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Introduction

This paper is called *Paper 1 Explorations in creative reading and writing*. It is 1 hour and 45 minutes long. You are advised to spend 15 minutes reading the source material, which will be an extract from a piece of previously unseen fiction. Other times are indicated in each section of the revision guide.

Section A: Reading

You will read an extract from a literature fiction text in order to consider how an established writer uses narrative and descriptive techniques to capture the interest of readers.

Question 1

Summary of the question

You will list four details from a section of the extract. You should spend 5 minutes on this question.

Sample Question

- 1) Read again the first part of the source, lines 1 to 7.

List four things from this part of the text about the weather in Cornwall.

[4 marks]

How to approach the task

You should consider the following steps:

- Ensure you know exactly which part of the text you are being asked about
- Ensure you know exactly which topic or character you are being asked about

Question 2

Summary of the question

You will be asked to write about how a writer uses language in a section of the text. You should spend 10 minutes on this question.

Sample question

Look in detail at this extract from lines 8 to 18 of the source:

The wind came in gusts, at times shaking the coach as it travelled round the bend of the road, and in the exposed places on the high ground it blew with such force that the whole body of the coach trembled and swayed, rocking between the high wheels like a drunken man.

The driver, muffled in a greatcoat to his ears, bent almost double in his seat in a faint attempt to gain shelter from his own shoulders, while the dispirited horses plodded sullenly to his command, too broken by the wind and the rain to feel the whip that now and again cracked above their heads, while it swung between the numb fingers of the driver.

The wheels of the coach creaked and groaned as they sank into the ruts on the road, and sometimes they flung up the soft spattered mud against the windows, where it mingled with the constant driving rain, and whatever view there might have been of the countryside was hopelessly obscured.

How does the writer use language here to describe the effects of the weather? You could include the writer's choice of:

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

[8 marks]

How to approach the task

You should consider the following steps:

- Ensure you know exactly which bit of the text you are being asked about
- Ensure you know the topic you are being asked about
- Select specific word choices, language techniques (alliteration, puns, similes, metaphors etc) and sentence structures (minor sentences, frontloaded adverbials, anaphora etc) which create the effect you have been asked about
- Ensure you can comment on the effect or impression created by each feature you have selected

Structure of response/sentence stems

Statement (with reference to technique/word class): *The writer uses the (name of technique)...*

Quotation: *He/she says '.....' about/to describe*

Analysis: *The (word/phrase) '.....' connotes/suggests/implies...*

Impact on the reader: *which makes the reader.....*

Sample response

This is a 7 mark response

The writer's uses the word "gusts" of wind to describe them as a strong force. The fact that the wind came in gusts means it isn't a constant flowing wind and like waves and water it gathers energy then hits. The writer uses the word "exposed" to describe places on the high ground insinuating that there is a battle between the wind and the high ground. They describe the weather to be the stronger force and the high ground subject to it as the victim.

The writer also uses the simile, "like a drunken man" to describe the body of the coach rocking to illustrate how it is uncontrollable and has little balance.

The wind causing the coach to act "like a drunken man" also connotes that the coach has gone numb to the wind as it has grown used to it's ways.

Additionally, the author writes in long sentences littered with commas. This is a technique to slow down the reader reading much like how the cold, harsh weather seems to prolong time.

The weather affects the mood of the entire piece of writing and all living forms described in it. For example, the horses are "dispirited" displaying their resentment for the weather and the negative impact it has on them. The weather is described to almost take something away from the horses; like hope, they "plod sullenly to his command".

The writer uses the alliteration "soft splattered" when describing the mud to contrast with the harshness of the "constant driving rain" rain.

Question 3

Summary of the question

You will be asked to write about how the author has structured the extract and why they might have done this. You should spend 10 minutes on this question.

Sample Question

You now need to think about the whole of the source. This text is from the opening 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 the writer changes this focus as the source develops
- any other structural features that interest you.

[8 marks]

How to approach the task

You should consider the following steps:

- Consider how the extract starts
- How does the extract change or develop?
- Are there any contrasts?
- Does anything increase or decrease as the extract goes on?
- How does the extract end?
- For each of these, consider why the writer might have made this choice. What impact does it have on the reader and what does it help them to understand?

Structure of response/sentence stems

Statement (with reference to structural terminology): *The writer begins with _____ which suggests...*

Quotation: *He/she says '.....'*

Analysis: *The (structural feature): '.....' connotes/suggests/implies...*

Impact on the reader: *which makes the reader.....*

The text moves on to _____, creating the impression that...

A change is seen when _____, which makes the reader understand...

By ending the section with _____, the writer...

Sample Response

This is an 8 mark response.

The writer purposely starts the novel describing the weather to create an atmosphere for the novel using a technique called pathetic fallacy. This captures the reader's attention as it forms an unusual aura about the novel.

The terrific weather may also foreshadow an event later on in the novel or be an explanation for why a later event occurred

In the second paragraph the writer begins to create tension as, "the whole body of the coach trembled and swayed". The reader now is sensing danger and wants to continue to read.

The passage progresses to speak first about the bus driver and then the people in the bus. The writer may have intentionally described the driver "bent over his seat" first so we feel sympathy towards him before we hear the passengers view on the situation and their complaints.

There is a change in perspective as the author goes onto feature the people traveling on the coach. The author especially draws attention to the "red-faced women in a blue coat" who seemingly is annoying with her remarks. Lastly we are introduced "Mary Yellan" - the only character we currently know the name of. Mary Yellan could potentially be a main character in the novel as her name is the only one identified and she is the one we are introduced to last. The writer may have purposely introduced us to Mary last to make her more memorable as she is most likely more important than the bus driver who is only mentioned briefly.

The description of Mary is quite intriguing as she seems to be the only character with "desperate interest that some ray of light would break the heavy blanket of sky". The writer may be intentionally associating Mary with a ray of light or hope so as the reader we have a connection or like her.

The passage ends with Mary reminiscing about the lost blue heaven that had mantled Helford yesterday echoing the beginning of the novel where the author states "the weather had changed overnight." The references to a glorious yesterday may be implying that events have taken a sudden turn for the worst and a dramatic event will arise. Throughout the passage the author repeats the fact about the atrocious weather with the people on the coach reiterating and the women stating "it is the dirtiest night she ever remembered. The repetition is used to remind the reader of the mood of the novel and that trouble lies ahead – foreshadowing.

Question 4

Summary of the Question

You will be given a statement about the extract. You will be asked to give your supported opinion on this statement. This will include exploring how the writer has used methods in the extract so that you can give a fully considered opinion of the statement. You should spend 20 minutes on this question.

Sample Question

Focus this part of your answer on the second part of the source, from line 19 to the end.

A student, having read this section of the text said: "The writer brings the very different characters to life for the reader. It is as if you are inside the coach with them."

To what extent do you agree?

In your response, you could:

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

[20 marks]

How to approach the task

You should consider the following steps:

- Ensure you know which bit of the extract you are being asked about
- Consider the statement you are being asked to agree or disagree with. Break it down. There may be more than one opinion in it
- Consider whether you agree with each part of the statement, and how far you agree. You may think it is partly true
- Select details from the extract which support your opinion.
- Consider how the writer's use of methods make you agree or disagree with each part of the statement

Structure of the response/sentence stems

Statement (with reference to own opinions): I agree that because....
Quotation: *When the writer says*
Evaluate/analyse: *This makes the reader think of..... which is effective because..... and supports my view that.....*

Sample response

This is a 17 mark response

I agree with this statement to a certain extent as despite describing the appearance of one of the characters the author only scrapes the surface about each one and their current actions.

The "old fellow" who had kept up a constant complaint is portrayed first. He is clearly very on edge and is a character not afraid to voice his opinion as he hurls abuse at the driver, "cursing him in a high petulant voice". The fact that the author describes the man's voice to be of a "high" pitch shows he is panicked about the situation and he is worried for his safety as a person's voice raising in pitch is a result of that.

The word "petulant" indicates the man is bad tempered and sulky, like a child, which contrasts with his appearance of being an "old fellow". By cursing the driver the man also appears to be ill mannered and when he lets the window down, consequently "bringing a shower of rain upon himself and his fellow passengers," he is displayed as being inconsiderate to others. The man may feel he holds more importance than the other passengers on the coach as there are no apologies given for his actions after having "thoroughly chilled the interior of the coach," This statement may not just be physically due to the cold weather but also down to the cold, awkward atmosphere the man has created inside the bus after his petulant shouts.

Additionally, the man "mutters into his beard", which is a sign the man is lonely or prefers to be in the presence of just himself rather than others. The fact the man likes to be alone may be why he is so rude to the driver as he isn't used to human company, especially when he isn't in control of the situation.

Neighbouring the man is "a jovial, red-faced woman in a blue cloak,". The woman's red-face indicates she is out of breath and may potentially be unfit. This is confirmed when "she brought out a great hunk of cake and plunged into it." The woman eats the cake for comfort and it seems like a natural response when she was, "burrowing into the depths of a large basket". The woman appears to be used to stressful situations as she is more calm than the old man and also is sociable and likes to be noticed, "sighed heavily."

Section B: Writing to Describe or Narrate

Summary of the question

You will be given a choice of questions on this section. One of the questions will ask you to use an image as a prompt. You will choose to either narrate or describe. You should spend 45 minutes on this question.

How to approach the task

You should consider the following steps:

- What are you being asked to write about? Make sure you are clear on the topic
- Are you describing or narrating? Make sure you use the key features of each one
- Plan your response – ensure it includes relevant details and language choices, and think about how you will structure your writing

Sample Question

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.

You are going to enter a creative writing competition.

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

Either:

Write a description suggested by this picture:



OR

Write the opening part of a story about a place that is severely affected by the weather.

(24 marks for content and organisation

16 marks for technical accuracy)

[40 marks]

Sample response

This is a 23 mark response for content and organisation with 15 marks for technical accuracy.

The air was not peaceful on the fourteenth of April: the renowned April Showers had been replaced with colossal winds, able to knock the largest of men off of their feet, and sweeping, gargantuan waves, colliding harshly with the weary metal structures of passing trains, dangerously close to the coast.

Although this weather had come to be expected in the deep South-West of Cornwall, the tenacious nature of it was unmatched. It was as if all the weather in England had been focused onto one point, in a ruthless attack against humanity from the blackened clouds above.

A single train, still running, typically British, ignorant to the danger it was in; it's old, rusted casing creaked against the wind and was assaulted by barrages of icy salt water. The once reassuring sound of the solid wheels clanking along the railway was now but a far off memory to the train's few passengers, instead of being replaced by the constant onslaught of the elements.

The light was dim onboard the tired train, the illuminating lights in the carriages, having been drenched in sea water, were no longer operational. All that was left was the bleak natural light, distorted through the cascading waterfalls on the windows.

Four people dared such a treacherous journey: a man, slim and measly, sat uncomfortably, staring nervously at his watch, fiddling with it obsessively; a woman, young and free, caged within an ancient, metal box, staring deeply into the window; another woman, an older lady, arms crossed looking forward and impatiently tapping her foot.

Finally, there was the driver, the one man stubborn enough to take on such a perilous journey. A large, arrogant fool of a man, ready to risk life and limb on a scenic train trip around the coast of Cornwall. Despite his increased age, he was a child; a lucky, death defying child.

Attacked ferociously, the train began to shake ever so slightly, weaving with the omnipotent gale. The distressed man scanned every corner of the train, still meddling with his watch noisily, whilst the two women still sat, unphased by the creaks of the dying train.

A large jolt. The train bounced two feet into the air, forcing the passengers to fly up from their seats. Screeching furiously, the wheels slid across the tracks, as the driver wrestled to regain control. The carriage, now filled with screams and wails, was pushed sideways, thus causing the whole train to turn on itself.

The final moments of the train's life. A wave, unlike any wave before, crashed into the momentary metal coffin, with the fury of the wind on its side. Clangs of metal echoed as the wheels of the train escaped the tracks, pushing the can of humans onto its side.

Travelling at thirty miles per hour, the train collided sharply with the untamed sea. Water began filling the driver's cabin, engulfing the already unconscious driver, as he allowed his own demise.

The water of death crashed through the carriage windows. The young woman was carried with the water and crushed against the opposite wall. Accepting her fate she closed her eyes and waited for her breath to be lost to the depths. The wall gave way behind her, sucking her out of the train and into the raging sea. Although ready for death, she used all of her strength to swim to the surface. Feeling the cold hand of death take her, she attempted a final breath as her vision became dark.

A tug on her back, sharply pulled her upwards and out of the deathly water.

Sample Extract (Used in the Sample Questions and Responses)

This extract is from the opening of a novel by Daphne du Maurier. Although written in 1936 it is set in the past. In this section a coach and horses, with its passengers, is making its way through Cornwall to Jamaica Inn. Jamaica Inn It was a cold grey day in late November.

The weather had changed overnight, when a backing wind brought a granite sky and a mizzling rain with it, and although it was now only a little after two o'clock in the afternoon the pallor of a winter evening seemed to have closed upon the hills, cloaking them in mist. It would be dark by four. The air was clammy cold, and for all the tightly closed windows it penetrated the interior of the coach. The leather seats felt damp to the hands, and there must have been a small crack in the roof, because now and again little drips of rain fell softly through, smudging the leather and leaving a dark-blue stain like a splodge of ink.

The wind came in gusts, at times shaking the coach as it travelled round the bend of the road, and in the exposed places on the high ground it blew with such force that the whole body of the coach trembled and swayed, rocking between the high wheels like a drunken man.

The driver, muffled in a greatcoat to his ears, bent almost double in his seat in a faint endeavour to gain shelter from his own shoulders, while the dispirited horses plodded sullenly to his command, too broken by the wind and the rain to feel the whip that now and again cracked above their heads, while it swung between the numb fingers of the driver.

The wheels of the coach creaked and groaned as they sank into the ruts on the road, and sometimes they flung up the soft spattered mud against the windows, where it mingled with the constant driving rain, and whatever view there might have been of the countryside was hopelessly obscured.

The few passengers huddled together for warmth, exclaiming in unison when the coach sank into a heavier rut than usual, and one old fellow, who had kept up a constant complaint ever since he had joined the coach at Truro, rose from his seat in a fury; and, fumbling with the window-sash, let the window down with a crash, bringing a shower of rain upon himself and his fellow-passengers. He thrust his head out and shouted up to the driver, cursing him in a high petulant voice for a rogue and a murderer; that they would all be dead before they reached Bodmin if he persisted in driving at breakneck speed; they had no breath left in their bodies as it was, and he for one would never travel by coach again.

Whether the driver heard him or not was uncertain: it seemed more likely that the stream of reproaches was carried away in the wind, for the old fellow, after waiting a moment, put up the window again, having thoroughly chilled the interior of the coach, and, settling himself once more in his corner, wrapped his blanket about his knees and muttered in his beard.

His nearest neighbour, a jovial, red-faced woman in a blue cloak, sighed heavily, in sympathy, and, with a wink to anyone who might be looking and a jerk of her head towards the old man, she remarked for at least the twentieth time that it was the dirtiest night she ever remembered, and she had known some; that it was proper old weather and no mistaking it for summer this time; and, burrowing into the depths of a large basket, she brought out a great hunk of cake and plunged into it with strong white teeth.

Mary Yellan sat in the opposite corner, where the trickle of rain oozed through the crack in the roof. Sometimes a cold drip of moisture fell upon her shoulder, which she brushed away with impatient fingers.

She sat with her chin cupped in her hands, her eyes fixed on the window splashed with mud and rain, hoping with a sort of desperate interest that some ray of light would break the heavy blanket of sky, and but a momentary trace of that lost blue heaven that had mantled Helford yesterday shine for an instant as a forerunner of fortune.

Suggested study guides/resources

Printed Study Guides (available on Amazon UK)

- New GCSE English Language AQA Revision Guide - for the Grade 9-1 Course
- New GCSE English Language AQA Workbook - for the Grade 9-1 Course (includes Answers)

Suggested revision tasks

- a. Choose a section from a novel. List four key details from the extract.
- b. Choose a section from a novel. Pick out 5 words that stand out to you as important. Note down why each word stands out to you.
- c. Using a section from a novel, create a mind-map of language devices used in the extract. For each one, note down what the device suggests.
- d. Using a section of a novel, note down how the section starts, develops and ends. Think about why the writer has chosen to structure it this way.
- e. Discuss a section of a novel with another person. Explain to them what feelings you think a character is having and ask if they agree with you.
- f. Find a photograph in a magazine. Write a description based on the image.
- g. Read the opening of a novel. Pick out five things the writer does to make this a good piece of writing. Write your own opening, making sure to use all five of these features. Label your writing when you are done to show where you have used each one.
- h. Complete the practice paper at the back of this guide.

Practice Paper

Extract – Taken from the opening of Great Expectations by Charles Dickens

Ours was the marsh country, down by the river, within, as the river wound, twenty miles of the sea. My first most vivid and broad impression of the identity of things, seems to me to have been gained on a memorable raw afternoon towards evening. At such a time I found out for certain, that this bleak place overgrown with nettles was the churchyard; and that Philip Pirrip, late of this parish, and also Georgiana wife of the above, were dead and buried; and that Alexander, Bartholomew, Abraham, Tobias, and Roger, infant children of the aforesaid, were also dead and buried; and that the dark flat wilderness beyond the churchyard, intersected with dykes and mounds and gates, with scattered cattle feeding on it, was the marshes; and that the low leaden line beyond, was the river; and that the distant savage lair from which the wind was rushing, was the sea; and that the small bundle of shivers growing afraid of it all and beginning to cry, was Pip.

"Hold your noise!" cried a terrible voice, as a man started up from among the graves at the side of the church porch. "Keep still, you little devil, or I'll cut your throat!"

A fearful man, all in coarse grey, with a great iron on his leg. A man with no hat, and with broken shoes, and with an old rag tied round his head. A man who had been soaked in water, and smothered in mud, and lamed by stones, and cut by flints, and stung by nettles, and torn by briars; who limped, and shivered, and glared and growled; and whose teeth chattered in his head as he seized me by the chin.

"O! Don't cut my throat, sir," I pleaded in terror. "Pray don't do it, sir."

"Tell us your name!" said the man. "Quick!"

"Pip, sir."

"Once more," said the man, staring at me. "Give it mouth!"

"Pip. Pip, sir."

"Show us where you live," said the man. "Pint out the place!"

I pointed to where our village lay, on the flat in-shore among the alder-trees and pollards, a mile or more from the church.

The man, after looking at me for a moment, turned me upside down, and emptied my pockets. There was nothing in them but a piece of bread. When the church came to itself - for he was so sudden and strong that he made it go head over heels before me, and I saw the steeple under my feet - when the church came to itself, I say, I was seated on a high tombstone, trembling, while he ate the bread ravenously.

Practice Questions

Reading

1. Look at lines 1 – 10. List 4 details about Pip.
2. How does the writer use language here to describe Pip's surroundings? You could include the writer's choice of:
 - words and phrases
 - language features and techniques
 - sentence forms.

[8 marks]

3. You now need to think about the whole of the source. This text is from the opening 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 the writer changes this focus as the source develops
- any other structural features that interest you.

[8 marks]

4. A student, having read this extract said: "The writer makes us feeling really sorry for Pip."

To what extent do you agree?

In your response, you could:

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

[20 marks]

Writing

5. You are going to enter a creative writing competition.

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

Either:

Write a description suggested by this picture:



Or

Write the opening part of a story about a place where the light is fading.