



2011 English

Higher Close Reading

Finalised Marking Instructions

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2011 English Higher

Close Reading

Some important general principles

The marking of Close Reading is not a straightforward, mechanical task, but one which requires from the marker a considerable element of judgement in all but the most straightforward questions – and these are rare. In a typical allocation there will be over 200 different answers to every question. In order to award the correct mark to each answer, you must be guided by the detailed instructions which follow, by the exemplification given at the Markers' Meeting of how to apply these instructions, and by your own professional judgement.

If the standards and methods set out in these Instructions and at the Markers' Meeting differ from those you are in the habit of applying in your own marking, then you must adapt your approach to that which is required in order to maintain the national standard.

Each response must be read carefully and the points being made by the candidate considered against the Marking Instructions. Be alert to apparently insignificant words such as “even”, “just”, “really”, “too” etc which often make the candidate's thinking clearer.

The quality of candidates' expression is not being assessed in this part of the examination. You must not, therefore, mark down an answer which is expressed clumsily – indeed you should be as sympathetic as possible to the candidates, who are working under extreme pressure. Conversely, you must not be seduced by fluent emptiness.

Answers to questions testing “**Understanding**” (coded “**U**”) must be expressed using “own words as far as is reasonably possible”. Where candidates simply quote from the passage, they gain no marks. In order to earn marks they must attempt, however inelegantly, to “gloss” the key word or words.

Answers to questions requiring “**Analysis**” (coded “**A**”) are the most difficult to mark accurately and consistently. Markers must adhere to the statements in the Marking Instructions (“Reference alone: 0”) about not awarding marks for mere quotation or mere identification of a feature of sentence structure. Nor should any marks be awarded for quotation plus repetition of the question (plus any amount of empty waffle). Inappropriate marking of this type of question (eg the mechanical ticking of quotations) can lead to serious over-rewarding of candidates. Only genuine comment by the candidate is eligible for marks. The comment need not be all that mature or sophisticated, even to score full marks in a question. The brilliant answer is easy to spot, but less luminous responses might also be worth full marks.

Answers to questions on “**Evaluation**” (coded “**E**”) will involve evaluation of the writers' ideas (“**U/E**”) or the writers' styles (“**A/E**”). Be guided by the points above and by the specific guidance in the Marking Instructions.

As in the past, some use is made of half marks in the marking of Analysis questions. This allows for more sophisticated discrimination and can reward candidates for making weakish but nevertheless acceptable points which might otherwise not gain credit. Half marks should not, however, be awarded where they are not deserved; conversely, they should not be used in order to deny full marks to all but the exceptional answer. Half marks are not used in the marking of Understanding questions.

Administrative matters

- Enter marks in red ink in the examination booklet as neatly and clearly as possible.
- According to your own preferences, use ticks, crosses and lines within an answer to help clarify your marking, but **do not write any words or comments in any part of the booklet**. Necessary comment on a specific answer or on the work of a candidate in general can be made only by means of referral to PA or as part of a referral under the heading of Special Arrangements (in the case of suspected malpractice). For details of how to make such referrals, please refer to the General Instructions to Markers.
- Total the marks and enter the total (rounded up if necessary) to the “Others” box under “Total Marks” on the front cover.
- Check this total at least once.

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Close Reading Marking Instructions

Questions on Passage 1

Marks Code

1. Read lines 1-14.

- (a) Show how the writer's word choice in lines 1–4 emphasises the "conventional wisdom" that reading books is better than playing video games.

2

A

Marks will depend on the quality of comment. An insightful comment on one word could score up to 2 marks; more basic comments will be worth up to 1 mark each. Reference alone: 0.

Possible answers:

- | | | |
|---|--------------|---|
| 1 | "enriches" | suggests that reading adds to one's knowledge, awareness; is rewarding, beneficial; improves one |
| 2 | "the mind" | suggests reading is influencing something greater than just the brain; it influences our consciousness: thought, perception, emotions and imagination |
| 3 | "deadens" | suggests video games make kids less aware, less sensitive, less vigorous; they make kids think less; lifeless |
| 4 | "zoning out" | suggests video games make kids detached from people and things around them, unresponsive, unstimulated |

- (b) Explain "the question" the writer asks in lines 7-9 about "other forms of culture".

2

U

There must be some attempt to use own words. Blatant lifts: 0.

Clear explanation: 2 marks; less assured explanation: 1 mark.

A full gloss of "intellectual virtues in their own right" will be sufficient for 2 marks, although many candidates will acceptably gloss "different from, but comparable to, reading" in dealing with the "in their own right" part.

Possible answer:

The writer is asking if these other forms of culture:

- involve discrete thinking skills/have qualities which benefit, stimulate, challenge, stretch our minds in ways which are different from – but just as important as – reading

- (c) Show how the writer's use of language in lines 9-14 ("Where ... books.") emphasises the contrast between his positive view of "other forms of culture" and the negative view held by "most critics".

In your answer you should refer to specific language features such as: imagery, word choice, sentence structure...

4

A

Marks will depend on the quality of comment. Insightful comment on one feature could score up to 3 marks; alternatively a candidate could make more basic comments for up to 1 mark each. For full marks, there must be comment on at least two features.

For full marks, there must be coverage of both the writer's positive view and the critics' negative view.

Reference alone: 0. Mere identification of a feature of sentence structure: 0.

Possible answers:

Imagery:

When dealing with imagery, answers must show recognition of the literal root of the image and then explore how the writer is extending it figuratively.

- | | | |
|---|-----------------------|---|
| 1 | “(progressive) story” | “story” suggests a developing, organised narrative: the writer sees the positive influence of popular culture as gradual, logical, coherent, interesting... |
| | | “story” might also be linked to the idea of a news story: just as a news story is something important, topical, developing which people should know about, the writer sees the positive influence of popular culture as something of ongoing importance which he wants to make people aware of. |
| 2 | “our brains sharper” | just as sharpening involves giving cutting tools a better edge, this suggests making our brains keener, more accurate... |
| 3 | “we soak in” | soaking in is a process of absorption, of taking in as much liquid as possible; this suggests we become immersed in popular culture, that its influence is natural, irresistible, all-consuming, profound, deep... |

[continued ...]

- | | | |
|---|-------------------|--|
| 4 | “(lowbrow) fluff” | fluff is light, downy material (for example, small pieces of wool); its use suggests critics believe popular culture is light, trivial, worthless, superficial, irrelevant, trifling.... |
| 5 | “honing” | just as honing is a process of giving cutting tools a perfect edge, this suggests gradually making our brains as sharp as possible, more and more precise, accurate, productive... |

Some candidates may choose to deal with “sharper” and “honing” as a pair. This will be a reasonable approach. Some candidates will choose to deal with words listed under “Imagery” as word choice.

Word choice:

- | | | |
|----|-----------------|--|
| 6 | “allege” | casts doubt on, calls the critics’ views into question |
| 7 | “dumbing down” | suggests popular culture offers people a reduced intellectual challenge or is responsible for making people less educated, less intelligent, more lowbrow |
| 8 | “progressive” | developing, advancing, moving forward steadily, leading to improvement |
| 9 | “story” | something that is developing and interesting; something that people should know about |
| 10 | “steadily” | reliable, consistent progress |
| 11 | “imperceptibly” | change is gradual, subtle |
| 12 | “sharper” | keener, more precise, more accurate |
| 13 | “soak in” | not a superficial process; influence is deep; we are fully engaged, absorbed |
| 14 | “dismissed” | brushed aside, considered beneath contempt, irrelevant, unimportant, trivial |
| 15 | “so much” | dismissive expression, heightening the sense of inconsequentiality |
| 16 | “lowbrow” | vulgar, anti-intellectual, uncultured, plebeian |
| 17 | “fluff” | worthless, trivial, inconsequential, superficial |

- | | | |
|----|---|--|
| 18 | “increasingly” | popular culture is more and more important |
| 19 | “honing” | sharpening, perfecting, refining |
| 20 | “skills” | desirable talents |
| 21 | some candidates may comment on the writer’s repetitive use of adverbial ‘developing’ words which add weight to the idea of “progressive story”: “steadily”, “imperceptibly”, “increasingly” | |

Sentence structure:

- | | | |
|----|--|---|
| 22 | balanced structure/contrast of “Where...story” | allows the writer to trump the critics’ argument. This is heightened by the greater certainty of his “see” set against the dubious nature of their “allege” |
| 23 | use of colon | to introduce a full development of his “progressive story” argument |
| 24 | use of parenthesis “but...imperceptibly” | to explain that this positive development is so gradual that it’s easy for the less astute (like the critics) to miss it |
| 25 | positioning of “I hope to persuade you” at the start of the final sentence | alerts the reader to the fact that the writer is about to make what he believes is his most important point |
| 26 | positioning of “increasingly” just before his key statement | stresses that the point he is about to make is more and more relevant, true |
| 27 | balanced nature of final statement, hinging on the “just as important as” comparison | stresses skills developed by popular culture are of a comparable standard to the skills developed by reading |

2. "...how much time you spend not having fun." (lines 18-19)

Show how, in lines 15-22, the writer conveys the difficulty of playing video games by his use of:

(a) sentence structure;

2

A

Marks will depend on the quality of comment. A single insightful comment will be worth 2 marks; more basic comments will be worth up to 1 mark each. Mere identification of a feature of sentence structure: 0.

Possible answers:

- | | | |
|---|--|--|
| 1 | positioning of (or rhythmic/repetitive nature of) "And the first and last thing" | definitive "alpha and omega" nature of this phrase, especially when placed at the start of the sentence, suggests the difficulty of video games is a fundamental point to the writer |
| 2 | use of parenthesis "the thing ...hear" | adds to the mystery, adds to the dramatic build-up to the final announcement of video games' difficulty |
| 3 | additional phrase "sometimes maddeningly" | two functions: again adds to the build-up and/or ramps up the notion of extreme difficulty that "fiendishly" has introduced |
| 4 | Candidates may attempt a more general point, incorporating aspects of points 1–3, about the various ways in which the writer builds up to/delays the climax of the (ultimately slightly lame) "hard" | |
| 5 | use of climax in the sentence "The dirty ...fun." | somewhat awkward/unusual construction of this sentence is designed to stress the "not having fun" element of its conclusion |
| 6 | repetition of the "you may be" structure | stresses – and this is heightened by the use of the inclusive direct address – the variety of problems playing video games may cause |
| 7 | list of adjectives ("frustrated", "confused", "disorientated", "stuck") | rat-a-tat run of adjectives suggests 'the sea of troubles' playing video games may involve |
| 8 | anticlimax(?) of "you may be stuck" | in its definitive downbeat simplicity, it is a stark summation of the seemingly insoluble challenge these games present |
| 9 | use of the continuous tense in final sentence | an argument might be made that this reflects the ongoing, nagging nature of the problems involved |

(b) imagery

2

A

Marks will depend on the quality of comment. A single insightful comment will be worth 2 marks; more basic comments will be worth up to 1 mark each.

Mere identification of an image: 0.

When dealing with imagery, answers must show recognition of the literal root of the image and then explore how the writer is extending it figuratively.

Possible answers:

- | | | |
|---|--------------------------|---|
| 1 | “stuck” | to be stuck is to be fixed immovably; it suggests being trapped in a situation which offers no escape |
| 2 | “wrestling” | wrestling involves close, physical combat with a single opponent; it suggests a demanding, exhausting battle with an unforgiving enemy |
| 3 | “worrying a loose tooth” | involves the constant working away at a persistent physical annoyance; it suggests that the difficulties presented by video games are nagging frustrations that constantly prey on one’s mind |

NB Comment could possibly be made on “dirty little secret”, but it will be hard to relate this convincingly to “the difficulties of playing video games”. It could be argued that the expression is usually used in the realms of ethics or morality, a deliberate attempt to hide the truth, a cover-up of some sort, a hidden scandal; used in relation to the difficulty of video games, it heightens the potentially damaging nature of this feature, suggests it is a very negative feature that is deliberately glossed over.

3. Read lines 23-30.

- (a) What is ironic about the situation described by the writer in lines 23-26 (“In the typical game ... homework.”)?

1

U

There must be some indication that the candidate understands the term “irony”. A “two-pronged” answer is required.

Possible answer:

- young people are very averse to doing mundane, repetitive tasks but will happily play video games which involve more drudgery than fun, are full of mundane, repetitive tasks

- (b) In lines 26-30 (“You often ... show”), what distinction does the writer make between video games and “most forms of popular entertainment”?

2

U

There must be some attempt to use own words. Blatant lifts: 0.

For full marks, candidates need to show an understanding of the distinction between “delayed gratification” (video games) and “instant gratifications” (most forms of popular entertainment). If a full gloss of one term suggests a clear understanding of its converse, full marks should be awarded.

Possible answer:

- most forms of popular entertainment offer quick, immediate, easily gained pleasure, reward, satisfaction but the pleasure, reward, satisfaction from video games is very slow in coming, takes a long time to achieve, seems as though it will never come

4. Read lines 31-45.

- (a) According to the writer, why is “reward” so important to the learning process involved in playing video games?**

3

U

There must be some attempt to use own words. Blatant lifts: 0.

Candidates must focus on why the “rewards” benefit “the learning process”. Merely describing the “rewards” fails to address the question properly.

For full marks, answers must cover the key idea in point 1 below plus any of points 2-9. A good explanation of point 1 will be worth 2 marks.

- 1 people are hard-wired to respond strongly to rewards; people’s brains are created in such a way that they find rewards a great stimulus to action, learning etc
- 2 video games are designed to be full of rewards
- 3 rewards in video games are precise, with clear outcomes (gloss of “clearly defined”)
- 4 the rewards are attractive
- 5 the rewards are presented in a variety of forms
- 6 players are constantly reminded about the rewards
- 7 the rewards are vitally important to achieving success in the games
- 8 the rewards are more intense, striking, colourful than in real life
- 9 players aren’t always aware that they are learning (gloss on “without realising ...”)

- (b) Show how the writer's use of language in lines 40-45 ("In the game world ... life.") conveys the excitement generated by rewards in the world of video games.

2

A

Marks will depend on the quality of comment. A single insightful comment will be worth 2 marks; more basic comments will be worth up to 1 mark each.

Reference alone: 0. Mere identification of a feature of sentence structure: 0.

Possible answers:

Word choice:

- | | | |
|---|---------------------|---|
| 1 | "everywhere" | suggests rewards are all around, presenting an infinite set of possible attractions |
| 2 | "(gaming) universe" | a vast, multi-faceted environment of infinite possibilities |
| 3 | "teeming" | suggests a vibrant superabundance; brimful of lively attractions |
| 4 | "deliver" | suggests video games are productive, make good their promises, fulfil expectations |
| 5 | "spells" | something magical, enchanting, wondrous |
| 6 | "vivid" | colourful, intense, attractive, striking |

Sentence structure:

- | | | |
|----|---|---|
| 7 | use of list ("more life ...new spells.") | suggests variety, large number of rewards |
| 8 | brevity of each example in the list ("more life ... new spells.") | heightens the "teeming" idea: no time for a detailed description, there are so many aspects they come tumbling out at a rapid, almost breathless rate |
| 9 | repetition of "new" | stresses the fresh challenges that abound, never-ending novelties on offer |
| 10 | (repeated) use of comparatives in final sentence | stresses idea that video games are superior to life itself in a variety of ways |
| 11 | repetitive, rhythmic build-up in final sentence ("and more ... and more") | heightens the sense of the writer having an ever-expanding range of positive points to make about rewards in video games |

5. Read lines 46-54.

(a) Give two criticisms the writer makes of the content of video games.

2

U

There must be some attempt to use own words. Blatant lifts: 0.

Any two of the following for 1 mark each:

- 1 the games may seem attractive but the attractions flatter to deceive, are rather superficial, blind one to the truth (“dazzled”)
- 2 subject matter of the games is infantile, petty, puerile, trivial... (“actual content ... childish”)
- 3 unnecessarily threatening, unjustifiably scary (“gratuitously menacing” – but gloss on “menacing” alone: 0)
- 4 the subject matter is very limited **and/or** moves between the two extremes of violence and childish fantasy (“alternates ... princess-rescuing”)
- 5 violent (“drive-by shooting”)
- 6 pure fantasy (“princess-rescuing”)

(b) Show how the writer's use of language in these lines conveys a dismissive attitude towards the content of video games.

2

A

Marks will depend on the quality of comment. A single insightful comment will be worth 2 marks; more basic comments will be worth up to 1 mark each.

Possible answers:

- | | | |
|----|---|--|
| 1 | (repeated) use of "just" in opening sentence (plus the "perhaps") | the effect of these words is to diminish, downplay, minimise the importance of what might appear to be absolute fundamentals: winning the game, completing the story or being wowed by the graphics |
| 2 | structure of the first sentence | sense of lumping together three apparently vital elements of the game so they can be somewhat undermined <i>en bloc</i> |
| 3 | "dazzled" | suggests one's vision being impaired, being over-impressed by superficial details, being blinded to the truth |
| 4 | "draws you in" | suggests a rather devious, deceptive process |
| 5 | capitalisation of "Next Thing" | could suggest something rather childishly overblown about people's curiosity, mockery of exaggerated importance |
| 6 | "childish" | suggests simple, undemanding, infantile, puerile |
| 7 | "gratuitously" | suggests pointless, unnecessary, unjustifiable |
| 8 | "drive-by shooting and princess-rescuing" | deliberately polarised, reductive, black and white view of the content of video games |
| 9 | "drive-by shooting" | particularly cowardly, unpleasant, unheroic, random form of violence |
| 10 | "princess-rescuing" | very simplistic, fantastical, childish, fairy tale-esque |
| 11 | (balanced) structure of final sentence | importance of actual content rejected with brisk, unarguable certainty, followed by developed endorsement of the reward system (this contrast heightened by the "It is not...it is" balance around semi-colon) |

6. How does the example of algebra or of chess illustrate the point the writer is making in lines 55-61?

2

U

There must be some attempt to use own words. Blatant lifts: 0.

Clear explanation: 2 marks; less assured explanation: 1 mark.

Possible answer (Algebra):

- many people see algebra as pointless, abstract, irrelevant, but studying it develops their brain power, adds rigour to the way they think

Possible answer (Chess):

- many people see chess as a game which has a straightforward objective or is abstract or is about (glorifying) war and battles, or presenting war and battles in a formulaic way, but playing it develops strategic, tactical thinking, adds rigour to the way they think

7. Read lines 62-68.

- (a) “Novels may activate our imagination and may conjure up powerful emotions, but games force you to analyse, to choose, to prioritise, to decide.” (lines 63-65)

Show how the writer’s use of language in this sentence emphasises the contrast between novels and video games.

2

A

Marks will depend on the quality of comment. For full marks, there must be recognition of the contrast.

Reference alone: 0. Mere identification of a feature of sentence structure: 0.

Possible answers:

- | | | |
|---|--|--|
| 1 | (repeated) use of the conditional “may” | suggests some uncertainty about the impact of novels or that the efficacy of novels is somewhat haphazard (especially when set against the definite, irresistible “force” of video games) |
| 2 | “activate (our imagination)” | suggests setting something in motion, a more gradual process perhaps (than the more immediate and more strategic thinking skills video games demand) |
| 3 | “conjure up” | suggests a somewhat magical, mystical, dreamy, ethereal process |
| 4 | parallel construction in “Novels ...emotions” | suggests something very measured, unhurried, perhaps even languid, about the outcomes of reading novels |
| 5 | “force” | video games are much more compelling, active, immediate, dynamic (especially when set against the uncertain “may” of novels) |
| 6 | switch from “our” to “you” | suggests playing video games is a more direct, personal activity |
| 7 | list of verbs (“to analyse ... to decide”) | rapid fire, punchy run of infinitives suggests playing video games is a very dynamic, frenetic activity which involves a lot of cerebral processes taking place simultaneously |
| 8 | nature of verbs in the list | all the verbs are to do with higher order thinking skills and so stress the cerebral nature of playing video games |
| 9 | some candidates will highlight the very different structures of the two “halves” of the sentence, picking up on some of the ideas from points 1, 4 and 7; this may well be a profitable approach to take | |

- (b) Show how the writer’s use of language in lines 65-68 conveys the contrast between what a gamer looks like from “the outside” and what is happening “inside the gamer’s mind”.**

2

A

Marks will depend on the quality of comment. For full marks, there must be recognition of the contrast.

Possible answers:

Gamer from “the outside”:

- | | | |
|---|--|---|
| 1 | “looks like” | suggests this may be an unreliable perspective, a superficial, unquestioning way to approach an analysis of gamers |
| 2 | “fury” | suggests the gamer is behaving in an impulsive, uncontrolled way; everything is being done at top speed, in a blur of unthinking activity |
| 3 | “clicking” | suggests mindless, repetitive activity |
| 4 | “shooting” | suggests destructive, homicidal activity |
| 5 | “clicking and shooting” | automatic, unthinking, mechanical, robotic, repetitive... |
| 6 | it could be argued that the general simplicity of the penultimate sentence (especially when compared to the much more complex final sentence) heightens the impression that this is a naïve, simplistic way to view gamers | |

“inside the gamer’s mind”

- | | | |
|---|----------|---|
| 7 | “if you” | deliberate attempt to involve the reader in what is presented as the much more pro-active, cerebral, sophisticated, subtle approach to analysing gamers |
| 8 | “peer” | suggests an active approach involving close examination |
| 9 | “mind” | suggests thinking, rational being |

[continued ...]

10	re-introduction of “the primary activity”	heightens impression that the ideas in this sentence supersede the wrong-headed thinking of the previous sentence
11	“turns out”	sense of some kind of revelation, surprise, discovery
12	“another creature”	suggests something mysterious, surprising, unexpected, interesting but hard to define, a new form of life we didn’t know existed
13	“altogether”	heightens the idea of a complete turnaround, of the complete reversal of received wisdom
14	use of colon	to introduce detailed description of the full range of intellectual activities involved in gaming
15	balance/repetition of “some of them”	stresses range of activities involved
16	contrast “snap judgements ... long-term strategies”	again shows range of important decision-making skills involved from quick, smart thinking to overall planning
17	“decisions”/ “judgements”	suggests wise, fair thinking
18	“strategies”	suggests considered, creative thinking
19	it could be argued that the variety, complexity and punchiness of this sentence (especially when compared to the much simpler preceding sentence) heightens the impression that it contains a much more persuasive, well-rounded argument	
	Relevant to both “inside” and “outside”	
20	“But ...”	positioning at the start of the sentence flags up a significant transition between the two viewpoints

Questions on Passage 2

Marks *Code*

8. Read lines 1-10.

- (a) In what ways, according to the writer, can young people be adversely affected by playing video games?**

2

U

There must be some attempt to use own words. Blatant lifts: 0.

Any two of the following for 1 mark each:

- 1 the unreasonable, hysterical behaviour (“snarl”, “sobbing”, “shrieking”, “pleading”)
- 2 games are played compulsively, obsessively; young people cannot live without them (“narcotic withdrawal”, “addicts”, “hooked”)
- 3 disastrous consequences for the ability to read (“catastrophic effect . . . on the literacy”)
- 4 disastrous consequences for young boys’ future chances of success (“catastrophic effect . . . on the prospects of young males”)

(b) Show how the writer creates in these lines an impression of outrage in his condemnation of video games.

2

A

Marks will depend on the quality of comment. For full marks there must be some recognition of the hyperbolic/exaggerated nature of the writing. A single insightful comment will be worth 2 marks; more basic comments will be worth up to 1 mark each. Reference alone: 0.

Possible answers:

- 1 an overall recognition (supported by some suitable exemplification) of how the hyperbolic nature of the writing is used to create a rather artificial outrage should score 2 marks

The following specific points could be commented on relevantly:

- | | | |
|----|--|--|
| 2 | “snarl ... sobbing and shrieking and horrible pleading ... wail of protest” | over-dramatising of children’s reactions, suggesting extreme, sometimes animalistic behaviour |
| 3 | “narcotic withdrawal ... drug ... addicts” | exaggerating the connection between gaming and serious illness, dependency |
| 4 | “strobing colours” | suggests extreme disorientating effect |
| 5 | “Millions” | Exaggeratedly vast scale of the problem |
| 6 | “hooked” | as point 3 above |
| 7 | “it is time someone had the guts to stand up, cross the room, and just say no to Nintendo” | definitive statement of intent to carry out decisive action to stop gaming activity |
| 8 | “just say no to Nintendo” | tongue-in-cheek allusion to “just say no” campaign tagline; also first in sequence of exaggerated alliteration |
| 9 | repetition of “it is time” and “it is about time” | stresses writer’s sense of exasperation |
| 10 | “garrotte the Game Boy”/ “paralyse the PlayStation” | hyperbolic acts of destruction (highlighted by alliteration) |
| 11 | sequence of alliterative, game-related phrases | intensifies the sense of increasing anger; self-conscious over-use of stylistic feature |
| 12 | “as a society, that we admitted” | sense of full-scale communal guilt for which we must accept responsibility |
| 13 | “the catastrophic effect” | overly dramatic description of the disastrous consequences |
| 14 | “these blasted gizmos” | use of slang to show his utter contempt for pointless gadgets |

9. Show how the writer's word choice in lines 11-16 reinforces the contrast he is creating between school and home.

2

A

For full marks both school and home must be dealt with in order to explore the contrast.

Marks will depend on the quality of comment.

Possible answers:

School:

1	"demand"	suggests sense of authoritative claim
2	"provide"	suggests nurturing, caring
3	"expect"	suggests responsibility for child's learning lies with the school
4	"fill"	suggests idea of achieving capacity
5	"love (of books)"	suggests intensity of emotion, goes beyond the merely functional

Home:

6	"slump"	suggests unthinking passivity, slovenly posture and attitude
7	"hedonistic"	suggests selfish pursuit of (parents') own pleasures
8	"some other (room)"	vagueness suggests lack of concern, couldn't-care-less attitude
9	"nippers"	suggests a rather demeaning, patronising, offhand attitude
10	"bleeping and zapping"	suggests pointless, repetitive, noisy, slightly aggressive
11	"speechless rapture"	suggests hypnotic state where words are superfluous
12	"passive"	suggests no active responsibility taken for their learning/ no real engagement on the children's part
13	"washed"	suggests completely covered, submerged, not under control
14	"explosions and gore"	suggests excess of mindless violence
15	"so long"	suggests prolonged inactivity which seems to lead to their being absorbed by the machine
16	"sucked"	suggests surrender of their very being

10. Show how the writer's use of language in lines 17-26 conveys his contempt for the claim that there is some educational value in some video games.

4

A

Marks will depend on the quality of comment. A strong comment could score up to 2 marks; more basic comments will score up to 1 mark each.

Mere identification of a feature of sentence structure: 0. Reference alone: 0.

Possible answers:

- | | | |
|----|---|---|
| 1 | "blinking lizards" | far from enhancing education, the effect is to turn children into a lower form of life |
| 2 | "motionless" | suggests children are inactive, semi-conscious, death-like, ... |
| 3 | "twitching" | suggests only barely alive, making vague spasm-like movements |
| 4 | "These machines" | rather sneering tone |
| 5 | "These machines teach them nothing" | short, definitive statement indicating total lack of worth |
| 6 | "no ratiocination, discovery or feat of memory" | list of worthy qualities negated by "no" to emphasise mindlessness of the games |
| 7 | "though some of them may cunningly pretend to be educational" | concessionary clause which condemns the artful falsehoods promulgated |
| 8 | "may cunningly pretend" | suggests deviousness on part of manufacturers, a despicable attempt to deceive the public |
| 9 | "looked" | suggests a deceptive outward appearance |
| 10 | "fairly historical" | disparaging use of adverb to indicate half-hearted approval of history content |
| 11 | "on the packet" | coming after comma, sounds like a pointed afterthought, as if to imply actual contents were something different |
| 12 | "guilt-ridden (parent)" | suggests sense of being burdened by pangs of conscience which are abused by unscrupulous manufacturers |

[continued ...]

13	“Phooey!”	structure: single word exclamation completely refuting the manufacturer’s claims tone: utter dismissiveness through use of outlandish, mock-childish word;
14	“robotically”	suggests mindless, automatic, the antithesis of learning
15	“slaughtered”	to emphasise the brutality, carnage, bloodbath
16	“and then they did it again, that was it.”	monosyllabic description to suggest dull, unengaging nature of the game
17	“that was it”	tone of disbelief at meagreness of content
18	“Everything”	to emphasise the absolute paucity of content
19	“programmed”	suggests that, computer-like, there is no possibility of exercising individual choice
20	“spoon-fed”	image of helpless baby being fed, no need for the individual to think or act
21	“immediate”	to emphasise the absence of opportunity to reflect or to learn the value of effort
22	“Everything was programmed, spoon- fed, immediate”	list-like accumulation of adjectives stressing the unthinking nature of the activity
23	“endlessly showering”	suggests continuous, lavish, overwhelming, undeserved commendations
24	“bogus”	blunt condemnation of its falseness, suggesting something almost criminal
25	“massacres”	a reminder of the unsavoury content of the game

11. Read lines 27-35.

Why, according to the writer, is reading important in the development of writing skills?

2

U

There must be some attempt to use own words. Blatant lifts: 0.

Acceptable gloss on

- 1 “read enough to absorb the basic elements of vocabulary, grammar, rhythm, style and structure” , eg read widely in order to acquire the essential components of language (1 mark)

and

- 2 “to articulate your own thoughts in your own words” eg to express adequately your own ideas (1 mark)

12. How effective do you find lines 36-39 as a conclusion to the writer's condemnation of video gaming in the passage as a whole?

3

E

Marks will depend on the quality of evaluative comment. For full marks there must be attention to the idea of "conclusion" and to the "condemnation ... in the passage as a whole".

The following points could be made, but all points which candidates propose will have to be judged on their merits.

- | | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | "So I say now:" | Churchillian call to arms which signals the start of the peroration |
| 2 | "sitting in auto-lobotomy" | recalls description used in paragraph 3 (lines 11-16), and this reminds us of the detrimental effects of video gaming on young people |
| 3 | use of imperatives - "Summon", "Steel", "yank out", "get out", "strike" | takes the reader back to the turning off of the equipment at the beginning of the passage because the writer feels action must be taken |
| 4 | "all your strength, all your courage" | rhetorical patterning to reinforce the effort required by adults to overcome their offspring's addiction |
| 5 | "sledgehammer" | cartoon-like exaggeration typical of whole passage |
| 6 | final five words "strike a blow for literacy" | brings together writer's literal and metaphorical use of the expression in the title and at the end to illustrate the value he attaches to literacy |
| 7 | tone remains consistent | faux-outrage throughout, building to this ludicrous ending |
| 8 | argues that the situation is so serious that parents need to take decisive action to remedy the problem | |
| 9 | returns to the initial scenario to remind the reader of the "logical" need to take action | |

Question on both Passages

13. Which passage gives you a more interesting insight into the appeal and influence of video games?

Justify your choice by referring to the ideas of both passages.

5

U/E

Note that the question is on “ideas”. A case may be made for either passage. Answers which demonstrate a clear line of argument and refer closely to the ideas of both passages to illustrate the line of thought should be rewarded.

The mark for this question should reflect the overall quality of the response and may not be directly related to the length of the response or to the number of points/references made. A succinct, sophisticated response should be worth more than a series of fairly trivial points and obvious references. “Ticking and adding up” is not appropriate (or fair) here.

For full marks there must be reference to the ideas contained in both passages (although not necessarily a balanced treatment) and convincing evaluative comment. Where reference is made to one passage only, the **maximum** mark is 3.

The following guidelines should be used:

5 marks	clear and intelligent understanding of both passages; evaluative comment is thoughtful and convincing
4 marks	clear understanding of both passages; evaluative comment is reasonably convincing
3 marks	understanding of both passages; there is some evaluative comment
2 marks	some understanding of both passages; at least one appropriate evaluative comment
1 mark	one or two relevant but unconvincing comments
0 marks	irrelevant, or too generalised, or excessive quotation/reference without comment

The following points could be made, but all points which candidates propose will have to be judged on their merits:

Passage 1

- awareness of the traditional view that reading is better for the mind than video games
- writer's acknowledgement that most people will come into contact with other media
- writer's oppositional view that video games may be as mentally stimulating as reading
- the difficulties and frustrations involved in playing video games
- recognition that young people are more likely to play video games
- surprise that the onerous nature of "tasks" in video games would appeal to young people
- the popular misconception that video games offer immediate rewards
- the view that video games can promote learning in an entertaining way
- writer's belief that the reward strategy in video games is a powerful attraction
- the notion that narrative is often unimportant to the success of a video game
- the analogy of algebra/chess to illustrate the power of video games to develop critical thinking and problem-solving skills
- video games develop skills which are different from novels, music, etc
- the astonishing difference between appearance and reality in gaming activities

Passage 2

- the comparison of video games to an addictive drug
- the negative effects which video games have on children
- argument that video games are responsible for poor literacy
- argument that boys' lives may be ruined by over-exposure to video games
- hypocritical attitude of parents who expect schools to foster good literacy
- the writer's view that some video games masquerade as educational
- suggestion that the rewards in video games are undeserved
- view that reading books is essential for developing effective communication skills
- final paragraph encourages removal of video games from children

[END OF MARKING INSTRUCTIONS]