



**Harris** Federation

English



# AQA English Language

## Paper 1

Explorations in  
creative reading  
and writing





# English Language Paper 1:

- The paper is **split into two parts**—Section A and Section B;
- **Section A** will assess your **reading** skills. You will have to read a fiction extract that you've never seen before and **answer four questions** on it;
- **Section B** will assess your **writing** skills. You will be given a **choice of two scenarios** to write about, one of which will be based on a picture. **You are to pick one question.**
- The whole paper is out of **80 marks.**



# Reading Strategies

In your English **Language** GCSE, you will need to read and understand extracts from texts you haven't seen before (**unseen**) and explain your ideas about what they mean.



This booklet will help you:

1. Learn some **strategies** to help you do this, so you can tackle unseen texts confidently;
2. Use these strategies to understand a text and work out its '**big ideas**';
3. Practise **identifying** and **explaining** these ideas, using evidence from the text.

This booklet will use example extracts to walk you through how to answer the questions. There will be lots of opportunities for you to look at model responses and then try yourself. At the back of the booklet is a selection of extracts and questions for you to try independently.

**Extract 1: The Children of Men – P.D. James (1992)**

*Set in 2021, no human being has been able to give birth for 25 years and scientists still do not understand why. Here, Theo meets a woman as he walks through Oxford towards Magdalen College.*

1 It happened on the fourth Wednesday in January. Walking to Magdalen as was his custom, he  
2 had turned from St. John Street into Beaumont Street and was nearing the entrance to the  
3 Ashmolean Museum when a woman approached him wheeling a pram. The thin drizzle had  
4 stopped and as she drew alongside him she paused to fold back the mackintosh cover and push  
5 down the pram hood. The doll was revealed, propped upright against the cushions, the two  
6 arms, hands mittened, resting on the quilted coverlet, a parody of childhood, at once pathetic  
7 and sinister. Shocked and repelled, Theo found that he couldn't keep his eyes off it. The glossy  
8 irises, unnaturally large, bluer than those of any human eye, a gleaming azure, seemed to fix on  
9 him their unseeing stare which yet horribly suggested a dormant intelligence, alien and  
10 monstrous. The eyelashes, dark brown, lay like spiders on the delicately tinted porcelain  
11 cheeks and an adult abundance of yellow crimped hair sprung from beneath the close-fitting  
12 lace-trimmed bonnet. It had been years since he had last seen a doll thus paraded, but they  
13 had been common twenty years ago, had indeed become something of a craze. Doll-making  
14 was the only section of the toy industry which, with the production of prams, had for a  
15 decade flourished; it had produced dolls for the whole range of frustrated maternal desire,  
16 some cheap and tawdry but some of remarkable craftsmanship and beauty. A middle-aged  
17 woman in well-fitting tweeds, hair carefully groomed, came up to the pram, smiled at the  
18 doll's owner and began a congratulatory patter. The first woman, simpering with pleasure,  
19 leaned forward, smoothed the satin quilted pram cover, adjusted the bonnet, tucked in a stray  
20 lock of hair. The second tickled the doll beneath its chin as she might a cat, still murmuring her  
21 baby talk. Theo, more depressed and disgusted by the charade than surely such harmless  
22 play-acting justified, was turning away when it happened. The second woman suddenly seized  
23 the doll, tore it from the coverings and, without a word, swung it twice round her head by the  
24 legs and dashed it against the stone wall with tremendous force. The face shattered and  
25 shards of porcelain fell tinkling to the pavement. The owner was for two seconds absolutely  
26 silent. And then she screamed. The sound was horrible, the scream of the tortured, the  
27 bereaved, a terrified, high-pitched squealing, inhuman yet all too human, unstoppable. She  
28 stood there, hat askew, head thrown back to the heavens, her mouth stretched into a gape  
29 from which poured her agony, her grief, her anger. She seemed at first unaware that the  
30 attacker still stood there, watching her with silent contempt. Then the woman turned and  
31 walked briskly through the open gates, across the courtyard and into the Ashmolean.  
32 Suddenly aware that the attacker had escaped, the doll-owner galumphed after her, still  
33 screaming, then, apparently realising the hopelessness of it, returned to the pram. She had  
34 grown quieter now and, sinking to her knees, began gathering up the broken pieces, sobbing  
35 and moaning gently, trying to match them as she might a jigsaw puzzle. Two gleaming eyes,  
36 horribly real, joined by a spring, rolled towards Theo. He had a second's impulse to pick them  
37 up, to help, to speak at least a few words of comfort. He could have pointed out that she  
38 could buy another child.

**Tawdry: showy, but cheap and of poor quality**

**Galumphed: moved in a clumsy, noisy manner**



### Strategy 1: Check and line/self abridge

Using a ruler, read through the text carefully. At the end of each sentence:

- If you understand it, lightly pencil a tick above the full stop;
- If you don't understand, re-read the sentence and lightly underline the words or phrase that is confusing.



Guess: Can you work out the meaning from the surrounding text/your prior knowledge of the topic/clues in the spelling of the word? Can you substitute another word that would make sense?

Ignore: If you can't guess, ignore it and try and make sense of what you are reading without it.

## Strategy 1: Check and line/self abridge

### Example:

It happened on the fourth Wednesday in January. Walking to Magdalen as was his custom, he had turned from St. John Street into Beaumont Street and was nearing the entrance to the Ashmolean Museum when a woman approached him wheeling a pram. The thin drizzle had stopped and as she drew alongside him she ~~paused to fold back~~ the mackintosh cover and push down the pram hood. The doll was revealed, propped upright against the cushions, the two arms, hands mittened, resting on the quilted coverlet, a parody of childhood, at once pathetic and sinister. Shocked and repelled, Theo found that he couldn't keep his eyes off it. The glossy irises, unnaturally large, bluer than those of any human eye, a gleaming azure, seemed to fix on him their unseeing stare which yet horribly suggested a dormant intelligence, alien and monstrous.

Not sure what this phrase means but a 'custom' is like a tradition so maybe it means he does this walk all the time.

I don't know what a mackintosh cover is but I do know it is raining so I think it is a plastic cover for the pram. It does say something about a 'hood' in the rest of the sentence so I think it is something to protect you from the rain.

I know what mittens are and it sounds like that. 'Coverlet' sounds like cover, so maybe it is talking about a blanket.

I don't know what 'parody' means and it doesn't sound like another word I know so I am going to skip that bit.

I'm not sure what dormant means and can't guess, but I understand that the description of the doll is negative. The man is scared of it as he thinks it looks creepy.

I am not sure on this phrase but it is talking about the doll's eyes which are blue, so I think azure is for a type of shade of blue.

### Now your turn!

Lines 1-10 of the extract have been done for you. Now read through the rest, using 'check and line' to make sure you understand the extract.

Can you summarise the extract in 3-5 sentences?

## Strategy 2: Identifying the 'big ideas'

'Big ideas' are the messages that the author wants to convey. They often centre around these themes—these are examples, there could be others:

### TIME



### SOCIETY



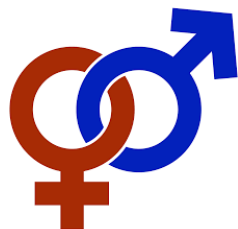
### RELATIONSHIPS



### CHILDHOOD



### GENDER



### POWER





## Strategy 2: Identifying the 'big ideas'

Go through the extract and highlight where you think a theme or 'big idea' is shown. The first bit has been done for you:

It happened on the fourth Wednesday in January. Walking to Magdalen as was his custom, he had turned from St. John Street into Beaumont Street and was nearing the entrance to the Ashmolean Museum when a woman approached him wheeling a pram. The thin drizzle had stopped and as she drew alongside him she paused to fold back the mackintosh cover and push down the pram hood. **The doll was revealed, propped upright against the cushions, the two arms, hands mittened, resting on the quilted coverlet, a parody of childhood, at once pathetic and sinister. Shocked and repelled, Theo found that he couldn't keep his eyes off it. The glossy irises, unnaturally large, bluer than those of any human eye, a gleaming azure, seemed to fix on him their unseeing stare which yet horribly suggested a dormant intelligence, alien and monstrous. The eyelashes, dark brown, lay like spiders on the delicately tinted porcelain cheeks and an adult abundance of yellow crimped hair sprung from beneath the close-fitting lace-trimmed bonnet.** It had been years since he had last seen a doll thus paraded, but they had been common twenty years ago, had indeed become something of a craze. **Doll-making was the only section of the toy industry which, with the production of prams, had for a decade flourished; it had produced dolls for the whole range of frustrated maternal desire, some cheap and tawdry but some of remarkable craftsmanship and beauty. A middle-aged woman in well-fitting tweeds, hair carefully groomed, came up to the pram, smiled at the doll's owner and began a congratulatory patter. The first woman, simpering with pleasure, leaned forward, smoothed the satin quilted pram cover, adjusted the bonnet, tucked in a stray lock of hair.**

**CHILDHOOD**



**FEAR**



**SOCIETY**



**GENDER**





**Strategy 2: Identifying the ‘big ideas’**

What do you think the author’s message is? What is he trying to convey through the themes of gender, childhood, fear and/or society?

**GENDER**  
Women take on the stereotypical role of mothering, even when unable to have a real child. Both women engage in the charade of a conversation about a baby, as if it is real.

**SOCIETY**  
Women feel they need to meet societal expectations of being a mother, even if they cannot have children. Children in this society are longed-for by women, and if they are unable to be real society is willing to entertain the notion of dolls being treated like babies.

Any other thoughts about themes/big ideas in the extract as a whole?

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Reflection

*Before moving on, let's recap and see how much you have learnt so far. Try and answer these questions without looking back in the booklet. If you get stuck, check your answers, but only after you've had a go from memory.*

1. How many sections are there in the Language Paper 1 exam and what does each section test you on?

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2. What are the two reading strategies you should use when reading an extract for the first time? **Challenge: how do you use them?**

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3. What is a 'big idea'? Give three examples of themes that may help you identify the big ideas in an extract.

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## Answering the questions

So far we have looked at how you approach an unseen text for the first time in an exam to ensure that you understand it as much as you can. This may seem like a long process but the more you practise these strategies, the easier and quicker you will find them.

Once you have read the extract and feel as confident as possible that you know what it is about, you can start answering the questions.

**This part of the booklet is going to take you through the types of questions you will get and how best to approach them.**

### Here is a brief overview:

- Q1**— List 4 things about X (4 marks)
- Q2**— How does the writer use language to show X? (8 marks)
- Q3**—How has the writer structured the text to interest you? (8 marks)
- Q4**—To what extent do you agree with X? (20 marks)
- Q5**—Creative writing (40 marks—24 for content and 16 for SPaG)

Example Q1: Read again the first part of the source, **lines 1-10**.

List **four** things that the narrator saw on his walk. **(4 marks)**

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

4. \_\_\_\_\_

This is not a complicated question, but there are a few tips to keep in mind:

- Always make sure you only get your information from the lines the question tells you to look at. In this case, you only need to look at **lines 1-10**;
- Make sure you understand what **the question is asking you to look for**;
- Don't over-complicate it, this is only a **comprehension** questions. You don't need to analyse or infer any meaning.

**Have a go at this question, writing your answers above next to the numbers.**



Did you get any of these? Mark your work in a different colour pen and give yourself a **mark out of 4**.

Example Q1: Read again the first part of the source, **lines 1-10**.

List **four** things that the narrator saw on his walk. **(4 marks)**

1. The entrance to the Ashmolean museum
2. A woman pushing a pram in the rain
3. The woman pushing the cover back from the pram to reveal what was inside
4. A scary looking doll in the pram, not a real baby

## Question 2—Language Analysis

Example Q2: Look in detail at this extract, **lines 7-16** of the source:

Shocked and repelled, Theo found that he couldn't keep his eyes off it. The glossy irises, unnaturally large, bluer than those of any human eye, a gleaming azure, seemed to fix on him their unseeing stare which yet horribly suggested a dormant intelligence, alien and monstrous. The eyelashes, dark brown, lay like spiders on the delicately tinted porcelain cheeks and an adult abundance of yellow crimped hair sprung from beneath the close-fitting lace-trimmed bonnet. It had been years since he had last seen a doll thus paraded, but they had been common twenty years ago, had indeed become something of a craze. Doll-making was the only section of the toy industry which, with the production of prams, had for a decade flourished; it had produced dolls for the whole range of frustrated maternal desire, some cheap and tawdry but some of remarkable craftsmanship and beauty.

How does the writer use language here to describe the doll?

**(8 marks)**

You could include the writer's choice of:

- Words and phrases
  - Language features and techniques
  - Sentence forms
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### Understanding the question:

- You only need to focus on the small section that the examiners give you in the question
- You are only focusing on language devices and techniques
- You are expected to write a response in a 'what how why' format, around two paragraphs
- Higher mark responses will be able to infer meaning
- You must link your analysis back to the question. In this case, it is the description of the doll.

**FIRST STEP: Annotate** the section—turn the page to see how to do this...

Use of adjectives “shocked” and “repelled” indicates that the doll is so terrifying to look at that the narrator feels horrified at the thought of this woman pretending it is a real baby.

The adverb “unnaturally” implies how odd looking the doll’s eyes, showing that even though the woman treats the doll like a real baby, it is not life-like at all and is, in fact, creepy.

**Shocked and repelled**, Theo found that he couldn’t keep his eyes off it. The glossy irises, **unnaturally** large, bluer than those of any human eye, a gleaming azure, seemed to fix on him their unseeing stare which yet horribly suggested a **dormant intelligence, alien and monstrous**. The eyelashes, dark brown, **lay like spiders on the delicately tinted porcelain cheeks** and an adult abundance of yellow crimped hair sprung from beneath the close-fitting lace-trimmed bonnet. It had been years since he had last seen a doll thus paraded, but they had been common twenty years ago, had indeed **become something of a craze**. Doll-making was the only section of the toy industry which, with the production of prams, had for a decade flourished; it had produced dolls for the whole range of frustrated maternal desire, **some cheap and tawdry but some of remarkable craftsmanship and beauty**.

The adjectives “alien” and “monstrous” support the earlier horrifying description of the doll. Dolls are usually seen as friendly and suitable for children but this description highlights that due to the fact that the woman is pretending it is real, it is actually quite horrifying.

### Things to consider:

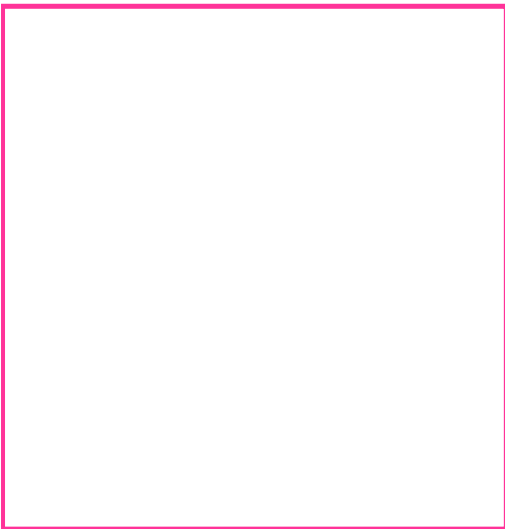
1. The first part of the analysis in each coloured box identifies the device technique and gives a clear answer to how the doll is presented—horrifying, terrifying and odd.
2. The second part of the analysis in **bold black** is where you infer meaning about why the doll is presented in this way. This is where you may wish to consider the context of the story—women in this extract have not been able to have a baby for 25 years and no one understands why.

**Now turn the page and have a go at annotating the rest of it!**





**Shocked and repelled**, Theo found that he couldn't keep his eyes off it. The glossy irises, **unnaturally** large, bluer than those of any human eye, a gleaming azure, seemed to fix on him their unseeing stare which yet horribly suggested a **dormant intelligence, alien and monstrous**. The eyelashes, dark brown, **lay like spiders on the delicately tinted porcelain cheeks** and an adult abundance of yellow crimped hair sprung from beneath the close-fitting lace-trimmed bonnet. It had been years since he had last seen a doll thus paraded, but they had been common twenty years ago, had indeed **become something of a craze**. Doll-making was the only section of the toy industry which, with the production of prams, had for a decade flour-ished; it had produced dolls for the whole range of frustrated maternal desire, **some cheap and tawdry but some of remarkable craftsmanship and beauty**.



The simile "lay like spiders" creates a description with connotations of creepy or nasty surroundings. Although describing eyelashes, this description adds to the notion that this doll is unsettling and traumatising for the narrator to look at.

**Shocked and repelled**, Theo found that he couldn't keep his eyes off it. The glossy irises, **unnaturally** large, bluer than those of any human eye, a gleaming azure, seemed to fix on him their unseeing stare which yet horribly suggested a **dormant intelligence, alien and monstrous**. The eyelashes, dark brown, **lay like spiders on the delicately tinted porcelain cheeks** and an adult abundance of yellow crimped hair sprung from beneath the close-fitting lace-trimmed bonnet. It had been years since he had last seen a doll thus paraded, but they had been common twenty years ago, had indeed **become something of a craze**. Doll-making was the only section of the toy industry which, with the production of prams, had for a decade flourished; it had produced dolls for the whole range of frustrated maternal desire, **some cheap and tawdry but some of remarkable craftsmanship and beauty**.

The reference to the doll becoming a "craze" highlights how many women took their chance to be mothers to dolls as they were unable to have children of their own. Although sad for those who wanted to have their own babies, this severance from reality may indicate disturbing mental suffering from these women.

The dolls are described as either "cheap and tawdry", or of "remarkable beauty". As it is implied that many women turned to dolls to experience motherhood, it makes sense to assume that dollmakers catered for all budgets—women that could afford more expensive, realistic dolls contrasted against the poorer woman's choices.

Once you have annotated the section, you are ready to start writing. Although it seems like that has taken a long time, by the time you sit the exam you will be used to doing this and so will be able to do it much more quickly!

So, how to start?

The format you will need to write in will be a **what/how/why** paragraph. Have a look at the example below:

The writer uses language to describe the doll as disturbing and traumatising to look at as it is used to pretend to be a real baby. The reference to the narrator being “shocked and repelled” highlights how the doll’s features are terrifying to look at. Perhaps the writer is trying to convey how horrifying it is for the narrator to watch women, who are so unhappy at not being able to have a baby, pretend to be mothers with unrealistic-looking dolls and fully invest themselves in the charade of being a mother and baby out for a walk in a pram.

See below for a breakdown of this example paragraph.

**WHAT:** The start of the paragraph outlines really clearly your response—language is used to describe the doll as disturbing.

**HOW:** This is where you put the quotation in that supports your ‘what’. How do you know the doll is disturbing? Because it says X. Remember, keep the quotations short.

This is highlighted in green to demonstrate tentative language. Add this into your writing to show that you are thinking about the writer’s intentions but that you don’t know for sure—it is just your perception and there could be alternative readings

The writer uses language to describe the doll as disturbing to look at, traumatising to look at as it is used to pretend to be a real baby. The reference to the narrator being “shocked and repelled” highlights how the doll’s features are terrifying to look at. Perhaps the writer is trying to convey how horrifying it is for the narrator to watch women, who are so unhappy at not being able to have a baby, pretend to be mothers with unrealistic-looking dolls and fully invest themselves in the charade of being a mother and baby out for a walk in a pram.

**WHY:** This is the part where you explain why you’ve picked out the quote you have and how it helps you answer the question. This is where you infer meaning and link to what the context box told you about the extract.

Example Q2: Look in detail at this extract, **lines 7-16** of the source:

Shocked and repelled, Theo found that he couldn't keep his eyes off it. The glossy irises, unnaturally large, bluer than those of any human eye, a gleaming azure, seemed to fix on him their unseeing stare which yet horribly suggested a dormant intelligence, alien and monstrous. The eyelashes, dark brown, lay like spiders on the delicately tinted porcelain cheeks and an adult abundance of yellow crimped hair sprung from beneath the close-fitting lace-trimmed bonnet. It had been years since he had last seen a doll thus paraded, but they had been common twenty years ago, had indeed become something of a craze. Doll-making was the only section of the toy industry which, with the production of prams, had for a decade flourished; it had produced dolls for the whole range of frustrated maternal desire, some cheap and tawdry but some of remarkable craftsmanship and beauty.

How does the writer use language here to describe the doll?

**(8 marks)**

You could include the writer's choice of:

- Words and phrases
- Language features and techniques
- Sentence forms

Now have a go at writing your own two what/how/why paragraphs to answer this question. Use your annotations and the example para-graph to help you.

Write your response on the following page.



How does the writer use language here to describe the doll?  
(8 marks)

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### Question 3—Structural Analysis

Example Q3: You now need to think of the **whole** of the source.

This text is from the middle of a story.

How has the writer structured the text to interest you as the reader? **(8 marks)**

You could write about:

- What the writer focuses your attention on at the beginning of the source
- How and why the author changes this focus as the source develops
- Any other structural devices that interest you

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#### Understanding the question

- You need to focus on the **entire source**, not just specific lines like Q1 and Q2;
- You are only focusing on **structural devices and techniques**;
- You are expected to write a response in a **what/how/why format**, looking at the beginning, middle and end, writing around **three paragraphs**.

**FIRST STEP: Annotate** the source, splitting it into **beginning, middle and end** and looking specifically at **what** the author focuses on/switches to and **why** you think they do this.



### Beginning

It happened on the fourth Wednesday in January. Walking to Magdalen as was his custom, he had turned from St. John Street into Beaumont Street and was nearing the entrance to the Ashmolean Museum when a woman approached him wheeling a pram. The thin drizzle had stopped and as she drew alongside him she paused to fold back the mackintosh cover and push down the pram hood. The doll was revealed, propped upright against the cushions, the two arms, hands mittened, resting on the quilted coverlet, a parody of childhood, at once pathetic and sinister. Shocked and repelled, Theo found that he couldn't keep his eyes off it. The glossy irises, unnaturally large, bluer than those of any human eye, a gleaming azure, seemed to fix on him their unseeing stare which yet horribly suggested a dormant intelligence, alien and monstrous. The eyelashes, dark brown, lay like spiders on the delicately tinted porcelain cheeks and an adult abundance of yellow crimped hair sprung from beneath the close-fitting lace-trimmed bonnet. It had been years since he had last seen a doll thus paraded, but they had been common twenty years ago, had indeed become something of a craze. Doll-making was the only section of the toy industry which, with the production of prams, had for a decade flourished; it had produced dolls for the whole range of frustrated maternal desire, some cheap and tawdry but some of remarkable craftsmanship and beauty.

#### The writer focuses on:

- **The narrator's usual walk in the town**—sets the tone for a normal day in the narrator's world; no reason to expect anything out of the ordinary.
- **The bleak and rainy weather**—helps to build tension; pathetic fallacy would suggest something terrible is about to occur;
- **The appearance of a woman who initially looks like an ordinary mother pushing a pram**—the introduction of a non-speaking character; the reader would start to anticipate that she will become part of the story;
- **The narrator's realisation that there isn't a real baby in the pram, it is a doll**—writer introduces a scary and confusing moment early on in the story
- **The writer's description of the terrifying-looking doll and the narrator's horror when looking at it**—the reader can understand at this point that what the narrator is looking at isn't out of the ordinary

**The red writing highlights what the writer is focusing on in the beginning.**

**The green writing then goes on to briefly comment on the effect of this particular focus on the reader**

Do the same thing on the next two pages for the **MIDDLE** and **END** of the extract.





**End**

Then the woman turned and walked briskly through the open gates, across the courtyard and into the Ashmolean. Suddenly aware that the attacker had escaped, the doll-owner galumphed after her, still screaming, then, apparently realising the hopelessness of it, returned to the pram. She had grown quieter now and, sinking to her knees, began gathering up the broken pieces, sobbing and moaning gently, trying to match them as she might a jigsaw puzzle. Two gleaming eyes, horribly real, joined by a spring, rolled towards Theo. He had a second's impulse to pick them up, to help, to speak at least a few words of comfort. He could have pointed out that she could buy another child.

The writer **finishes** the extract by focusing on the following at the end:

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### Question 3—Structural Analysis

Once you have decided the key areas that the writer has focused on that you feel you could write about and analyse, you are ready to start writing.

So, how to start?

The format is similar to Q2 although this time you are instead focusing on how the extract is built to interest the reader. That is why it is important to talk about the beginning, middle and end.

Have a look at the example below to help you:

The writer structures the extract to interest the reader in many different ways. In the first instance, the beginning of the extract the writer focuses on the narrator's normal walk into town "as was his custom" making the reader feel that this is just a normal day and to not expect anything different to happen. However, the introduction of the bleak and rainy weather and "thin drizzle" indicates to the reader that this may be an example of pathetic fallacy, building tension that something bad is going to happen. This in turn creates an ominous atmosphere, preparing the reader for the disturbing event that is to happen next. The writer uses the beginning of the extract to introduce a woman who, at first sight, appears to be an ordinary mother walking her baby in the pram. However, the writer then focuses on the narrator's reaction to the fact that it is not a real baby in the pram, but a terrifying doll who the mother treats like a real child: "the doll was revealed...a parody of childhood". By starting the extract in this way, the reader is confused as to why a woman would do this, and would wonder if the bleak weather and the scary-looking doll foreshadows further creepy happenings in the rest of the extract.

**Turn the page to see a breakdown of this example paragraph.**

Consistently clear focus on the **BEGINNING** of the extract and why the points that have been picked out are relevant.

What the writer chooses to focus on in the beginning of the extract.

The writer structures the extract to interest the reader in many different ways. In the first instance, *the beginning of the extract* the writer focuses on the *narrator's normal walk into town* "as was his custom" making the reader feel that this is just a normal day and to not expect anything different to happen. *However, the introduction of the bleak and rainy weather and "thin drizzle"* indicates to the reader that this may be an example of pathetic fallacy, building tension that something bad is going to happen. This in turn creates an ominous atmosphere, preparing the reader for the disturbing event that is to happen next. The writer uses *the beginning of the extract* to *introduce a woman who, at first sight, appears to be an ordinary mother walking her baby in the pram. However, the writer then focuses on the narrator's reaction to the fact that it is not a real baby in the pram, but a terrifying doll* who the mother treats like a real child: "the doll was revealed...a parody of childhood". *By starting the extract in this way, the reader is confused as to why a woman would do this, and would wonder if the bleak weather and the scary-looking doll foreshadows further creepy happenings in the rest of the extract.*

Explanation as to why focusing on this particular thing would be interesting to the reader.

Key quotations as evidence to what I have said is being focused on. Note how **short and concise** they are. Do not waste time copying out loads from the extract.

### Make note:

- You never should write 'to make the reader want to read on' or 'to engage the reader';
- The analysis of what is focused on in each part of the extract is detailed and covers a variety of things the writer has focused on, not just one thing.



### Question 3—Structural Analysis

Example Q3: You now need to think of the **whole** of the source.

This text is from the middle of a story.

How has the writer structured the text to interest you as the reader? **(8 marks)**

You could write about:

- What the writer focuses your attention on at the beginning of the source
- How and why the author changes this focus as the source develops
- Any other structural devices that interest you

Now have a go at writing the paragraphs for the middle and end of the extract.

Use the notes you made on the previous pages to guide what to focus on.

Write your response on the following page.

#### Understanding the question

- You need to focus on the **entire source**, not just specific lines like Q1 and Q2;
- You are only focusing on **structural devices and techniques**;
- You are expected to write a response in a **what/how/why format**, looking at the beginning, middle and end, writing around **three paragraphs**.





A series of horizontal lines for writing, spanning the width of the page.



### Reflection

***Before moving on, let's recap and see how much you have learnt so far. Try and answer these questions without looking back in the booklet. If you get stuck, check your answers, but only after you've had a go from memory.***

1. How many marks are available for Question 2 and Question 3?

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2. What are you focusing on analysing in Question 2 and what format should your response be written in?

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3. What are you analysing for Question 3 and what different parts of the extract should you focus on?

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## Question 4—Evaluation

Example Q4: Focus this part of your answer on the second part of the source, lines 22 to the end.

A student said, “In this part of the story, the wom-an’s reaction when her doll is destroyed is under-standable and rational. The reader feels sympathy for her.”

To what extent do you agree? **(20 marks)**

In your response, you could:

Consider your own impressions of the woman’s reaction

Evaluate how the writer makes you feel to-wards the woman

Support your response with references to the text.

### Understanding the question

- You only need to **focus on the small little section** that the examiners give you in the question;
- You must read the statement given and either agree or disagree with it. You can be 50/50, you don’t have to definitely do one or the other;
- You should break the statement down into two parts and address both parts of the statement;
- You must **link your argument back to the question**. In this case, it is whether you agree or disagree with the statement.

**The first step is to break up the statement. Please see how we do this on the next page.**

**Part 1**— The woman’s reaction is understandable and rational. Do you agree or disagree? Bullet point your ideas.

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“In this part of the story, the **woman’s reaction when her doll is destroyed is understandable and rational.** The reader feels sympathy for her.”



**Part 2**—The reader feels sympathy for her. Do you agree or disagree? Bullet point your ideas.

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**Part 1— The woman’s reaction is understandable and rational. Do you agree or disagree? Bullet point your ideas.**

1. Not understandable because it isn’t a real baby, it is a doll “the face shattered”
2. Completely irrational and once the doll was broken, there was nothing she could do about it “began gathering up the broken pieces”
3. Described as animalistic and crazed, could be considered an over the top reaction “inhuman yet all too human.”
4. However, understandable as she felt it was her real baby and now it has gone “the scream of the tortured, of the bereaved”

“In this part of the story, the **woman’s reaction when her doll is destroyed is understandable and rational.** The reader feels **sympathy for her.**”

**Part 2—The reader feels sympathy for her. Do you agree or disagree? Bullet point your ideas.**

1. Completely agree as she feels like she has lost a child. The writer talks about the “bereaved” and “grief” as if a real baby died
2. Yes because she can’t express herself beyond crying “her mouth stretched into a gape from which poured her agony”
3. Sympathy that the woman gets away and she has no fight left in her to go after her “apparently realising the hopelessness of it”
4. The context box indicates that no woman can have a real child and so the reader would appreciate that this woman just wants to be a mother

## Using the planning boxes on the previous page, have a look at this example paragraph:

All from Point 1 in the red box on the previous page.

Use of evaluative language

Note how I disagree with the first part of the statement but agree with the second. I use comparative connectives to show this.

I partly agree with this statement and partly disagree. Firstly, I disagree that the woman's reaction was understandable and rational. It is made clear to the reader that what is in the pram is in fact a doll, and her reaction to the "face shattering" is excessive considering it is not a real human being. Additionally, the fact that the woman treats a doll like a real baby is at best, sad and pitiful and at worst, disturbing and terrifying. Interestingly, although there appears to be no reason why the second woman destroys the doll, the woman's reaction is arguably extreme and does not appear to be aligned to the action committed. However, I do agree that the reader feels sympathy for this woman. Regardless of whether the doll is a real baby or not, the woman clearly feels obvious sadness at the loss of her 'child' and the writer successfully describes her actions as ones of "grief" and that she is "bereaved". This shows that the woman is feeling a genuine sense of loss, and so I definitely feel sorry for her in this instance. It is also likely that the reader would feel sorry for her that she couldn't have a baby when she clearly so desperately wanted one, and would recognise the sadness behind a woman pretending that a doll is a baby to fulfil her dream of motherhood.

Written in first person, always giving a supported opinion.

All from Point 1 from the box on the previous page in blue.









### Reflection

***Before moving on, let's recap and see how much you have learnt so far. Try and answer these questions without looking back in the booklet. If you get stuck, check your answers, but only after you've had a go from memory.***

1. What must you do the statement in Question 4? How do you approach answering the question?

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2. How many marks are available for Question 4 and how many paragraphs are you aiming to write?

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3. What five elements must you include in your paragraphs for Question 4  
Hint: one of them is a point wither for/against the first part of the statement.

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### Section A Quiz

1. What skills does Section A test you on?

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2. How many marks are there for each question 1-4?

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3. Name two reading strategies to help you understand unseen extracts?

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4. What are you analysing in Question 2?

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5. What are you analysing in Question 3?

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6. What paragraph structure should you use for questions 2 and 3?

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7. What is the technique called when you make a suggestion about the writer's intentions?

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8. What skill in being tested in Question 4?

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9. True or false: You can agree AND disagree with different parts of the statement in Question 4.

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10. What type of language do you specifically use for Question 4?

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Section B: Creative Writing

This is 50% of the entire paper. This means you **MUST** plan your time to ensure you answer this question.

This section is out of 40 marks.

0 5

Your local newspaper is running a creative writing competition and the best entries will be published.

Either

Write a story about time travel as suggested by this picture:



or

Describe life as you imagine it in 200 years' time.

(24 marks for content and organisation  
16 marks for technical accuracy)  
**[40 marks]**

You only answer ONE question. You have to choose between the picture OR the scenario.

Turn the page for the example question we will be using.



**Question 5:** Your school is running a creative writing competition and the best entries will be published.

**Either**

Write about an unusual or disturbing place as suggested by this picture:



**Or**

Describe life as the sole survivor in city.

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

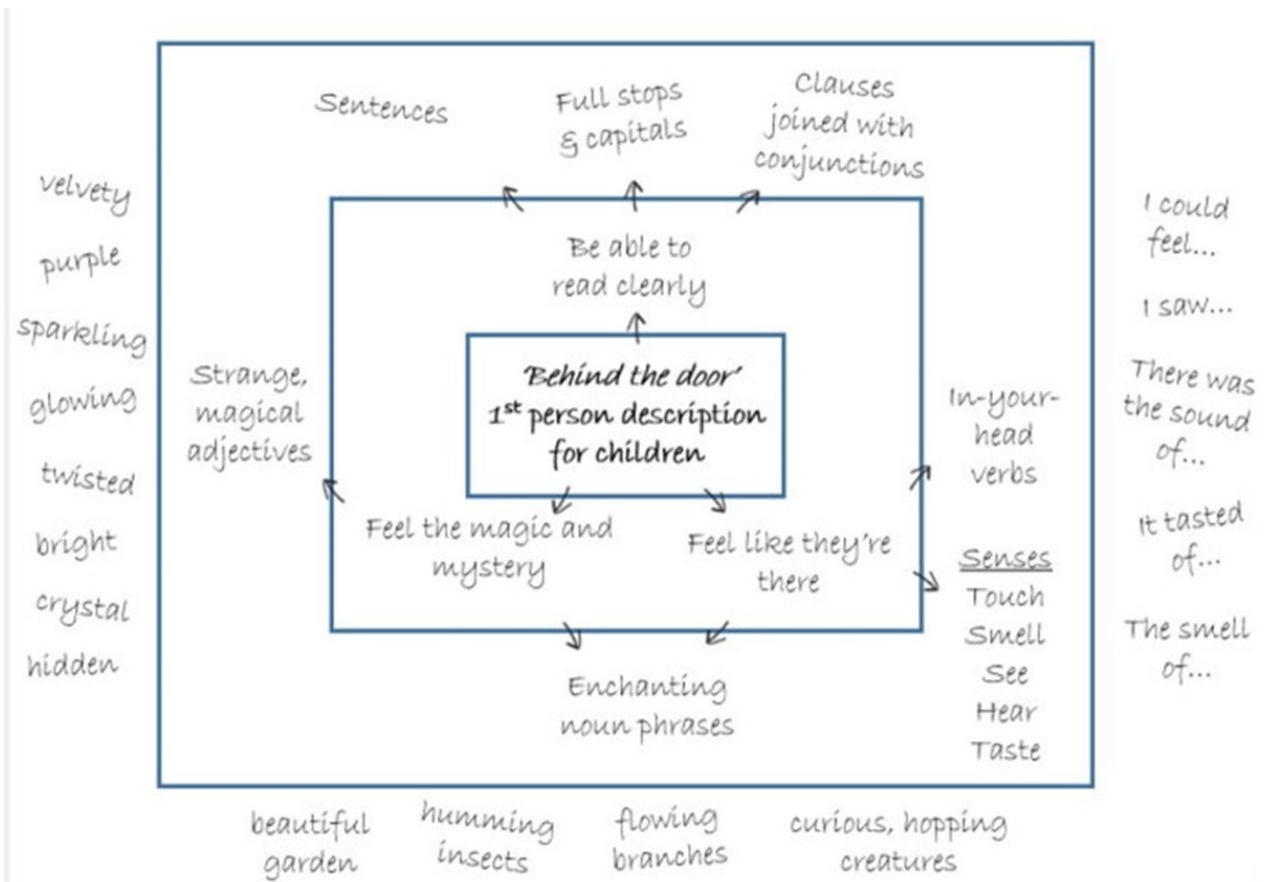
**[40 marks]**

# Planning

You must plan your response first. This will help you to structure your writing so that it is clear and concise.

Here is a planning grid to help you. After practising planning this way, you will soon be able to do this without the grid.

1. In the middle of the grid is the **task and the intended audience**. For this example, we are going to use the picture questions.
2. Outwards from this are the **intended 'effects'** on that audience of what the writing is meant to **provide for its readers**.
3. The next layer are the **ingredients—your ideas** which might help to achieve these effects—describe the building, the road, the weather
4. The final layer—consider **specific keywords, adjectives, impressive verbs**—**remember to show not tell the reader what is happening** - use **'frightening adjectives'** if you are trying to build tension.
5. Use the blank grid on the next page to plan your answer using the steps in the booklet to help you.



**Vocabulary – tier 2 ambitious vocabulary:**

**The writing features – form, structure and language:**

**Intended effect(s) on the reader:**

**Task:**

**Intended Audience:**

**Purpose:**

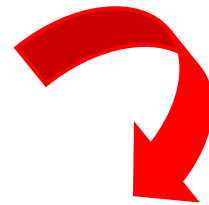
Lets look at the image that is provided for us in the question. We are to write a story about an unusual or disturbing place as suggested by this picture.



**1) Drop** the reader into the action.

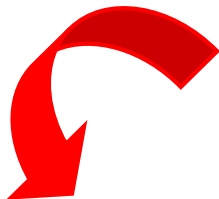
**Zoom in on** setting.

2) Describe **different aspects** of the setting.



**3) Shift** to introduce the character.

Describe their **thoughts or actions**.



4) Drop the reader into a **climatic moment**

Vocabulary – tier 2 ambitious vocabulary:

Surrounding the panicked survivors was a remote, barren, blistering hot landscape.

The writing ideas and features – form, structure and language:

5) Describe the detail nobody spotted – closely zoom in on the image

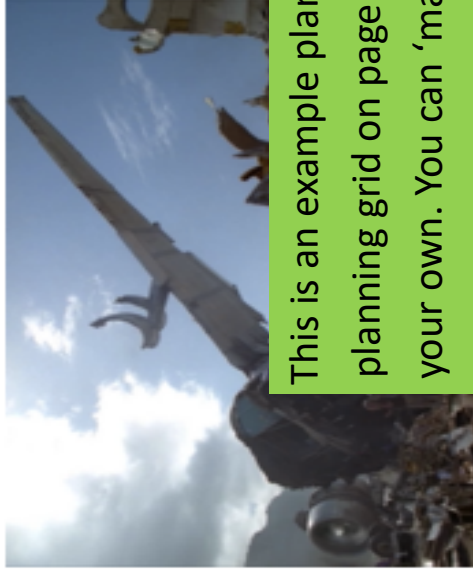
1) Zoom out and open with the azure blue, tranquil sky

billowing grey giants (clouds)

2) Then zoom in on the strange odours of gas (smells)

The curling smoke and fumes enclosed the wide beach

Intended effect(s) on the reader:



This is an example plan. Use the blank planning grid on page 49 to write out your own. You can 'magpie' ideas but don't copy all of them.

4) Zoom in on a small crowd of people on the beach

Chaos, crying and confusion swept the beach.

Screams, cry of terror, and sobs of despair

3) Change focus and move to zoom in on the dilapidated aeroplane

The dilapidated wing of the aeroplane was jutting out into the sky.

The whirring of the aeroplane was deafening.

## Possible structure—have you chosen the order of your paragraphs?

On this page, you will see a possible structure for your story. You don't have to use this structure, you can switch the order around to suit your story. However, if you are struggling to think about how to start writing, following this guide may help you.

- **Stage 1—Overview of setting (zoom out):** Detailed description of the scene in general. Focus on things like the time of day, the weather, the surroundings;
- **Stage 2—Zoom in one something/one:** Detailed description of a specific part of the scene eg a house, a person, a feature of the landscape etc
- **Stage 3—A change occurs/zoom out:** something happens to change the focus of the writing eg the weather changes (a storm begins), you move on in the scene (go through a door to another room), someone enters the scene (you can describe the person);
- **Stage 4—Describe the impact of the change on the scene/zoom in:** How does the weather change the appearance of the scene?
- **Stage 5—Overview of the setting again/zoom out:** Has it returned to normal, has it changed based on the events you have described? Has the mood changed since the beginning? Set the tone and atmosphere once again.

Label on your planning grid the order you plan on writing your story in.





## Vocabulary Choices

Have a look at these three words. Using the information about the root of the word, can you work out the definitions? Draw a line from the word to the correct definition.

### Match the word to the definition:

- A. **Dilapidated** = 'lapis' is the root word for stone or rock
- B. **Desolate** = the prefix 'de' can mean the removal of something
- C. **Foreboding** = the prefix 'fore' means before

1. Noun: fearful apprehension; a feeling that something bad will happen.
2. Adjective: (of a place) deserted of people and in a state of bleak and dismal emptiness.
3. Adjective: (of a building or object) in a state of disrepair or ruin as a result of age or neglect.

Turn the page for the answers!

**Match the word to the definition:**

A. **Dilapidated** = 'lapis' is the root word for stone or rock

B. **Desolate** = the prefix 'de' can mean the removal of something

C. **Foreboding** = the prefix 'fore' means before

1. Noun: fearful apprehension; a feeling that something bad will happen.

2. Adjective: (of a place) deserted of people and in a state of bleak and dismal emptiness.

3. Adjective: (of a building or object) in a state of disrepair or ruin as a result of age or neglect.

Can you now find other adjectives to help you describe what is happening in the picture? Use a dictionary or thesaurus to help you. Write them down here with the definition so that you can refer to it when you're writing. Add any adjectives you want to use to your planning grid.

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## Different sentence types

It is really important in your exam that you vary your sentence types throughout your writing. This makes your story much more interesting to read and it also gives you the chance to add more information into your story arc. Have a look at these different types of sentences. Can you match them up to the examples underneath?

Sentence Type
More, more, more sentence
Colons to clarify
Distance (closer, nearer, further)/more sentence
Not only, but also sentence
Repeat and develop ideas sentence

The more time that passed, the more anxious I felt, the more I wanted to shut my eyes and for this all to be over.

I felt petrified and astonished - petrified that I was in a living hell, yet astonished that I was still somehow alive.

I just wanted one thing: home.

The closer I got to the man, the more nauseous and faint I felt.

Not only was I terrified and in pain, but it appeared that was the least of my worries.

## Did you get them right?

The more time that passed, the more anxious I felt, the more I wanted to shut my eyes and for this all to be over.

The closer I got to the man, the more nauseous and faint I felt.

Sentence Type
More, more, more sentence
Colons to clarify
Distance (closer, nearer, further)/more sentence
Not only, but also sentence
Repeat and develop ideas sentence

I just wanted one thing: home.

Not only was I terrified and in pain, but it appeared that was the least of my worries.

I felt petrified and astonished - petrified that I was in a living hell, yet astonished that I was still somehow alive.

Now have a go at writing your own examples of the different sentence types. Think of sentences that you can use in your story. You can get ideas from the examples above

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## Let's start writing!

This next part of the booklet is going to take you through writing each paragraph of your story. It will follow the structure that was outlined on page 52. However, you do not have to use this structure and can swap the paragraphs around.

### **Paragraph 1: Drop the reader into the action/scene: Zoom in on the setting**

*My eyes blarily opened to reveal the wreckage and chaos that confronted me. The humidity struck me like lighting, causing beads of sweat to swamp my body. Birds cawed and took flight from their nests, unsettled by the heat. Rain and thunder were coming, as I watched the ominous clouds tower over me. Panic filled my body and gripped me.*

- In front of me stretched a.....
- The scorching searing sun beamed down...
- Smoke penetrated the sky and covered the...



Now have a go at writing your own paragraph 1 here:

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**Paragraph 2: Shift and zoom in on the setting - the beach:**

*The image of a sandy beach with an azure blue sea flooded my senses; it ran for miles, with only sheer rock and wind for company. It was a desolate place. Disrupting my gaze of the scenery, I was startled by a piercing scream which filled the air.*

**Paragraph 3: Zoom in on another aspect and create a sensory description:**

*A chill crept down my spine and the hairs on my neck stood up. Suddenly a pain surged through my arm and I noticed how I was bleeding profusely from my left arm. Disturbed by the scream, I gradually stumbled up on to my feet and stood in a state of shock. Hearing further yells and cries, I crept out of the clearing and was met with carnage.*

Your paragraph 2:

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Your paragraph 3:

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**Paragraph 4: Shift and zoom in on the setting - the beach or the aeroplane:**

*The image of a sandy beach with an azure blue sea flooded my senses. The beach ran for miles, with only sheer rock and wind for company. It was a desolate place.*

*Disrupting my gaze of the scenery, I was startled by a piercing scream which filled the air.*

*Flames licked the plane like fire on wood and the memory of the plane crash came back to me, like a film previously set on pause. The plane had rapidly fallen from the sky and smashed on the beach – the sound had been deafening and I had been thrown out of the plane, like a doll. As I came back to my present senses, I realised the air was alive with panic. A blonde girl screamed for her brother; a man lay over his dying wife, a child cried for his mother; and a passenger, bloodied by the crash, screamed with pain.*

- Hearing the roar of the engine as it.....
- The .....sound **amplified** and deafened...
- Sweltering fierce flames **lingered** amongst...
- Scorching flames **engulfed**....



Your paragraph 4:

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**Paragraph 5: End on a cliff-hanger/ drop the reader into a climatic moment:**

*Without warning, a crack of thunder sounded and rain began to fall, I was close to the dangling aeroplane wing, but a familiar voice made me turn in an instant.*

Without warning a.....

Flames curled, chased and surrounded.....

A foreboding creaking sound grew louder then....



Your paragraph 5:

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### Self-assessment

This is a very simple version of the mark scheme that the examiner will use to mark your stories. Go back through your paragraphs and check that you have included all of these things. If you need to add anything in, use a different colour pen so that your teacher can see your corrections.

AO5 (content/organisation) 24 marks	A06 (SPaG) 16 marks
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. A range of techniques</li> <li>2. Well-chosen vocabulary</li> <li>3. Paragraphed clearly and accurately</li> <li>4. Sensory details</li> <li>5. Zooming in and out</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Simple punctuation used accurately ; , ? !</li> <li>2. A range of punctuation used</li> <li>3. A range of sentence structures</li> <li>4. A range of sentence start-ers</li> <li>5. Spelling of vocabulary is accurate</li> </ol>



## Writing practice

The next part of the booklet is going to take you through additional practise questions.

Your aim is to approach these in the same way we did for the aeroplane picture.

There is also a selection of model answers and example responses. It will be your job to decide if it is a good response or not, and if not, what could be done to make it better.



1) List three effects that you would want the reader to feel when they you're your description. E.g. enthralled, excited and/or tense.

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8) Choose a more ambitious word for each of the following:

RED →

FAST →

SPIN →

LIGHTS →

7) Rewrite the description so that it includes a colon:

The atmosphere was thrilling, so many lights, flashes, sounds and spinning figures.

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2) Plan what you will describe in each paragraph – remember to consider the senses and how you will zoom in & out of the scene:

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6) Correct the punctuation in this description:

They spun faster. And faster. Faster than a meteor crashing to earth, the world blurred around them until they couldn't tell what was real and what was a dream. Scream's filled the air, when would this end!

5) Write the opening sentences

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3) Use Show Don't Tell to show the reader this event – describe the sounds and movements:

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4) Rewrite the following clichés and come up with original similes / metaphors:

Fast as a bullet →

Lights flashed like twinkling stars →

The howled like wolves →



In what ways does this response meet the success criteria?  
What could be developed?

*As night falls, the fairground glows luminous against the black sky. The fair is a myriad of colours: dazzling lights flash and flicker; rides accelerate, hurtling through the air; rich scents waft through the air. The place is alive with booming music, exhilarated screams, delighted squeals and cheerful shouts. The air is filled with the mouth-watering aromas of sizzling hot-dogs, fluffy candyfloss, spiced apples and sugary donuts. Some stalls sell hamburgers oozing with burnt onions; others sell sweet treats of steaming coffee.*

*Colossal, spinning rides with vibrant, pulsating lights tower over the excited visitors. A roller coaster spirals and coils, which makes it look like an elongated snake twisting through the fair. Excited, thrilled, delighted children race to join the spectacular rides. A lone girl waits by the big wheel smiling and tapping her feet (inside she is petrified of the dizzying heights).*

*Anxious and agitated, excited and expectant a teenager stands huddled in a long queue. The roller coaster is wild and rapid: it is the biggest and most famous in England. High above the fair-ground, voices cry out and shriek with laughter. The riders are exhilarated, exhilarated because they are zooming rapidly along the tracks.*

*The dodgems, which are sparkling with luminous pink lights, whirls and revolves uncontrollably. The more the ride spins, the more the children scream.*

AO5 (content/organisation) 24 marks	AO6 (SPaG) 16 marks
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. A range of techniques</li> <li>2. Well-chosen vocabulary</li> <li>3. Paragraphed clearly and accurately</li> <li>4. Sensory details</li> <li>5. Zooming in and out</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Simple punctuation used accurately ; , ? !</li> <li>2. A range of punctuation used</li> <li>3. A range of sentence structures</li> <li>4. A range of sentence starters</li> <li>5. Spelling of vocabulary is accurate</li> </ol>



Use this space to re-write the model paragraph, making improvements based on what you annotated.

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**Next practice image...**



Firstly, decide simply who this man is, why he is here and what has happened to him.

The task: imagine you are this man.

What can you see around you? What do you hear?

Where are you? How do you feel?

Aim to write 1-2 paragraphs.





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### STUDY REAL WRITERS AND THEIR TECHNIQUES.

*“Going up that river was like travelling back to the earliest beginnings of the world, when vegetation rioted on the earth and the big trees were kings. An empty stream, a great silence, an impenetrable forest. The air was warm, thick, heavy, sluggish. There was no joy in the brilliance of sunshine. The long stretches of the waterway ran on, deserted, into the gloom of over-shadowed distances. On silvery sandbanks hippos and alligators sunned themselves side by side. The broadening waters flowed through a mob of wooded islands; you lost your way on that river as you would in a desert, and butted all day long against shoals, trying to find the channel, till you thought yourself bewitched and cut off for ever from everything you had known once - somewhere - far away - in another existence perhaps. There were moments when one’s past came back to one, as it will sometimes when you have not a moment to spare to yourself; but it came in the shape of an unrestful and noisy dream, remembered with wonder amongst the overwhelming realities of this strange world of plants, and water, and silence. And this stillness of life did not in the least resemble a peace. It was the stillness of an implacable force brooding over an inscrutable intention. It looked at you with a vengeful aspect. I got used to it afterwards; I did not see it any more; I had no time.”*

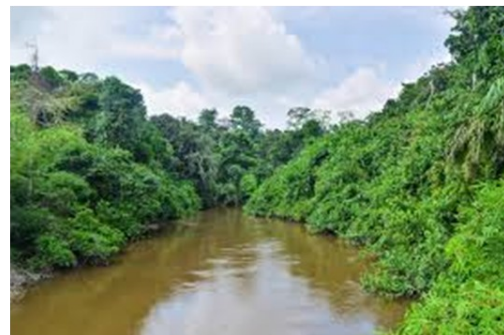
Create a key:

Highlight the **nouns related to nature.**

Highlight the **adjectives.**

Highlight the words which create a sense of **oppression and despair.**

Highlight **specific punctuation types.**



**What overall impression does he create of the river Congo?**

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Either:

Write a description based on this image. 40 marks.



Or:

You are walking home late from school and a storm strikes. Describe what happened to you. 40 marks



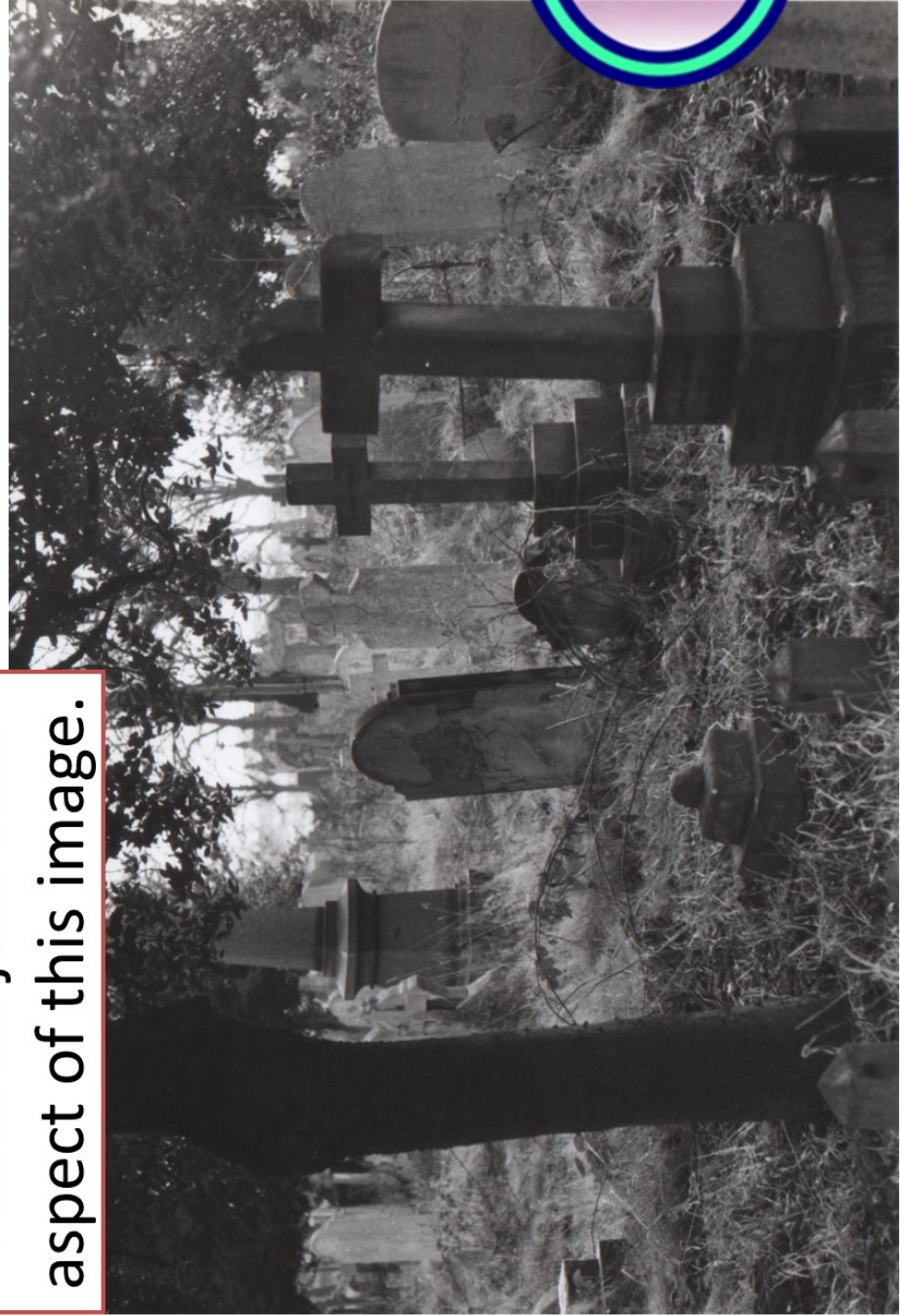
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## Developing strength in description...

Focus on just **ONE** aspect of this image.



- Mist?
- Colour/light/shade?
- Trees?
- Specific grave stone?

Write a short description focussing **MAINLY** on your chosen element.



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Develop and improve this extract.

*The lights were bright as I strolled along the embankment. I looked at the huge wheel and imagined myself at the top. I was very happy. Everything was going right for me. I was glad I had moved to the city.*



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Now that we have practised many questions/ partial questions/ planned (etc.), YOU should be able to ANTICIPATE what the question could be based on the image. HAVE GO AT DOING THIS!

Either:

Write ... 40 marks.



Or:

... 40 marks

What might these questions be?

Remember one is based on the image and one is loosely connected to it.

The questions could be narrative, description or both!  
Create them now.

Is this similar to what you came up with?

Either:

Write a description based on the image and what is happening in it. 40 marks.



Or:

Describe a time in your life when you felt, lonely, sad or isolated and what happened to make you feel that way. 40 marks

Try either of these questions or one of your own!



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