

Examiners' Report  
June 2018

GCSE English Language 1EN0 01

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# Introduction

The Pearson Edexcel Level 1/Level 2 GCSE (9–1) in English Language is a linear course. It consists of two externally examined components and one endorsement for Spoken Language.

Paper 1 is worth 40% of the total GCSE and consists of two sections, lasting for one hour and forty-five minutes in total. Candidates are recommended to spend one hour on section A which tests reading with questions on an unseen 19th-century fiction extract of approximately 650 words.

There are four questions on the text which are stepped in difficulty with the following mark breakdown: Q1 = 1 mark, Q2 = 2 marks, Q3 = 6 marks and Q4 = 15 marks.

Questions 1 and 2 test AO1: Identify and interpret explicit and implicit information and ideas. Question 3 tests 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 and Question 4 tests AO4: evaluate texts critically and support this with appropriate textual references.

Section B tests writing and candidates are recommended to spend 45 minutes on this section which is worth a total of 40 marks, giving the paper a total of 64 marks. In this section, there is a choice of two writing tasks, linked by a theme to the reading extract. One of the writing tasks provides two images that students can use to help them generate ideas for their writing. Students can write a response that draws on just one or neither of the images.

This is an untiered specification and the choice of texts and questions set are such that all candidates are able to access the paper and to show their abilities in reading and writing. The candidature of the paper increased in 2018, indicating its relative popularity with centres and in the summer of 2018 candidates found the paper to be engaging and interesting and they responded well to all questions.

# Question 1

**Question 1:** The majority of candidates successfully achieved the one mark that was available for this question.

The intention of this low mark tariff question is to help candidates to settle and to improve showed their confidence at the start of the examination. This question requires understanding of the first part of bullet 1 of AO1: identify. The examples below indicate the most common responses with most candidates able to successfully answer this question with a single word, numerical answer, though the answer 'several' was accepted as was the full phrase, 'three or four'; all of these responses were awarded the single mark that was available.

In the few instances where candidates were unsuccessful, they either chose a section of the text from lines 1-3 which did not answer the question or chose text from outside the line references given. The two important pieces of advice for this question is to focus only upon the lines given and to read the question so as to select the correct information. This question asks for a word or phrase and it is not necessary to offer any explanation or justification to achieve the one mark that is available.

## SECTION A: Reading

**Read the text in the Reading Text Insert provided and answer ALL questions.**

**You should spend about 1 hour on this section.**

**Write your answers in the spaces provided.**

- 1 From lines 1-3, identify a word or phrase that explains how many men are coming up the stairs.

"Several Men"

**(Total for Question 1 = 1 mark)**



This candidate correctly identifies one of the acceptable answers from the given lines and achieves the one mark that is available.



Make sure that you quote accurately from the passage using only words from the passage and not using your own words.

- 1 From lines 1-3, identify a word or phrase that explains how many men are coming up the stairs.

several ~~men~~ three or four of them



**ResultsPlus**  
Examiner Comments

This candidate chooses the other section of text that contains the correct answer to the question and so achieves the mark that is available for this question.



**ResultsPlus**  
Examiner Tip

Look at the line references carefully and make sure that you choose words or phrases from that section of the text and not from anywhere else.

- 1 From lines 1-3, identify a word or phrase that explains how many men are coming up the stairs.

but at that very instant several men<sup>11</sup>



**ResultsPlus**  
Examiner Comments

This candidate includes more words than is necessary to secure the available mark. Yet they have clearly made a selection from the passage and so has fulfilled the requirements of the Assessment Objective.



**ResultsPlus**  
Examiner Tip

Make sure that you select only a word or phrase to answer the question. If you copy a large part of the given lines, you will not be given the mark as you will not have made a selection of the key word or phrase needed.

## Question 2

**Question two** is worth two marks and, like question one, tests candidates' ability to identify and interpret explicit and implicit information and ideas.

Candidates generally fared well on this question often including more points than needed as key phrases were copied appropriately. The most popular answers on this question were 'in a flash' and 'darted'. Candidates who tried to 'use their own words' often made a generalised comments that were not sufficiently focused to achieve the marks .

This question develops from question one by asking candidates to focus upon a longer section of text and by allowing candidates to express answers in their own words as well as using quotations from the text. The question asked candidates to 'give two ways in which the speed of events is shown.' The layout, with its use of separate lines numbered 1 and 2 is intended to structure the answer for candidates and to ensure that they include two ways, in order to gain the two marks that are available.

This question was answered successfully by the majority of candidates. Where candidates were unsuccessful they struggled to pick out potential answers or in using their own words lacked the precision needed to gain the marks. Other unsuccessful answers referred to text from outside the line references given.

Many students made the same error – either writing out extensive quotations which showed their lack of confidence or quoted too much and just happened to have the correct answer within the quote.

This cost many students a second mark on the question, while others also lost out by using quotes which were not on the mark scheme. So practising locating individual words or phrases would help to ensure students continue to respond well to this question.

**2** From lines 4-14, give **two** ways in which the speed of events is shown.

You may use your own words or quotations from the text.

1 'darted through the open door'

2 'in a flash'



**ResultsPlus**  
Examiner Comments

'Darted through' and 'in a flash' both successfully show the speed of events in this part of the passage and so this answer achieves two marks. This is a succinct and focused response to the question that chooses to use quotations rather than the candidate's own words.



Make sure that you only refer to the section in the lines given and do not quote from, or make reference to, things that happen elsewhere in the passage.

2 From lines 4-14, give **two** ways in which the speed of events is shown.

You may use your own words or quotations from the text.

1 "He darted through the open door in a flash."

2 "In the very nick of ~~the~~ time: they were already on the landing."



This is an example of an answer that does more than it needs to do to gain the two marks available. There will always be more words and phrases for you to find than the minimum number identified in the marks.



Use the layout of the page and the numbered lines in the answer to help you lay out your answer clearly, making sure that you have given two distinct points in your answer.

2 From lines 4-14, give **two** ways in which the speed of events is shown.

You may use your own words or quotations from the text.

- 1 "when suddenly" shows a fast speed due to the urgency
- 2 "darted through the open door in a flash" show the fast movement



The answer achieves two marks because it successfully identifies two of the phrases from the mark scheme. However, this answer also chooses to try and offer some explanations for the phrases it has selected. The question does not ask you to do this and whilst it is not incorrect, it does take up valuable time doing something in the examination that you don't have to do. It also suggests that the candidate may not have read the question carefully and may not be fully clear about what is being asked for. Nevertheless, it achieves full marks.



Always read the question carefully and make sure that you only do what the question asks you to do.



## Question 3

**Question three** is worth six marks and tests candidates' ability to 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.

The most notable feature of this question is that it asks candidates to comment upon both language and structure. The mark scheme is split into three levels of two marks each with the instruction that, 'responses that are unbalanced cannot access Level 2 or above.' This is an important feature and one that centres should be aware of.

However candidates should use the mark tariff as a guide about how much to write in response in this question and it is quite possible to attain all six marks in the one page provided in the answer booklet. The issue of candidates spending too long on Q3 for the six available marks was raised with centres following the 2017 examination. That situation has improved but there are still a number of candidates spending too long responding to this question, at the expense of later questions on the paper. Centres should note that In order to access the marks in levels two and three, it is not necessary for the language and structure comments to be equally weighted, only that the answer must contain an analysis of both.

Less successful answers sometimes made little reference to the focus of the question, 'tension'; in addition, some candidates wrote only about language or structure, often quite well, but could not achieve more than 2 marks. Stronger answers were those that offered an analysis of both features and which were focused upon how these were used to show the narrator's thoughts and feelings. Weaker responses wrote about only language or structure or only offered comments upon features and did not clearly explain the effects that the writer had sought to achieve and were not able to examine in detail those features and so reach the marks in levels two and three.

The most popular responses focused on the use of rhetorical questions for language and the use of short sentences for structure.

3 In lines 15-26, how does the writer use language and structure to build tension?

Support your views with reference to the text.

The writer creates a semantic field of speed in the text which keeps the reader on edge as things are moving fast under pressure, which helps build tension successfully - 'quickly, already, run, quicken'. The verb 'run' highlights the idea of having to move at a quick pace and escape the situation also.

The use of exclamation marks adds a dramatic effect, as it expresses the feeling of panic - 'No good! No good!'. The writer also uses repetition here which exaggerates his panic and erratic behaviour, building tension in the extract.

The sentence length in this section is also very long, showing that he has many things going through his head, that are becoming too much - 'He knew full well that they were.....' this also builds a lot of tension.



This answer successfully presents language and structure analysis and so does not limit its access to the full range of marks. The candidate looks at the relevant semantic field appropriately and is focused and selective in its use of support. There is a simple and effective comment on the verb 'run' made appropriately. The second paragraph moves on from language analysis to make structural points about exclamation marks, the use of repetition and an interesting interpretation of sentence length. There is a consistent focus on the question throughout and analysis of both language and structure that includes features of vocabulary, sentence structure, punctuation and other language features that meets all of the demands of Level. The answer selects references with discrimination and uses them to clarify the interpretations made. Above all else, this is an answer that is focused upon addressing the question and not merely feature-spotting elements of language and structure. It achieves the six marks available.



It is important to include comments on both features of language and structure. If you do not do this, you will limit the range of marks that your answer can be awarded.

3 In lines 15-26, how does the writer use language and structure to build tension?

Support your views with reference to the text.

As the section goes on, the sentences get shorter and therefore quicker, this shows ~~more~~ panic and running out of time, which creates tension. The first sentence in the paragraph, that starts at line 17, lasts six lines but the final sentences are a few words ~~each~~ each.

As the section continues more punctuation and more complex punctuation is used. At first there are <sup>mostly</sup> ~~mostly~~ commas, <sup>whereas</sup> ~~whereas~~ at the end there are lots of question and exclamation marks. This makes ~~more~~ the story quicker and more dramatic, therefore building up tension.



This answer has been included as an illustration of one that cannot move out of the Level 1 mark range because it only contains comments about structure. The first paragraph is correct in what it says but there is no textual evidence used in support of the point made about sentence lengths. The candidate is not able to offer any explanation as to how these are used to build tension. Therefore the answer is limited to Level 1 because of its lack of language points and within that it scores the lower of the two marks available because of its inability to explain. This answer scores one mark.



This question always asks, 'how does the writer', and so you must make sure that you explain your ideas clearly rather than simply finding relevant quotations or identifying that a particular language feature is used.

3 In lines 15-26, how does the writer use language and structure to build tension?

Support your views with reference to the text.

The writer uses structure to build tension. In the quote "Slip past them, run off!" shows the writer is using a pause break to make it more exaggerated. Having the pause break makes the text more intense and manic. In conclusion the writer purposely put the pause break there to make it more intense for the reader.

The writer uses language to build tension. In the quote "he does not quicken his stride;" shows the writer is using a verb to tell us how the person is moving about. Having a verb makes the quote more effective and detailed by having the word "stride". In conclusion the writer uses tension by using the words "quicken" and "stride" to tell the reader how the person is moving.

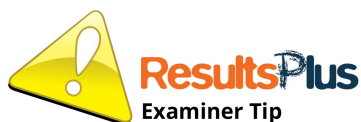
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The writer uses structure to build tension. In the quote "or hail a cab?" shows the writer is using a rhetorical question to show us his asking a question. Having a rhetorical question makes the text more interesting and effective. In conclusion the writer makes the reader think what the person might do next.

(Total for Question 3 = 6 marks)



This is an example of a mid-range response that scores a mark within Level 2. The initial point about structure comments on the use of the comma to exaggerate the pauses as a means of creating tension. The comment is repeated and is not very detailed, but it does represent a valid explanation and interpretation that this makes it more 'intense and manic'. The candidate adds another structural point towards the end of the answer about rhetorical questions and, although it is able to find relevant quotations, the explanation is clearly weaker than the point made in the first paragraph. The language point comments on the verb 'dared' and then identifies 'quicken' and 'stride', so there is some attempt at looking at word level detail. The answer achieves a mark of 3 because it comments upon language and structure though the quality of explanation is not sufficiently developed for a mark of 4.



Make sure that you always comment upon the reader and explain how the techniques used by the the writer are intended to affect them.

## Question 4

**Question four** is the highest mark tariff question in Section A and candidates would be wise to ensure that they allocate sufficient time to this question.

This question tests candidates' ability to evaluate texts critically and support their evaluations with appropriate textual references. The focus of evaluation is upon how well something has been achieved, not merely upon how it has been achieved; it is an assessment of the relative success of the writer rather than simply an explanation of the techniques that have been used.

Some candidates wrote successful analysis responses but lacked the evaluative language and the insights needed to access the higher mark levels. On the contrary, some students used evaluative language but used evidence in a limited way and were unable to explain the evidence in any detail. Answers which were Level 1 or 2 were often shorter and showed a limited understanding of the whole extract and the way the narrator's thoughts and feelings changed throughout the extract, which was crucial in being able to answer this question successfully.

It is true that in order to offer a meaningful evaluation one must be able to show a well-informed understanding of the text and be able to support this with close reference to the text. The focus of this question was upon the narrator's changing thoughts and feelings. Once again, candidates must focus upon the question asked if they are to be successful. Better answers offered wide-ranging evaluations that were closely focused upon the Assessment Objective and which used apt text selection to support the points being made. These answers often wrote about how a range of ideas in a section of the text worked together in a successful way for example, ellipsis, fragmented sentence structures and the emotive language was successful in communicating how panicked and distressed the narrator was. Weaker answers were often brief and showed only a partial understanding of the text, which limited their ability to evaluate how successfully the writer had achieved those effects.



- 4 In this extract, there is an attempt to show the narrator's changing thoughts and feelings.

Evaluate how successfully this is achieved.

Support your views with detailed reference to the text.

(15)

Throughout the text there is a successful attempt to show the narrator's changing thoughts and feelings. This is achieved through a variety of language and structural techniques which have been employed within the extract.

At the beginning of the text the ~~narrator~~<sup>writer</sup> shows that narrator is very optimistic and uses the quotation, "what will be, will be." This implies that he is rather laid back and is willing to accept his fate for what he has done and in my opinion reflects that he is quite an honest person deep down and is not afraid of anything.

Additionally later on in the text the writer employs carefully chosen verbs like, "darted" and "vacated"; to show how fast he had moved. The use of these verbs suggests to me that in his mind he is being told to rush around and is rather panicked about the situations that have occurred and that he took place in. The use of the specific verb enhances gives the audience a clearer idea of how scatty the narrator's thoughts were at that specific time.

Furthermore there is an employment of rhetorical questions such as, "Perhaps I should duck under one of these arches and wait it out in some stairwell?". The use of rhetorical questions gives the audience a clear image of what he is thinking and saying to himself. I feel like this really thoroughly explores how anxious he felt at that current time.

As well as that juxtaposition is employed to show how much his feelings and thoughts changed and how he began to worsen. This is shown through the quotation, "He turned in to more dead than alive.", this is effective because it really explores and gives a clear idea of what is going on not only in his physical state but also his mental state.

Overall there is a successful view of the narrator's change in thought and feelings throughout the text.



This is a response in Level 3. The opening paragraph is largely a restating of the question and does not attract any marks. The second paragraph identifies a spirit of optimism in the protagonist though it is not accurate to describe this as 'laid back' as the situation is a very tense one. There are some appropriate references such as those dealing with rushing around and the candidate is able to explain some thoughts and feelings with some comment. Judgement is not always informed as there are some general comments made, such as that about justification, which is not wholly clear. The Level 3 descriptor of 'explanation' is exemplified by the comment about rhetorical questions and the relevant supporting reference. This sits in the middle of Level 3 as there are some straightforward opinions about the text that do not really move into 'informed judgement' (bullet point 2 of the Level 3 criteria.)



Some candidates may find it useful to use a familiar way to structure their answer, such as PEE.

- 4 In this extract, there is an attempt to show the narrator's changing thoughts and feelings.

Evaluate how successfully this is achieved.

Support your views with detailed reference to the text.

(15)

In the extract the writer masterfully manipulates the tone and pace of the piece to reflect the narrator's changing thoughts and feelings.

At the start of the extract, in line 4, the narrator is very confident and bold with his actions. 'He made straight for them' is the writer's skilful way of showing the reader that the man of direct action, heading 'straight' for his aim. The writer's use of exclamatory sentences such as 'What will be, will be!' creatively shows the reader that the narrator has no fear about the situation at hand.

However, there is a tonal shift between lines 6 and 11 where 'suddenly', the narrator's attention diverts and we see a clear change in attitude. In line 11 the writer effectively portrays the contrast in the narrator's actions by describing how he 'hid on the other side of the wall'. The verb 'hid' connotes fear and presents a new side of the narrator to the reader. This fearful portrayal of the narrator continues further in the extract where the writer masterfully teaches the reader that the narrator 'knew full well... still for the

life of him dared not'. This shows the reader that all the previous confidence we'd seen from the narrator had turned into angst.

Another way in which the <sup>writer</sup> ~~writer~~ portrays the narrator's changing thoughts effectively is through the introduction of the concept of self doubt. The word 'perhaps' implies uncertainty, and followed by a sequence of questions with the "repetition of 'No good!'" shows the reader that the narrator is losing hope and growing more desperate as they lose confidence. In lines 27 and 30 the writer describes the narrator as 'more dead than alive' and 'feeble' - these both portray the narrator in an unkeen light. By successfully portraying the narrator to be almost lifeless, the writer vividly shows the reader the true effect that 'all these agonies' had on the narrator and show his gradual ~~descent~~ <sup>descent</sup> into a loss of all the previous personality traits we'd seen.

'He was in a state of near-oblivion' provides a clear contrast for the reader between the narrator at the start and end of the extract. The juxtaposition between his clear 'straight' aim at the start and 'near-oblivion' at the end shows the reader the struggle of the narrator and how much he had changed

throughout the ~~course~~<sup>rest</sup> of the extract.

The final paragraph, however, is a final attempt from the writer to present a defining thought in the narrator. The repetition of phrases such as 'yet' and 'but' are skilfully used by the narrator to show the narrator's perseverance and to portray the idea that despite the fact that 'he still hadn't recovered his wits', the narrator still tried to carry out the job he knew was 'of the utmost importance'. This is the writer's last, successful attempt to show the reader that the narrator's thoughts always changed for the best.



**ResultsPlus**  
Examiner Comments

This response is brisk, focused and evaluative throughout; it starts with strongly evaluative language 'masterfully manipulates' and makes a comment about both tone and pace in this introduction. In the second paragraph there is a strong comment about the man's 'confident and bold' actions. The third paragraph regarding the tonal shift shows a detached critical overview. There are particularly strong sections of this answer dealing with self-doubt and with the decline in his faculties towards the end of the passage which are representative of a sustained critical approach to the text throughout. The focus is precise and there are well-chosen embedded quotations used consistently. A strongly evaluative approach is adopted and interpretations are nuanced and for all of these reasons the answer was awarded a top Level 5 mark of 15



You should make sure that you are doing more than a language analysis and that your answer deals with how well you think the writer has achieved certain effects, rather than just explaining what they are.

4 In this extract, there is an attempt to show the narrator's changing thoughts and feelings.

Evaluate how successfully this is achieved.

Support your views with detailed reference to the text.

(15)

In this extract the narrator's changing thoughts and feelings are shown in a variety of ways. At the start he thinks there are "several men," which he then realises is actually "three or four," this shows that he is nervous and isn't picking up on details ~~properly~~ correctly.

Next he says "What will be, will be!... they'll remember." which shows that he is accepting his fate. The repetition of "ruined" reinforces the idea that he thinks this is the end. However he then says "suddenly, salvation!" which shows that his feelings have changed to hope now. The use of alliteration here makes it seem more miraculous.

furthermore the narrator shows his thoughts about smaller things & for example by saying: "So that was... hue and cry." which shows that although in a rush he is still trying to make sense of everything.

After that he is shown to be overjoyed as he



exclaims "No one on the stairs!" This shows his disbelief at what is happening. His ~~extra~~ ~~shows~~ knowledge ~~by saying~~ is also shown in the sentence "he knew... the apartment." This is because he has used logic to determine what is happening. He knows that "beyond any shadow of a doubt" they know he was there and acts accordingly. "he dared not quicken his stride more than a little." This shows that he feels suspicious and doesn't want to draw attention to himself.

Also the rhetorical questions followed by the phrase "No good!" suggest that he is starting to panic. This is emphasized by the repetition of "No good!" as it implies that he is becoming desperate. You see his relief when he says "At last, the lane." specifically the phrase "At last."

He feels "more dead than alive" which suggests that what is happening doesn't feel real to him. Although feeling like this he understands that now there will be "less reason for suspicion" and wants to "lose himself like a grain of sand" in the crowd. The use of a simile gives the sentence a dreamlike feel, which reinforces the

idea that what is happening doesn't feel real to him.

In addition he feels "so feeble he could barely move." which suggests he is overwhelmed with fear and guilt. Also he is "in a state of near-oblivion" which shows that the fear has made him lose focus on his surroundings. This is "only getting worse" which implies that he is becoming more and more overwhelmed.

He starts to become aware of "how ~~is~~ conspicuous he was" and can "barely stay on his feet" which shows that the adrenaline he felt has gone and now he feels unable to continue as his nerves become greater.

"He still hadn't recovered his wits" shows that he isn't paying much attention to his surroundings. This is reinforced by the phrases "he remembered his axe" and "he was in no fit state" as they give the impression that he is caught up in his head and has lost focus.

Overall his thoughts and feelings change

massively throughout the extract, as he starts out as confident - even when he might get caught - and gradually becomes more and more nervous and overwhelmed with <sup>the</sup> fear of being caught.



This is a Level 4 mark that gains a mark of 10. This candidate starts with a comment about 'several men' and then 'three or four' as a means of identifying that he is nervous. This is a valid but rather weak point. The second paragraph is stronger where it speaks of fate and comments on the repetition of 'ruined' which has a focus on thoughts and feelings. Subsequent paragraphs have an apt selection of references. There is evaluation at the bottom of the second page where the dreamlike quality is identified as being created through the use of rhetorical questions.



When you use quotations from the text, try to make sure that you are saying something about them and the techniques used and you are not simply repeating them in your own words.

## Question 5

The specification entitles this section, 'Imaginative Writing', and it is worth reminding yourself about the range of what that entails.

There is no set text type for this section; candidates are expected to produce clear and coherent text and to write for impact. Each question tells candidates that their work will be marked for the accurate and appropriate use of vocabulary, spelling, punctuation and grammar.

The question is marked against two assessment objectives and does not include a separate mark for SPAG. The two assessment objectives are AO5 which assess how well candidates can communicate clearly, effectively and imaginatively, selecting and adapting tone, style and register for different forms, purposes and audiences; and in addition how well they organise information and ideas, using structural and grammatical features to support coherence and cohesion. That Assessment Objective is worth 24 of the 40 marks available.

Assessment Objective 6 accounts for the remaining 16 marks and assesses how well candidates use a range of vocabulary and sentence structures for clarity, purpose and effect, with accurate spelling and punctuation.

Candidates must choose one of the two questions available to them and are recommended to spend 45 minutes on this section. One of the questions will always make reference to a pair of printed images and in this instance, this was question 5 where candidates were asked to write about a time when they met somebody new. There is a deliberate and thematic link to the text that has been read for Section A and this is intended to encourage and support candidates in their writing. Candidates are free to make use of the images, or not, as they choose.

In the summer of 2018, question 5 was the more popular of the two writing questions and was the most closely connected with the Section A passage. Many candidates wrote about childhood experiences and incidents of unfairness they had been involved in. Most candidates were able to complete a piece of writing in the available time. For those who had not left sufficient time for the writing they should be aware that the mark scheme makes specific reference to structural and grammatical features to support coherence and cohesion, therefore incomplete texts will not be able to access the full range of marks that is available for this question.

There was a wonderful range of writing with many candidates creating a genuine connection with the reader, crafting a response that had emotional depth, accessible and rounded characters in a defined narrative structure. The question invites candidates to write about an experience that is real or imagined. Whichever is chosen, it is important that candidates remember the purpose of the writing task is to demonstrate their writing skills and they should avoid the tendency of some candidates to prioritise remaining 'true' to a factual recount of a real incident over the opportunity to demonstrate an imaginative and creative use of language. Weaker answers were often incomplete, lacking in accuracy or assumed an understanding of character or setting that was not shared with the reader, making it difficult to fully engage with what was written.

Many answers followed a similar narrative – doing 'something you should not have done' – the images included led to many similar answers. Many students seemed to write from personal experience on this one and it led to a lot of good responses. There was a surfeit of 'doing something wrong and keeping it from parents' although many inevitably turned Q5 into a murder story and Q6 into all variety of unpleasant secrets! It was nice to see many students attempting to use the techniques they'd identified in section A, and there were a lot of responses in the style of the extract but it allowed candidates to write believable and often engaging accounts. As would be expected the better candidates often supplemented these with a bit of a twist which took them to

the higher levels of performance. There were a couple of 'adoption' stories which were very powerful. Many responses were at band 3 or low band 4 - solid responses but without the sophistication and imagination that is needed for a level 5 response. Sometimes narratives would just end abruptly - something that emphasises a lack of thought and craft. Overall, vocabulary and sentence structure were of a good quality.

Chosen question number: **Question 5** ✘

**Question 6** ✘

Write your answer to Section B here:

It was beckoning to me, mumbling sweet invitations against my ear as its tender waves lapped against the shore. Don't go in, my mother had told me. It's too dangerous, she had said, squinting her eyes against the cold invasion of rain. I glanced over at her in the shelter, watching her chest rise and fall as sleep ribboned through her mind. The sky was grey, infected by Grief and its cruel brother Sorrow. Yet the sea was pure. Joyful and innocent and just waiting for me to take its ruddy hand and slip into its embrace.

I stood, the pebbles unforgiving against the soles of my feet, yet kind enough to allow my gentle path towards the shore. The water twisted around my toes and pressed soft kisses to my ankles, welcoming me. My jeans were sodden and heavy against my legs as the water moved up to lick at the hem of my shirt. There was something foul on its breath, a noxious fume that seeped off of its tongue ~~and~~ and only grew stronger with every other step I took. But it was kind, whispering its warm words as it slipped over my shoulders.

and embraced my tired neck.

I gasped. Gone was the water's sweet affection, replaced by its cold fist lodged against my throat. Its sour tongue licked at each of my teeth, forcing its bitter taste into my mouth and choking me with its cruel affliction. It shoved its thumbs into my eyes as it screamed its vile cacophony into my ears ~~that~~ <sup>and</sup> rang through my head, unforgiving.

Nausea was growing in the pit of my stomach, tendrils of pain and misery leaching out of the seed that I had planted there. A seed born from panic and stupidity. I opened my mouth to scream, yet the water muffled my begging with its cruel palm, which gripped my wrists as I beat them against its strong chest. Blackness seeped into my vision from the corner of my eye, pixelating into some sort of analogue screen as I felt my throat tense, and then close up.

Darkness had washed over me, trickling into my brain from the back of my eyes and pricking each thought with a burning pain. My legs were useless, hanging there cold and doughy as my arms made one last futile attempt to push off the water's vergeful grasp. Yet it was

to no avail.

My finger twitched, one last time, as my arms sank and grew still. It twisted around me, dragging me down into its bitter depths with a cruel smile upon its sick face as it claimed its next victim.



This is an engaging and creative piece of writing that was awarded full marks for A05 and A06. It is a response that draws its readers in and which shapes their response with subtlety, building to a powerful conclusion. The candidate has sustained the style and tone throughout the response. The opening sentence is intriguing and the use of (unpunctuated) direct speech is the only direct reference to the question set. This opening paragraph contains some interesting sentence variety and an ambitious vocabulary, such as the use of 'ribboned' to describe her mother's sleep. The tone is foreshadowed through the reference to sorrow and grief, although at this stage the narrative is still relatively light and innocent. The personification of the sea as an extended metaphor and as an adversary is established from the opening sentence – "It was beckoning to me" – and this is cleverly sustained throughout – "the water's vengeful grasp". The end of the first page strengthens the change in tone, but then pulls back with the alliterative use of 'warm words' and the comforting, 'embracing'. The reader is pulled up short by the abruptness of the short sentence at the start of the next paragraph. The graphic imagery of being violated is intensified by the deliberately choice of 'shoved' as a crude and violent choice of verb. The piece ends powerfully and with a well-controlled complex sentence depicting the sea as a predatory, powerful and vicious killer. The narrative is structured chronologically beginning with the initial "beckoning", moving through different stages and ending with the narrator becoming the "next victim". There are a wide range of structural and grammatical features that support cohesion and coherence. Spelling is almost entirely accurate, and writing is punctuated for effect and to aid emphasis and precision. This is a powerful and disturbing piece of writing that sustains and builds throughout, and which engages the reader throughout.



You should use your experiences as a reader to inform your own writing. Use the same techniques that you have seen other writers use. Make those techniques your own by adapting them to your own purposes.



Write your answer to Section B here:

Sweat dripped off my face as I sat motionless at the traffic lights. I could feel my soul screaming out to me as I gripped the steering wheel harder. It hurt. It hurt a lot. All this pain for a bag of cash.

I struggled up to my front door with my conscience dragging me back. I braced myself as I pulled the penetrated ball of metal from the delicate shatter of my right shoulder. The pain was nothing like I had experienced before. It felt as if I was cutting my nerves up into tiny little pieces as blood ran up to my ice cold heart.

That night I lay in bed. Eyes janned open. Waiting. Waiting for them to come. I could hear every siren across the city that night. Every footstep of an insect which circled my house as I lay in my blood stained bed. Suddenly a louder bang entered my ears. I froze. My ice cold heart expanded.

"It's the police" Someone cried out as I rushed to my door. I couldn't hear them co-ordinating through my house as I felt my earthquake like trembling footsteps pounding on the floor boards. "We know you're here Mr Right, just make this easy for us" the policeman called out. I couldn't feel my dried sweat condensing on my face as I reached for my pistol. With my eye down the sights I fixed on his Sheriff's badge. "fire" he screamed as I stumbled to the floor with no control. Looking up in total oblivion I felt the blood soak into the hairs on my legs.

"Sir, this is a very serious crime you committed" said the judge as the flowing current of tears running down my face increased. "They, they were going to kill my Mum unless I played up" I replied. "They were are brutal men, I've seen their work" I ~~proceed~~ proceeded.

"That is no excuse for the ~~receiving~~ receiving for the attempted murder of a police officer and armed robbery" the judge replied.

Here I lay. In my orange overalls covering up  
the true monster that lies beneath them I can  
Never to hear from my Mum again played  
on my conscience conscience for life. I  
Still carry the tear I shed the day  
I was sentenced. For my soul? It is  
Supporting in the bag of money  
which lay beneath the tiles on my patio.  
I now live on that one night  
of stupidity lost me everything. I  
even lost myself.



**ResultsPlus**  
Examiner Comments

This is an answer that scores in Level 4 for both A05 and A06. The answer chooses to start in *media res* with a powerful and intriguing opening. The purposefully enigmatic introductory paragraph sets the scene with the use of short sentences and repetition for effect. A narrative hook is used – “All this for a bag of cash.” There is an effective use of sentence variety though the intensifier of ‘It hurt a lot’ is relatively simple and lacks the sophistication that one would expect for Level 5. The final paragraph on page one shows that this candidate has absorbed and can use the conventions of the thriller or spy novel, with its frequent use of short sentences for effect and its paragraphing which is effectively used to create quick ‘edits’ from scene to scene within the narrative. The use of dialogue adds interest and shows a further use of conventions. The third paragraph has a build-up of tension through description and this is continued in the fourth paragraph with phrases such as “earthquake like”. Sometimes this answer strives a little too hard for effect such as in “dried sweat condensing”. A wide and selective vocabulary is used – oblivion; motionless; penetrated. Punctuation is mostly reliable although direct speech not punctuated properly. The answer ends strongly with a twist to the original question posed in the first paragraph – “I even lost myself”. Spelling mostly reliable although ‘to’ and ‘conscience’ are spelled incorrectly throughout.



You may use ideas and techniques that you have met in your own writing but you must make them own and not simply plagiarise the work of other writers.

5) It was a vicious summer day, birds were chirping happily and it was as warm as the Sahara desert. Myself and my friend Emily, a shy girl with eyes as bright and blue as the ocean, were not too keen on sitting in the stuffy sports hall for our lunch break. We decided to venture outside.

In our school leaving the site was detested. ~~No one~~ ~~do it~~ Nobody dared to ~~leave the site~~ <sup>do it</sup>. Ever. But we did... We crept up to the cast iron gates and slowly stumbled our way over them. ~~It was a lot trickier~~ It was a lot trickier than when you see people do it in films. Trust me. After ~~the~~ tremendous struggle we had made it. We were free for a little while. We skipped along the deserted high street. There were trees standing proudly and we shared ~~our~~ their pride. But then it hit us...

Myself and Emily realised how much trouble we would be in when we returned to that school, we were for it.

The alarm systems went crazy in ~~my~~<sup>our</sup> heads. A wave of anxiety hit us - we felt lost and didn't know what to do or who to turn to. We had always shared a fear of authoritative figures and now we had to face them. We both felt our hearts pounding in our chests, it was as though they would leap out at any moment, ~~that~~<sup>it</sup> was horrendous, what had we done? Anxiety and fear took over the whole of our bodies. It was like someone had opened a jar of butterflies ~~to our bodies~~ and let them roam like lions inside of us. We knew what we had done was wrong but how could we make it right.

~~At~~ Half an hour had past since we first left the site. We had been sat trembling with fear for so long that we decided to man up and go back to ~~the~~ school. We past the same trees we past on the way out of the school but instead of standing proudly they looked ashamed, deflated and miserable. Birds were no longer chirping, it was almost like everything shared the shame and guilt we were racked with. As we reluctantly ~~we~~ doddled back onto the site we turned to our headmaster who was stood watching us with ~~a~~ disappointment all over his face, and said, "~~that~~ "we are here to confess to what we have done, we were stupid but we've manned up and returned."

He turned to us and smiled, as he said, "don't worry, that's why I'm here to, I've done the same thing". Then we all just stood there grinning like cheshire cats pleading for forgiveness.



This is a Level 3 response that has a number of strengths, but which lacks the consistency and the deliberate management of technique needed for a Level 4 mark. The opening paragraph sees a deliberate attempt to set the scene and to create a carefree mood through its vocabulary choices and its use of familiar tropes such as the warm sun and the chirping birds. Paragraph two sees the development of the plot and the deliberate use of short sentences. The candidate uses ellipsis twice within the same paragraph which is not to be recommended. Certain punctuation marks are better used sparingly so as not to diminish the effect that they have. There is a deliberate use of the trees a structural pointer in the piece to mark both the journey from and back to school, with the corresponding mood being created. The answer lacks a clear conclusion with the confusing image of 'cheshire cats begging for forgiveness.' Despite that the answer consistently strives for effect ("A wave of anxiety hit us.") sometimes overreaching itself and impeding the effectiveness of its own communication ("slowly stumbled our way over them"). For AO6, a varied vocabulary is used – luscious; venture; stumbled; reluctantly - with spelling mainly but not wholly accurate, and mainly accurate punctuation. Sentence structure (e.g. "Nobody dared do it. Ever. But we did...") is used to contribute positively to effect. All of this places this answer securely in Level 3.



Always try to think of the effect that you will have on your reader and choose your words, techniques, punctuation and sentence structure accordingly.

## **Question 6**

The assessment objectives are identical to question five and the need to produce writing that has impact and which is accurate, clear and coherent for the reader is equally paramount.

Question six provided candidates with a picture stimulus and an invitation to write about about a secret. This produced a wide range of writing from John Le Carre-style spy stories to a number of stories detailing when they finally came out to their fiends and family about their sexual orientation.

There was a wide range of responses which were lively and interesting to read. Examiners report that spelling was generally accurate but that centres should focus upon the range and accuracy of punctuation. It seemed that some candidates had been had clearly been told that they needed to include more advanced punctuation and so semi-colons were sometimes liberally sprinkled across writing, though this was often without real undersatnding or for any particular effect. Comma splicing continues to be an area to work on. Timing is something that all candidates need to be aware and the short responses for section B suggests that some candidates ran out of time and quickly rushed to get to the question.



Write your answer to Section B here:

"I know nothing."

The lights of the interrogation room aggressively pierced my eyes, blinding me to the point where the only ~~thing~~ thing I could see was the Inspector's even more aggressive glare.

I sat there, chained to my own chair, showing no resistance, calmly waiting as the man in front of me furiously fired insults in my face. I do not care what he has to say to me. I will never tell him anything. I made this vow before I was incarcerated, before I was arrested, even before I heard the sirens wailing, proclaiming my ultimate defeat as I had no choice but to remain in my apartment with no possible routes of escape available to me.

I will never tell him anything. He cannot know. No-one can know. No-one could understand what I have seen, the horrors that ~~committed~~ ~~acted~~ I partook <sup>in the knowledge</sup> of, nor the incredible <sup>stories</sup> ~~of~~ such <sup>of</sup> terrible atrocities, such indescribable abominations, the likes of which would make Eldritch himself tremble in fear.

Who would have known that the madman was telling the truth?

Even now, I can remember what happened decades ago. I myself was never an inspector, yet I took it upon myself to investigate the case of Larson Kelsk, resident of St. Germain Mental Asylum. His wonderful stories sent the ignorant into disbelief, yet I was astounded by his teachings and tales of other dimensions, parallel universes, multi-spaces... and their inhabitants.

Any other person would have passed him off as an old man with a rich imagination and a few cards short of a few deck. I was not such a person. He took an almost unexplainable liking to me and every other week when I would ~~see~~ visit him, he would tell me darker and darker, more sinister stories of his downward spiral into the realms of existence. I, naturally, was indoctrinated.

One day, he feared for his own life and gave me ~~the~~ the key to his vault in Perestroika. "We shall meet in the place with the lights". I never understood him, but once I read the ~~the~~ library of books he himself had written and stored in his vault, I was perplexed. It all made absolute perfect sense.

There was no question that

that man spoke the truth.

The paroxysm of my realisation rendered my sanity terribly strained, yet the strings of my mind hold tight.

I hid from society, looking to come to an understanding of what I read, to no avail of course.

I was arrested on the 25<sup>th</sup> of June 1979.

I remain trapped in my mind.

"I know nothing."

## [Plan for Section B Q6]

- ① Start with climax : interrogation
- ② ~~Remembering~~ Remembering particular events
- ③ Fixate on one object : diary of a close friend
- ④ List what ~~was~~ was in there, subtly
- ⑤ Outline fascination with those horrors
- ⑥ Snap back to reality
- ⑦ Conclude ~~with~~ the same way as beginning



This is a powerful piece of writing that shapes the audience response with subtlety. It begins with direct speech which captures the reader from the start and which sets up an intriguing narrative hook that is returned to at the end, producing a strong sense of textual cohesion. There is a strong first-person voice used throughout and a sustained use of tone/style and register throughout. The character of the narrator is purposefully devised to have a psychological complexity and intensity that is impressive when completed in exam condition as and in a limited time-frame. The answer uses a wide and selective range of sentence structures with a complex sentence often deliberately followed by a short sentence for effect, such as, "I will never tell him anything". The overall structure is well considered with a return to the arrest and declaration of non-cooperation and the narrative the flashback is well integrated. In terms of A06 there is an extensive vocabulary used throughout: - interrogation; incarcerated; proclaiming; indoctrinated; paroxysm. There is a precision in punctuation used to create a subtle effect and a variety of tones: "I, naturally, was indoctrinated."



You should know what you are going to write about and where your writing is going to end before you begin. In that way you will build a greater sense of textual cohesion.

Write your answer to Section B here:

Write about a secret.

When I was little there was always a secret I only told my best friend, the secret got a bit old as I got older. Even my mum and dad didn't know or expect anything.

My secret is a bit disgusting for a little girl at the age of 3-4, but I used to go to family resorts and any other kid would go play in the swimming pool or go eat ice creams, no I was a different I decided I didn't want to play in the water with the other kids I would rather go play in the mud with my bucket and collect frogs.

I decided I'd rather swim with the frogs and play with them. At the age of 3-4, little girls would rather put dresses on, but there's me, I liked to make sure my frogs can swim and I even made them a house.

As I got older I started growing out of the little frace I went through and realised at the age of 6 the mud was disgusting, my family thought I was going through a frace where I actually wanted to be a boy.

I used to have this little note book but I used to call it my secret book, I used to write all my secrets in it I don't think I ever told any-one else my secret about the frogs.



because of the princess films  
about the princess kissing  
the frog to make a prince  
I always thought it would  
end up ~~be~~ becoming true,  
I've only ever kissed one.



**ResultsPlus**  
Examiner Comments

This is Level 2 answer that demonstrates a straightforward use of tone and style with some awareness of the reader. The opening sentence lacks the originality or stronger engagement that has been seen in the other student answers in this report. It focuses clearly upon the question and sets up the idea of the secret which will be revealed. It is explained in the second paragraph in a straight forward manner. There is an attempt at self-deprecation through the use of "but theres [sic] me". Some complication is added to the narrative through the introduction of the diary, the candidate is clearly making direct use of the picture stimulus from the examination paper at this point. However, the device of the 'secret book' is undeveloped and the narrative itself is relatively simple and fairly brief. It is uncertain whether the ending is intended to be humorous "I've only ever kissed one" or is intended to be an allusion to fairy stories where frogs are kissed and traditionally turn into Prince Charmings. In terms of A06, punctuation is used though it is not always accurate or reliable and some sentences are lengthy. There is a range of simple vocabulary used with fairly accurately spelling but there are errors, such as 'frace' and 'discusting'



**ResultsPlus**  
Examiner Tip

Just because you know something in your own head, do not assume that your reader knows and understands things in the same way that you do. Think of your reader as an interested stranger that you may need to explain things to that you know very well, such as things about familiar people (my mum) or place (my school).

## Paper Summary

Based on their performance on the paper, candidates are offered the following advice:

- Read the passage in section A very carefully, identifying the different ways in which the writer has tried to engage you as the reader.
- Pay particular attention to the opening and closing of the text as these are important points for any writer and they will help you to see how the writer has shaped their text to initially gain the interest of the reader and then to leave them at a particular point.
- On question 3, you must try to cover points on both language and structure within the space you have been given and with a time allocation that is appropriate to the six marks the question offers. There is no need for an introduction or conclusion on this question.
- On question 4, try to do more than identify the different techniques that have been used by the writer. You should explain your ideas on how successful you feel the writer has been.
- Whichever writing question you choose, always think about your reader, what you want them to understand and how you want them to react at different parts of your writing; then choose the best words, phrases or techniques available to you to achieve those effects.
- Think carefully about how you will begin to write so that it is imaginative and engaging for your reader from the very start. If you are telling a true story it is more important to write clearly and showing your writing skills than it is to stick to the real story as it happened.
- As you begin to write, you should know how you will end this piece of writing. This will help you to write in a manner that is cohesive and coherent for your reader.
- Take care throughout with accuracy of all sorts: spelling, punctuation and grammar.
- Keep a close eye on the time during the examination and use the number of marks available for each question as an indication of how long you should spend answering each question. If you have time left at the end you should check your work carefully.

## Grade Boundaries

Grade boundaries for this, and all other papers, can be found on the website on this link:

<http://www.edexcel.com/iwantto/Pages/grade-boundaries.aspx>

