to it and be particularly powerful.</p>
<p>If a significant word is repeated several times, the author is probably drawing deliberate attention to it.</p>	<p>Word choice is often linked to the way that a piece of writing sounds – so certain words might create a particular tone of voice, or words might be chosen for alliterative effect, so drawing attention to what they say.</p>
<p>Sometimes the simplest words can be the most powerful.</p>	<p>Sophisticated language is sometimes used to make very precise points, sometimes to write with a flourish.</p>

Critically Evaluating a Text

When critically evaluating a text, you can often signpost the point you want to get across by using particular words or phrases to start a sentence.

- Working with a partner, take it in turns to try and say different things about a text using as many of these 'evaluative hooks' as you can.
- Next attempt to answer a practice evaluative question, such as question 4, in your sample Paper 1, Section A. Keep an eye on how the evaluative hooks do or don't help your response.

1. By stating that ...	2. It seems likely that ...
3. The suggestion that ...	4. There's a particularly XXX (e.g. poignant) moment when ...
5. The first thing to notice is ...	6. Having ...
7. Whenever ...	8. Interestingly ...
9. Significantly ...	10. Gradually ...
11. Clarification of this point comes when ...	12. Ultimately ...
13. While initially ... as the piece goes on ...	14. Thematically there is a focus on ... when ...
15. The use of ...	16. Perhaps the biggest impact ...
17. The juxtaposition of ... and ... suggests ...	18. The tension builds when ...
19. If ... then ...	20. Surprisingly ...
21. To be clear ...	22. The author's use of ...
23. There is a significant change of focus when ...	24. It's possible to suggest that ...

Working Out What Is Important

It is possible to say a lot about quite a short piece of writing. However, it is not worth saying everything that you can in exam conditions if not many marks are on offer. The task here, for example, is worth 8 out of a possible 40 marks in Paper 1, Section A.

- Look in detail at this extract from lines 10 to 24 of the source.

They came over a rise to see a huge burning tree falling across the road a hundred yards or so in front of them. Flames flared up high along the tree trunk as it bounced on landing, its burning crown settling in a neat front yard to create an instant bonfire that merged into a burning house. Wedging his knee into the door, Dorrigo pushed with all his strength on the brake pedal. The Ford Mercury went into a four-wheel slide, spinning sideways and skidding straight towards the tree, slewing to a halt only yards from the flaring tree trunk.

No one spoke.

Hands wet with sweat on the wheel, panting heavily, Dorrigo Evans weighed their options. They were all bad. The road out in either direction was now completely cut off – by the burning tree in front of them and the fire front behind them. He wiped his hands in turn on his shirt and trousers. They were trapped. He turned to his children in the back seat. He felt sick. They were holding each other, eyes white and large in their sooty faces.

Hold on, he said.

- How does the writer use language here to describe the danger faced by Dorrigo and his family?

You could include the writer's choice of:

- words and phrases
- language features and techniques
- sentence forms

- Spend 2-3 minutes coming up with as much to say as you can in response to the task.
- Now look at the long list of possible things to say. Combine it with your own to come up with 3-4 points you can make in response to the task.
- Complete the task yourself, spending no more than five minutes on writing.

–

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Extended noun phrases emphasise the complexity of the danger faced – there is so much to say about it!
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Alliteration (e.g. 'flames flared') – sound effect draws attention to the danger
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Burning repeated four times – to show that the fire is everywhere
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Repetition of 'flared/ flaring' – suggest the flames shoot out aggressively
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Short simple sentences break up the longer ones, each emphasising the seriousness of the situation. 'No one spoke', 'They [their options] were all bad', 'They were trapped', 'He felt sick', 'Hold on, he said.'
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The short simple sentences create suspense – will they escape the danger?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sibilance ('four-wheel slide, spinning sideways and skidding straight towards the tree, slewing ') draws attention to how out of control the car is.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evocative verbs and verb phrases show the physical effort Dorrigo is going to ('wedging', 'pushed with all his strength')
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adjective 'instant' creates a sense of just how quickly the fire is developing
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fronted adverbials lead reader into the danger ('Hands wet with sweat on the wheel, panting heavily, Dorrigo Evans weighed their options.')

Comparing Texts: Areas to Consider

- Working in a pair, or small group, cut out these cards and place them face down on your desk.
- Take it in turns to pick up a card and apply it to both of the texts you are looking at.
- Keep going until you have spoken to all of the cards, then select the 3 or 4 that led to the most interesting points of comparison.
- Tell your class which cards you have selected and why.

<p>Word Choice</p> <p>Think about clusters of words, words that are used in both texts, different levels of sophistication, a focus on particular word classes etc.</p>	<p>Sentences</p> <p>Compare different lengths and use of subordination. Look for use of questions or interrogatives. Compare how sentences are used to guide readers.</p>	<p>Beginning</p> <p>Compare how both texts start. Do they create similar or different impacts? What is memorable about each beginning?</p>
<p>Development</p> <p>How does each extract move on? What do they do to maintain the interest of the reader? Compare how they change significantly, or stay the same.</p>	<p>Ending</p> <p>How does each extract end? How does each link back to its beginning? Is it a definitive ending, or open?</p>	<p>Voice</p> <p>What is similar or different about the tone of voice of each text? Is one more formal than the other? Is one more consistent than the other? Do they speak to each other in any way?</p>
<p>Purpose</p> <p>Are both written for the same or different purposes? Does either have more than one purpose? How does the language fit the purpose?</p>	<p>Audience</p> <p>Is each piece primarily addressing the same or different groups of people? Is the audiences quite broad, or defined tightly by things like age, background, interests, gender etc.</p>	<p>Language features</p> <p>What language features does each text use to draw attention to what it has to say? Do they use similar features in similar or different ways? Does one use features that draw attention to how it is written more than the other?</p>

Comparing Texts: Similarities and Differences

A comparison question will often ask you about the differences between two texts. One way to tackle such a question is initially to identify similarities. In stating what is similar, it is then possible to go into detail about the different ways in which such similarities are presented or conveyed.

Below are five similarities between the two texts in your sample Paper 2.

- Find evidence to back up the similarities in the texts, then jot down differences in how they are presented in the grid provided. You might like to draw on some of the vocabulary at the bottom.

Similarities	How the similarities are presented in different ways
Both writers want women to take part in sports	
Both writers present sport and physical activity as enjoyable	
Both writers present sport and physical activity as good for you	
Both writers draw on anecdotes to make their points	
Both writers feel that women need to overcome certain negative attitudes that exist about women and sport	
<p>Some words to draw on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – tone – vocabulary – point of view – levels of formality – emphasis, detail – evidence – argument – development <p>+ relevant linguistic terminology that you know (though the comparison questions are not specifically marked for this).</p>	

ACTIVITIES TO BOOST WRITING

for AQA GCSE English Language, Papers 1 and 2

- Recognising what each paper requires
- Getting in the mood: Just a minute fiction cards
- Getting in the mood: Just a minute non-fiction cards
- Planning descriptive writing
- Planning for a story
- Planning for writing a viewpoint or perspective
- Planning a written response

Recognising What Each Paper Requires

In the short time you have to write your responses to Paper 1 and Paper 2, Section B, it is important that you plan out your work as quickly as possible.

These activities offer quick ways into the different kinds of questions you are likely to encounter in the different papers: descriptive writing about an image or creative writing in Paper 1, and writing from a viewpoint or perspective in Paper 2.

Some of the approaches are designed to encourage you to think about the ideas and language resources you will draw on in your responses. Others are to help with your planning.

Thinking About Paper 1 – Creative and Descriptive Writing: Just a Minute Cards

You can use these cards for the descriptive writing task or the story task. You can use them in a number of different ways. Here are three examples:

1. Talking to a card at random

- In small groups, place the cards face down and take it in turns to pick one at random.
- Try to keep talking for up to 30 seconds (one minute if you're feeling ambitious) about how you would apply what is on the card to your writing task. If the card does not apply to your task, then take another one. E.g. you may feel that the 'character' card is not relevant to a descriptive writing task.
- Keep going until you have used up all of the cards.

2. Selecting cards

- On your own, choose the 5 cards that you think are most relevant to how you will approach your writing task.
- Compare your choices with those of a partner and discuss reasons for any similarities or differences.

3. Writing challenge

- On your own, select a card that you are particularly interested in using for your writing.
- Write a short paragraph that highlights the feature on the card.
- Share your work with a partner and discuss what you have done particularly well.

Creative and Descriptive Writing Cards

<p>Narrative point of view</p> <p>Who is speaking/what is the position of the person describing events? Is the narrative from a single point of view? Is it in the 1st or 3rd person? What effect are you aiming for?</p>	<p>The setting</p> <p>What is distinctive about where your writing takes place? What are the sights/sounds/smells/ physical sensations?</p>	<p>The opening</p> <p>How are you going to get the attention of your reader? What is distinctive about your very first sentence/ sequence of sentences? What do you want your reader to think/ feel?</p>
<p>Development/structure</p> <p>How do you want your piece of writing to move forward? What are the various stages it will go through? Will there be any sudden shifts or surprises?</p>	<p>The ending</p> <p>How are you going to round everything off? Are you going to explain everything to your readers, or leave them wanting to know more?</p>	<p>Use of generic conventions</p> <p>Will you follow the conventions of a particular genre, such as crime, or science fiction? If so, how will this affect your writing?</p>
<p>Tone of voice</p> <p>What does your writing 'sound' like? What particular effects are you aiming for – such as humour, or creating tension? How will you achieve them?</p>	<p>A moment of crisis/ a turning point</p> <p>Does something unexpected happen? If so what? How will you make sure readers find any moment of crisis believable?</p>	<p>Main character</p> <p>What are they like? What are they doing? What do you want readers to think and feel about them?</p>
<p>Vocabulary</p> <p>What groups of words are you going to use? Do you want one or two words to stand out and be repeated? If so, which ones? How would you describe your vocabulary choices in general?</p>	<p>Sentences</p> <p>How will your sentences be patterned? In what different ways will you begin sentences? How will you use different sentence types for particular effect?</p>	<p>Dialogue</p> <p>How do you plan to use dialogue? Who will speak to whom and in what way? Which character will say most and why?</p>

Thinking About Paper 2 – Writing from a Perspective or Viewpoint: Just a Minute Cards

You can use these cards for the non-fiction writing task. You can use them in a number of different ways. Here are three examples:

1. Talking to a card at random

- In small groups, place the cards face down and take it in turns to pick one at random.
- Try to keep talking for up to 30 seconds (one minute if you're feeling ambitious) about how you would apply what is on the card to your writing task. If the card does not apply to your task, then take another one.
- Keep going until you have used up all of the cards.

2. Selecting cards

- On your own, choose the 5 cards that you think are most relevant to how you will approach your writing task.
- Compare your choices with those of a partner and discuss reasons for any similarities or differences.

3. Writing challenge

- On your own, select a card that you are particularly interested in using for your writing.
- Write a short paragraph that highlights the feature on the card.
- Share your work with a partner and discuss what you have done particularly well.

Writing from a Perspective or Viewpoint Cards

<p>Audience</p> <p>Who are you addressing in your writing? Are you addressing them directly, or indirectly? Are they a broad or narrow group? How will you use pronouns? E.g. singular 'I', or plural 'we'</p>	<p>Viewpoint/perspective</p> <p>What is the viewpoint/perspective adopted for this piece of writing? How mainstream or extreme is it? How will you give your viewpoint/ perspective a sense of authority?</p>
<p>The opening</p> <p>How are you going to get the attention of your reader? What is distinctive about your very first sentence/ sequence of sentences? What do you want your reader to think/feel?</p>	<p>Development/structure</p> <p>How do you want your piece of writing to move forward? What are the various stages it will go through? Will there be any sudden shifts of emphasis?</p>
<p>The ending</p> <p>How are you going to round everything off? Are you going to repeat key points from earlier in a new way, or add something entirely new? How emphatic are you going to be with your ending?</p>	<p>Use of rhetorical devices</p> <p>How are you going to add rhetorical flourish to your writing? How will you use strategies like rhetorical questions and listing to keep the attention of your reader?</p>
<p>Tone of voice</p> <p>What does your writing 'sound' like? What particular effects are you aiming for – such as humour, or seriousness? How will you achieve them? What degree of formality will you adopt?</p>	<p>Dealing with opposing points of view</p> <p>How much time will you give to points of view that do not fit in with your own? How will you present them? How will you dismiss them?</p>
<p>Sentences</p> <p>How will your sentences be patterned? In what different ways will you begin sentences? How will you use different sentence types for particular effect?</p>	<p>Vocabulary</p> <p>What groups of words are you going to use? Do you want one or two words to stand out and be repeated? If so, which ones? How would you describe your vocabulary choices in general?</p>

Planning for Paper 1 – Descriptive Writing

The descriptive writing option is likely to look something like this:

You are going to enter a creative writing competition. Your entry will be judged by a panel of people your own age.

- Write a description suggested by this picture:



Notice that you do not have to describe this picture *exactly*, but write a description *suggested* by it.

This means that you can use your imagination to go beyond the stillness of the image. You might even consider translating the image into a sequence of moving image shots, using the vocabulary of filmmaking to help you. This vocabulary has been used in the grid on page 35 to help you, along with space to record ideas about the other senses: sound, smell and touch.

- With a partner, write one or two interesting sentences for each suggested approach for looking at and transforming the picture. (This is worth doing in a pair so that you can experience how someone else might tackle a task differently to you.)
- Next, on your own, decide on the approaches you are most likely to use in a full response. Place them in order, then have a go at writing your description in timed conditions.

Establishing shot (describing the whole picture in one go)	
Pan shot (moving across the picture)	
Close-up (zooming in on one particular element)	
Extreme close-up (zooming in even more closely)	
Reverse point of view (seeing the picture from the opposite perspective)	
Flashbacks (describing what happened before the picture was taken)	
Sequence of shots (describing what follows on from the image)	
Sounds	
Smells	
Touch/feel (this could include the weather conditions etc.)	

Planning for Paper 1 – Creative Writing Story

In a way a creative writing story answers two basic questions if it is a straightforward account of events as they took place, told in chronological order.

1. What happened?
2. And then?

- Working in a group of three, complete the grid on page 37 for the story task: *Write the opening of a story about an exciting rescue.*
- When you have finished the grid discuss how and why the things you have listed might have happened.
- Now, working on your own, spend 20 minutes writing up the plan in any way that you choose.
- After 20 minutes, take it in turns in your group to read aloud your own versions of the story.
- Talk about the decisions that each of you made and their effect. For example:
 - The type or genre of story
 - The point of view events are seen from
 - Who tells the story (a narrator, a character, different characters)
 - The order of the events
 - The style (mainly description, narration or dialogue? Chatty and conversational, or more formal? Long, complicated sentences, or short simple ones?)
- Go back to your own bit of writing and experiment with 2-3 different ways of telling. Here are some of the experiments that you could try:
 - Start at a different point in the story
 - Change all of the verbs
 - Take out all of the adjectives
 - Tell the story in a different style or genre
 - Change the narrative point of view. For example, switch from 1st to 3rd person, or write from the perspective of a different character.
- Leave your writing for a short period. Come back to it next lesson, or for homework, and draw on some of your planning and writing to attempt the task from the very beginning again, this time completing it in exam conditions.

Planning to Write a Viewpoint or Perspective

- Use this grid on page 38 to plan five key points to put forward when writing from a particular viewpoint or perspective.
- When you have finished your planning, develop the points into paragraph groups and work out how you will promote your own viewpoint or perspective, while also acknowledging those of others.

TASK. E.g. write the opening of a story about an exciting rescue.

(Write only one point in each box; stick to basic factual details.)

What happens/ happened?

And then?

And then?

And then?

And then?

And then?

And then?

And then?

Viewpoint or perspective to explore:		
Points to consider	Arguments to promote my viewpoint/perspective	Arguments against my viewpoint/perspective
1		
2		
3		
4		
5		
General conclusions		

SAMPLE RESPONSES FOR PAPER 1 READING AND WRITING

Example Answers for Paper 1, Section A, Reading

The following contains complete answers for all of the questions in the model paper for Paper 1, Section A. They have been written in timed conditions by someone who is good at English. However, because they were done within a time limit, they will not be perfect and you might well spot some things that can be improved.

- Have a go at answering the question paper on pages 5-9 in timed conditions.
- Now compare your answers to the ones here.
- Decide what you might have done differently having looked at the sample answers? What do you think that you have done better?
- Finally check your own answers and those in the model against the Assessment Objectives that apply to each question. How effectively have you written your answers with the AOs in mind? How effectively have the sample answers been written with the AOs in mind?

1.

- Read again the first part of the Source from **lines 1-9**.
- List four things from this part of the text about Dorrigo's car.

[4 marks AO1]

1.

Four things about Dorrigo's car:

- it is a Ford Mercury
- it has a column shift (gear stick)
- it has a big steering wheel
- it has white-walled tyres.

2.

- Look in detail at this extract from **lines 10 to 24** of the Source:

They came over a rise to see a huge burning tree falling across the road a hundred yards or so in front of them. Flames flared up high along the tree trunk as it bounced on landing, its burning crown settling in a neat front yard to create an instant bonfire that merged into a burning house. Wedging his knee into the door, Dorrigo pushed with all his strength on the brake pedal. The Ford Mercury went into a four-wheel slide, spinning sideways and skidding straight towards the tree, slewing to a halt only yards from the flaring tree trunk.

No one spoke.

Hands wet with sweat on the wheel, panting heavily, Dorrigo Evans weighed their options. They were all bad. The road out in either direction was now completely cut off – by the burning tree in front of them and the fire front behind them. He wiped his hands in turn on his shirt and trousers. They were trapped. He turned to his children in the back seat. He felt sick. They were holding each other, eyes white and large in their sooty faces.

Hold on, he said.

- How does the writer use language here to describe the danger faced by Dorrigo and his family?

You could include the writer's choice of:

- words and phrases
- language features and techniques
- sentence forms

[8 marks AO2]

2.

The language in this extract is heightened and dramatic to reflect the extreme danger in which Dorrigo and his family find themselves.

'Burning' appears four times to leave the reader in no doubt that a forest fire is the source of the danger. The writing creates the sense that the fire is everywhere and that there is little or no means of escape. It is there when the family drive over the rise of a hill, it is in the sky as the alliterative 'flames flared' high into the sky and it is 'in front of them' and 'behind them'. In fact, a neat play on words highlights this when the text says 'the burning tree in front of them and the fire front behind them'.

The verbs are particularly evocative. For example 'flared' and 'bounced' show the movement of the fire, while the sibilance of 'spinning', 'skidding' and 'slewing' creates an image of the car being almost out of control.

From the middle of the extract when it says 'No one spoke' to suggest how much the danger is making the entire family concentrate, the writer uses very short sentences to create suspense. After each short sentence, the reader is left to anticipate what danger will follow: 'They were all bad.' 'They were trapped.' 'He felt sick.' 'Hold on, he said.' Each short sentence cranks up the tension and prepares the reader for what looks at this point like a highly unlikely escape.

3.

You now need to think about the **whole** of the **Source**.

The text is from the middle section of a novel.

- How has the writer structured the text to interest you as a reader?

You could write about:

- what the writer focuses your attention on at the beginning
- how and why this focus develops and changes as the Source continues
- any other structural features that interest you.

[8 marks AO2]

3.

The text is structured in a way that creates a sense of danger, which builds to a high moment of suspense as the people trapped in the car momentarily seem to have run out of options, before moving on to a moment of high drama as they attempt to escape, followed by a point of reflection and revelation at the very end.

The focus at the beginning is on the enormous size and strength of the fire. This is done by comparing it to a 'trolley bus' and by pointing out that it is 'as blue as a gas flame', so highlighting its intense heat.

The moment of suspense is shown structurally by the use of a single simple sentence as a paragraph of its own: 'No one spoke'. This suggests that everyone is out of ideas and awaiting probable death.

The suspense is broken when Dorrigo says 'Hold on', again set out on a single line, to mark that the narrative is about to move on. The intense description that follows is then rounded off with the poignant image of Dorrigo's surgeon-hands 'swelling into blisters the size of small balloons' and the switch to his wife's point of view – with the revelation for her that Dorrigo is 'such a mystery of a man'.

4.

Focus this part of your answer on the second part of the Source from line 25 to the end.

A student, having read this section of the text, said: 'The writer brings the story to life for the reader. It is as if you are inside the car with the family.'

■ To what extent do you agree?

In your response you could:

- write about your own impressions of the action
- evaluate how the writer has created these impressions
- support your opinions with references to the text.

[20 marks AO4]

4.

I wouldn't say that this passage makes me feel like I am inside the car with the family. However, it does make me feel like I am looking in on their moment of intense danger: my point of view perhaps like that of someone watching an action movie, filled with close ups, dramatic cuts, sound effects and special effects.

The writer creates this impression with his attention to detail, both in terms of what is happening inside the car, and in the path the car takes. Both really are the stuff of movies. For example, we get the exaggerated, bold movements of Dorrigo as 'he slammed the car into reverse' and then acted against all apparent logic by driving straight back into the fire. By placing the present participle 'yelling' at the start of a sentence describing the way that he drives the car, we get a sense of his manic fear combined with real skill in driving in this situation.

From that point on, it feels like I am watching the car in slow motion attempt its miraculous escape – with Dorrigo's yelling playing out over the top of it all. Flanagan achieves this effect by paying close attention to physical detail. We are given the sound of the car – 'the V8 rose in a roar, tappets clattering', leading on to personification as 'the engine screamed' alongside panels 'groaning'. In fact, the car seems to be suffering as much as those inside it. It is only when the windows break that I begin to feel the intensity of the family's danger and emotions. Like the engine, the children scream too. The use of the same word emphasises that their future depends on the car's future.

The danger disappears as quickly as it arrives. This is a very effective way at bringing the story to life too because the suddenness emphasises the sense of relief that the family must have felt. The description remains just as visual though, and the car is even making similar movements as to when it was in the fire. We read that it 'slithered' down the mountainside, an exhausted movement, matching the sibilance of 'spinning', 'skidding' and 'slewing' in a previous paragraph. There is a sense of relief, as the pace changes, but also a feeling of physical pain, caused by the grim image of Dorrigo's surgeon's left hand 'swelling into blisters the size of small balloons'. Again, there is something film-like about this. I can imagine a close up shot of his hand, followed by one of his wife looking at it and coming to her moving realization about a man she once thought she knew.

Example Responses for Paper 1 Section B, Writing (Creative)

Story writing task

A response to a sample creative writing task for this paper has been printed on page 44. (NB. You have to choose one of two tasks for this part of Paper 1.)

- Read it through and discuss in a small group your general impressions of it as a piece of writing. For example, do you think it is well written? Did it hold your attention? Were there any bits you liked more than others? Is there anything you don't like about it?

- Now discuss it in relation to the assessment objectives for writing, reproduced here:

AO5	Communicate clearly, effectively and imaginatively, selecting and adapting tone, style and register for different forms, purposes and audiences. Organise information and ideas, using structural and grammatical features to support coherence and cohesion of texts.
AO6	Candidates must use a range of vocabulary and sentence structures for clarity, purpose and effect, with accurate spelling and punctuation.

- Finally consider the response in relation to the skills descriptors published by AQA in their mark scheme. You can find these online and your teacher can point you in the right direction. You can use the grid on page 53 to help you. It is based on the skills descriptors at the top end of the mark scale.

Write the opening of a story about an exciting rescue.

Jamie, as ever, found it difficult to work out what was going on. There was a noise and he was sure that there was something important about the noise, but he could not work out exactly what it was, nor locate it with any precision. As he looked up and down and from side to side, to try to locate this auditory intrusion on his senses, his head began to spin, in the way that it so often did, making him feel vaguely nauseous and in need of sitting down. Why was everything about his existence so complicated? he thought. Why couldn't he work things out quickly, like everyone else.

Perhaps it was because his mind was on higher things. That's what his mum used to tell him. But then his mum would tell him that, wouldn't she? She worshipped the ground he walked on, wouldn't have a word said against him, saw the positives in even the most ridiculous things that he did. So perhaps his mind wasn't on higher things at all. Perhaps his mind simply didn't function in a normal way, made him the hesitant, bumbling goof that he always felt himself to be.

His mind wasn't on higher things any way. His mind was on this strange noise that he couldn't locate. It was also on Esme Bloomberg because at this precise moment he was walking past her house, as he did every morning on his way to school. Perhaps that was why he felt so confused and couldn't work out what he was hearing. Esme Bloomberg scrambled his mind in myriad ways. Often she was all that he could think about and yet she made his thought processes as muddled as a thousand piece jigsaw puzzle with all its pieces hurled on the floor.

Strange noise ... Esme Bloomberg ... strange noise ... Esme Bloomberg ... strange noise ... Esme Bloomberg. His befuddled brain shuttled back and forth between the two, as he continued to look up and down and round and round. He did not look in one direction, though. He did not look at Esme Bloomberg's bedroom window. He never did, never could, not since THE THREE DAYS IN MAY. Every day he used to glance up at Esme's bedroom window as he walked past her house, in the forlorn hope that she would be looking out and would catch his glance – and that something deep and meaningful would pass between them in that moment. She was never looking back though, had probably left for school already, because she was such a timely and punctual girl. But then occurred THE THREE DAYS IN MAY. On May the fifth Jamie glanced up at Esme Bloomberg's window as he walked past. There, a vision to match the rising sun on this beautiful morning, was Esme Bloomberg. Their eyes met. And then Jamie found himself twitching and jerking and blushing and quickening his pace, all the while unable to remove his gaze from the top floor window. When he finally did so he felt that his life was over and spent the rest of the day making sure not to share a meaningful glance with anyone in the whole of his school. On May the sixth he glanced up again. It was a reflex habit, just something he did when he was outside number 64 Algernon Road. And exactly the same thing happened again. Grand humiliation as his eyes made contact with those of the previously elusive Esme. And on May the seventh ... you guessed it, the same all over again.

From that day forward, Jamie vowed never to look up at Esme's window. This was unfortunate, because on this particular day, four month's later, at the start of the new school term, Esme was at her bedroom window, frantically banging on the glass and calling out Jamie's name.

Paper 1 Section B (Descriptive Writing, Picture Task)

A response to the descriptive writing task for this paper has been printed out on pages 46-47. (NB. You have to choose one of two tasks for this part of Paper 1.)

- Read it through and discuss in a small group your general impressions of it as a piece of writing. For example, do you think it is well written? Did it hold your attention? Were there any bits you liked more than others? Is there anything you don't like about it?
- Now discuss it in relation to the assessment objectives for writing, reproduced here:

AO5	Communicate clearly, effectively and imaginatively, selecting and adapting tone, style and register for different forms, purposes and audiences. Organise information and ideas, using structural and grammatical features to support coherence and cohesion of texts.
AO6	Candidates must use a range of vocabulary and sentence structures for clarity, purpose and effect, with accurate spelling and punctuation.

- Finally consider the response in relation to the skills descriptors published by AQA in their mark scheme. You can find these online and your teacher can point you in the right direction. You can use the grid on page 53 to help you. It is based on the skills descriptors at the top end of the mark scale.

Paper 1, Section B: Model response to picture question

Write a description suggested by this picture



The sky is the pale blue of fading memories. Close your eyes and open them again and it might well have faded away into nothing. Its watery shade is so uniform as to be unnerving: constant, entirely lacking in variation, a defiant challenge to the notion that there is variety in nature. The view across the bay from the built-up city of Kanoville rarely changes. The denuded slopes of Mount Kano are too rocky to support vegetation and so remain the same dull grey throughout the year, changing in shade only depending on the time of day and the intensity of the sun.

It is early morning at the moment and it is not just the sky that is unnerving. The bird calls, always present in this tropical environment, are louder than usual; shriller, with an air of panic in their tone, as though screeching out a warning of impending doom. The birds know, just like the humans, that something bad is coming. Even people do not need scientific instruments on this occasion. Earth is angry. Its growls have been building in intensity for weeks now. And once it released its sulphurous breath into the atmosphere a week ago, the foul stench of rotten eggs leaking through various cracks and fissures, the people knew that it was time to leave.

In part, that is why the bird calls are so loud. Kanoville is deserted, cars no longer clogging up its narrow streets. Mount Kano is due to blow.

The birds have reason to be especially agitated on this particular morning. The first explosion shoots a plume of rock and molten lava high into the atmosphere, cutting a scar into the perfect pale blue. For a moment it looks as if the plume will go on rising for ever, like a space rocket escaped from its underground lair. But then it peaks and begins to shower down, like the willow tails of spent fireworks, relieved of their struggle to break free from the constraints of gravity.

There is beauty in this spectacle, though it is seen by few human eyes. Only the scientific observers are present, hovering in helicopters above the city, at a safe distance from the eruption and ready to turn tail and flee should an ash cloud develop and risk choking the whirring blades into inaction.

The buildings, though, seem to stand witness. Ranked along the shoreline, they are substantial structures, modern slabs of concrete and steel, built to stand for hundreds of years. Yet suddenly, in the face of the volcanic eruption, they seem insubstantial. They appear as a feeble line of defence in an army vastly outnumbered and aware of its imminent demise.

The water of the bay forms a kind of protective barrier, a moat against the giant on the opposite

shore. But the giant has many ways of meting out destruction. It does not have to rely on force alone. A great cloud of ash does, indeed, develop, following the initial explosion. It appears as a human heart in the sky, beating to a regular rhythm, as though dispensed by a giant pair of bellows beneath the ground. With each out-breath the cloud grows larger, and then the breeze chips away at its edges, carrying the ash across the bay, where it falls as poisoned snow on the empty metropolis.

There are no bird cries now, nor the whirr of helicopter blades.

EXAMPLE RESPONSES FOR PAPER 2 READING AND WRITING

Example Responses for Paper 2, Section A, Reading

The following contains complete answers for all of the questions in the model paper for Paper 2, Section A. They have been written in timed conditions by someone who is very good at English. However, because they were done within a time limit, they will not be perfect and you might well spot some things that can be improved.

- Have a go at answering the question paper on pages 10-16 on your own in timed conditions.
- Now compare your answers to the ones here.
- Decide what you might have done differently having looked at the sample answers? What do you think that you have done better?
- Finally check your own answers and those in the model against the Assessment Objectives that apply to each question. How effectively have you written your answers with the AOs in mind? How effectively have the sample answers been written with the AOs in mind?

1.

- Read again the first part of **Source B** from **lines 1 to 11**.
- Choose **four** statements below which are **TRUE**.
- Shade the boxes of the ones that you think are true. Choose a maximum of four statements.

[4 marks, AO1]

A	It was unusual that the author agreed to play pool with her husband.	
B	The author is good at lots of sports.	
C	The author is determined to become a good pool player.	
D	The author is asking how to bring about change that makes people feel good.	
E	The author was not very good at pool when she started playing.	
F	The author's husband is a professional pool player.	
G	The author is married to a sports journalist.	
H	The author usually accepts a new challenge.	

2.

You need to refer to **Source A** and **Source B** for this question.

- Use details from **both** Sources. Write a summary of the similarities and differences between Miss A. D. McKenzie and Anna Kessel in their approaches to sport.

[8 marks, AO1]

Both Kessel and McKenzie believe that women should take part in sport and that it is very important that they simply have a go, even if they are not, at first, particularly good. For example, Kessel, recounts how she was laughing away with her husband even though she was terrible at playing pool and McKenzie explains that 'a beginner finds the sculls are apt to be rather unmanageable'. They both stress that it does not take long to get better though. Kessel explains how she soon began to relax and then potted a ball, while McKenzie writes that after 'a little practice', sculling becomes manageable.

Both authors recognise that there are some barriers in the way of women being active. McKenzie explains that 'some folks would run down anything a lady does in the way of athletic exercises' while Kessel finds the barrier is in her own mind, but that writing a book helped 'changes sink into my own brain'.

Kessel is, ultimately, more relaxed about women taking part in sport. She takes delight in running with her daughter when heavily pregnant. McKenzie, on the other hand, has a paragraph that finds fault with women going out on the river alone when they are 'not adept on the water'. Perhaps this best summarises the differences in what is a broadly similar approach to women in sport: with Kessel there are no boundaries, with McKenzie some still exist.

3.

You need only refer to **Source A**, the article about boating and sculling.

- How does Miss A. D. McKenzie use language to try to convince the reader that rowing and sculling are suitable sports for women?

[12 marks, AO2]

The tone of the language in this piece is light and positive throughout. Perhaps anticipating that some people might not like the idea of women rowing or sculling, the author presents her piece as if being out on a boat is the most natural thing in the world for women to do. Of course, she does not call them women, but 'ladies'. The politeness of this term suggests that this is an activity only for particular kinds of women. It might encourage these women, though, because it suggests that they can row but still remain 'lady-like' [my inverted commas].

The polite tone slips into gentle irony in the final paragraph. Here the inverted commas around 'gowned' draw attention to how unprepared the three women on a punt are. These women are not really engaging in sport though, so, in a way, the way they are described adds to the force of McKenzie's argument. The women are described as 'evidently enjoying themselves' despite being 'thoughtless' and having 'the sweetest unconcern' for what they are doing. If you are engaged in proper sport – rowing or sculling – then presumably you are not any of these things. This is clear in the previous paragraph. Women who do manage their boats successfully are described as 'proficient'. They compete 'with much success' and they 'steered through crowded locks'.

McKenzie manages to argue strongly for the importance of rowing, despite her polite tone. For example, she uses the superlatives 'one of the healthiest' and 'one of the most enjoyable', and the emphatic adjective 'essential' to describe the sport. She also begins sentences with phrases that present her as an expert, and enable her to develop her line of thought. For example, she writes 'For a girl who is learning, the great thing is...' as well as, 'The great secret, of course ...' and 'Sculling is really quite as easy...'. She also presents her argument in a very staged, logical way. For example, the sentence that begins, 'Twenty years ago...' uses a colon to indicate exactly what was thought in the past, before the adverbial of time, 'Now', plus the conjunctive adverb, 'however', emphasise how the situation has changed.

4.

For this question, you need to refer to the whole of **Source A** and **Source B**.

- Compare how the two writers convey their different attitudes to women and sport.

In your answer, you could:

- compare their different attitudes
- compare the methods they use to convey their attitudes
- support your ideas with references to both texts.

[16 marks, AO3]

Both writers are keen for women to take part in sport, but Kessel's attitude is much more informal and inclusive than McKenzie's. While McKenzie goes into the technicalities of how you might learn to row or scull, using technical language such as 'stroke', 'bow' and 'stretcher', Kessel bases much of her argument around an unplanned game of pool and considers jogging alongside her daughter in the park as sport. Kessel also pokes fun at her own inability to play pool well, recounting how she joked with her husband about them being 'the worst journalist pool players ever', while McKenzies gently chastises three women who twice went out on a punt when they were not able to fully control it.

McKenzie gives the impression that in order to play sport, women must learn it correctly and abide by rules, both of how to perform and how to behave. For example, she describes the actions required for rowing and sculling in her first two paragraphs. Kessel, in contrast, suggests that women need to break rules, if not of how to play a sport, then of expectations around their general behaviour. For example, she plays pool with her husband and runs around with her daughter when she is six months pregnant, which, in turn, makes her think about a woman who once won the world snooker championship while seven and a half months pregnant.

While both passages rely heavily on anecdotes for their examples, Kessel's is much more personal. McKenzie describes other women rowing, but does not once mention taking part herself, or even knowing those who do. Kessel, on the other hand, can relate personally to every one of her anecdotes. As well as playing pool with her husband and running with her daughter, she also writes about watching football on television with her family and taking her daughter to watch a training session at a local athletics track.

McKenzie seems to have the attitude that sport is part of an enjoyable, but disciplined life. This is suggested at the start with the juxtaposition of 'healthiest' and 'most enjoyable'. The two go hand in hand. The language is then relatively restrained throughout: the verbs and verb phrases used to describe the women's actions, for example, include 'indulged in a great deal of rowing', 'pioneered', 'steered' and 'looked none the worse for the long pull'. In contrast, the women Kessel watches on the running track are described in terms of power and force. They 'thundered around the bends', as well as 'leaping onto boxes and into sandpits' and 'powering through circuits in the weight room'.

Ultimately, the writers want roughly the same thing for women: they want them to take part in sport. However, Kessel's attitude is much more relaxed and informal in tone, compared to the restrained approach of McKenzie.

Example Response for Paper 2, Section B, Writing

'It's a waste of time making students play sport in school. Those who like sport will play it in their own time anyway, and everyone else is forced to do something they don't like.'

- Write an article for a broadsheet newspaper in which you explain your point of view on this statement.

(24 marks for content and organisation
16 marks for technical accuracy)

[40 marks]

A response to the above task has been printed out below.

- Read it through and discuss in a small group your general impressions of it as a piece of writing. For example, do you think it is well written? Did it hold your attention? Were there any bits you liked more than others? Is there anything you don't like about it?
- Now discuss it in relation to the Assessment Objectives for writing, reproduced here:

AO5	Communicate clearly, effectively and imaginatively, selecting and adapting tone, style and register for different forms, purposes and audiences. Organise information and ideas, using structural and grammatical features to support coherence and cohesion of texts.
AO6	Candidates must use a range of vocabulary and sentence structures for clarity, purpose and effect, with accurate spelling and punctuation.

- Finally consider the response in relation to the skills descriptors published by AQA in their mark scheme. You can find these online and your teacher can point you in the right direction. You can use the grid on page 53 to help you. It is based on the skills descriptors at the top end of the mark scale.

My Dad enjoys running. In fact he loves it. Three times a week he pulls on his well-worn trainers and, with a breezy goodbye to his largely sedentary family, bounds out of the house for an hour or two of solitary exercise and freedom. He can run a long way for an old fella. Sometimes he'll come back, red in the face and stinking like a laundry basket of mouldy socks, and tell us that he's covered 12 or 13 miles. And once a year, he takes it to the limit and runs a complete marathon. 26 miles and however many extra metres. In one go!

So my Dad must be a fantastic example of the benefits of playing sport at school? Right? He must have been inspired to run by a PE teacher introducing him to cross-country running? Right? Wrong on both counts. My Dad hated running at school and between the ages of 16 and 36 ran no further than the distance it takes to catch the next bus. He is living breathing evidence that it is a waste of time making students play sport at school.

This information came as something of a shock to me when I first found out about it. Growing up with someone who treats running like a religion, you assume that they have always loved it. At my last school parents' evening though, the Year 11 one where half the parents don't turn up because they know their kids aren't going to make the grade, he had some kind of traumatic flashback.

It was after our meeting with Mr Tyrone, a dinosaur in a tracksuit, trying to pass himself off as a human being. Mr Tyrone had just done his T-Rex routine with me, growling in a way that

transmitted his disapproval of my lacklustre approach to PE without the need for actual words. Dad actually had a go back at him. Only with real words. He told him it was ridiculous to make young people run such long distances against their wishes and when they're not ready for it.

It's hard to be proud of your parents at a parents' evening (which, when you think about it, is an evening that has very little to do with parents at all). But I was proud of my Dad when we left school later on. He explained his logic to me. 'I know you're fit and can bomb around all over the place at your age, but long-distance running requires a different fitness. You build up to it. Small increments. He has you running six miles from scratch and that just hurts. It's painful. Horrible. It's why I packed up running for so many years. Because my only memory was one of pain.'

I was amazed. I thought I was a genetic oddity, that Dad's ability to run had skipped a generation. But it turns out we both share a hatred of running when it hurts too much, which is basically what running is all about at school.

I know that there are some people who love running at school, but my Dad's revelation got me thinking about the purpose of sport when you are in full-time education. I can see that there is a purpose. But that purpose becomes redundant if young people are actually turned off sport by what they are made to do. So when I say it's a waste of time making students play sport at school, my emphasis is on the word 'make'; and it might usefully be replaced by the word 'force'. My Dad was forced to run long distances against his will at school and it stopped him running for 20 years. Purpose redundant. I'm forced to run long distances at school and I don't feel like running for the next 20 years. Purpose redundant.

The same goes for lots of other stuff Mr Tyrone puts us through. He always cranks up the physical demands, whether we're playing football or netball, cricket or hockey. Lots and lots of repetitive tasks and hard, physical graft. And it's his way or the highway, with no prospect of going a little off-message, experimenting with your own technique. If students are to develop a love of sport that extends beyond school, then they cannot be made to do it. They need to have freedom to choose – both what they take part in and how. And if they hate all sport, then they need the opportunity to explore the physical side of life in other ways – by taking dance classes for example, or keep fit classes, where the emphasis is on exercise rather than competitiveness and pushing yourself to extremes.

Assessment Grid for Written Responses

- Comment on how effectively the sample response matches with ideas based on the AQA skills descriptors for **Paper 1, Section B** and **Paper 2, Section B**.

Aspect of writing	Comments
AO5 Content	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Register – is it convincing and compelling for an audience? 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Purpose – does it do what it's meant to do? Does it address all aspects of the task question? 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vocabulary – is it extensive and ambitious? 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Linguistic devices – are these sustained and well crafted? 	
AO5 Organisation	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Structural devices – are these varied and used inventively? 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ideas – are they convincing and complex? 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fluency – are the paragraphs seamless, using discourse markers where necessary? 	
AO6 Technical Accuracy	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sentence demarcation – is it consistently secure and accurate? 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Punctuation – is there a wide range and is it used accurately? 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sentence forms – is a full range used appropriately? 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Standard English – is this used consistently and appropriately? 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spelling – a high level of accuracy, including of ambitious vocabulary? 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vocabulary – is it extensive and ambitious? 	

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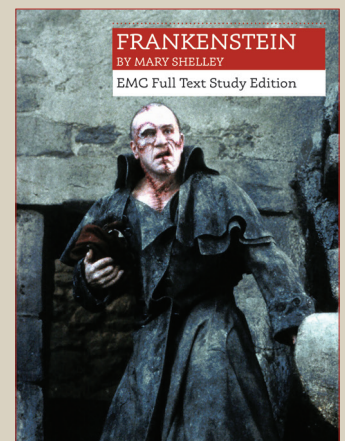
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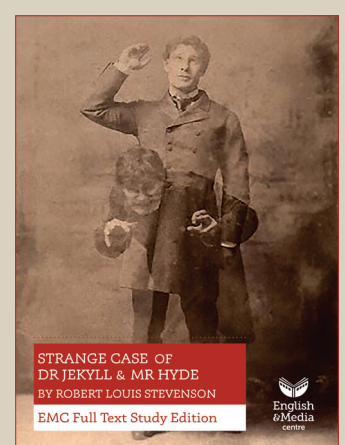
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