

GCSE Language Paper 1 – Explorations in
Creative Reading and Writing

Student booklet

Section A: Read a piece of fiction (around 40 lines long) and answer a series of analytical questions

Section B: A piece of creative writing inspired by a prompt

Timings:

	Question	Marks	Minutes
	Reading time		15
Section A	1 – List four things	4	5
	2 – how does the writer use language?	8	1
	3 – How does the writer use structure?	8	10
	4 – Evaluate the writing in light of a comment made	20	20
Section B	Creative writing (describe or narrate)	24 for content 16 for technical sophistication and accuracy	45

Section A:

The source:

The texts will be “extracts from literature prose fiction (such as novels and short stories) and will focus on:

- openings
- endings
- narrative or descriptive passages
- character development
- atmospheric descriptions”

It will be from the 20th or 21st century. At the top, there will be a short introduction including key information about the date it’s written, the story or character where needed. **Use this context** – underline the important details that help you to interpret the story.

Question 1:

Read again the first part of the source, lines

List **four** things from this part of the text about

Must remember:

- Make four **different** points
- Use short, simple sentences
- Always use a short quotation
- Only use the section they tell you
- Don't analyse language

4 marks – 5 minutes

These are quick easy marks to pick up, so read carefully!

My notes:

Question 1 self-assessment:

- I have written four different points
- I have used the lines from the question
- I have written four simple sentences
- Every point has a quote

Question 2:

How does the writer use language here to describe

You could include the writer's choice of:

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

8 marks - 10 minutes
"Language" is about the word choices the writer is making. This might be individual words or techniques like imagery metaphor, personification, pathetic fallacy etc.

Must remember:

- The bullet points are there to remind you – but you can write about any aspect of **language** here.
- Use literary vocabulary / language terminology
- Stick to the lines numbered in the question
- Use frequent, relevant, short quotation
- Evaluate and explore the effect of language

Top-band from the mark-scheme:

Level 4 Perceptive, detailed 7-8 marks	Shows detailed and perceptive understanding of <i>language</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Analyses the effects of the writer's choices of <i>language</i>• Selects a judicious range of quotations• Uses sophisticated subject terminology accurately
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My notes:

What to include:

- *Three paragraphs, with approx.. two quotes in each*

Question 2 Model answer:

The writer uses the word “gusts” of wind to describe them as a strong force. The fact that the wind came in gusts means it isn’t a constant flowing wind, and like waves of water the wind gathers energy then hits. The writer uses the word “exposed” do describe the high ground, insinuating that there is a battle between the wind and the ground. They describe the weather as the stronger force, and the high ground as the victim. The writer uses the alliteration “soft, splattered” when describing the mud in contrast to the harshness of the “constant driving rain.”

The writer also uses the simile “like a drunken man” to describe the body of the coach rocking to demonstrate how it is uncontrollable and has little balance. The wind causing the coach to act “like a drunken man” also connotes that the coach has gone numb to the wind as it has grown used to its ways. Additionally, the author writes in long sentences filtered with comas. This is a technique to slow the reader down, much as the cold, harsh weather sees to prolong time.

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

Question 2 self-assessment:

Highlight the statement in each column that describes the answer. Use this to work out the mark you should be awarded.

<p>7-8 marks</p> <p>Do they show <u>detailed and perceptive</u> understanding of <i>language</i>?</p>	<p>You analyse (pick apart) the different possible effects of the writer’s choices of <i>language</i>.</p>	<p>You use a wide range of well-chosen quotations from across lines 26-32.</p>	<p>You use a wide range of sophisticated terminology accurately.</p>
<p>5-6 marks</p> <p>Do they show that they <u>clear</u> understanding of <i>language</i>?</p>	<p>You explain in detail the different possible effects of the writer’s use of <i>language</i>.</p>	<p>You include a range of relevant quotations</p>	<p>You use a range of language terms accurately.</p>
<p>3-4 marks</p> <p>Do they show <u>some</u> understanding of <i>language</i>?</p>	<p>You <u>explain in detail</u> one effect of <i>language</i> on the reader.</p>	<p>You use relevant quotations to support your comments about language.</p>	<p>You use some language terms but not always accurately.</p>
<p>1-2 marks</p> <p>Do they show <u>simple awareness</u> of <i>language</i>?</p>	<p>You make simple comments about the effect of <i>language</i> on the reader.</p>	<p>You include one or two quotations, but they are quite long or inaccurate.</p>	<p>You use one or two language terms.</p>

Question 3:

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

This text is from the opening of a novel.
How has the writer structured the text to interest you as a reader?

8 marks - 10 minutes
“structure” is about the shape and changes in the whole text.

You could write about:

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

Must remember:

- The bullet points are there to remind you – but you can write about any aspect of **structure** here.
- Use literary vocabulary / terminology related to **structure**
- Use frequent, relevant, short quotation
- Evaluate and explore the effect of **structure**
- **Don't** retell the story/narrative
- **Don't describe** what's happening.

Top-band from the mark-scheme:

Level 4	Shows detailed and perceptive understanding of structural features
Perceptive, detailed	
7-8 marks	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Analyses the effects of the writer's choice of structural features• Selects a judicious range of examples• Uses a range of subject terminology appropriately

Tips to answer:

After the **first question**, draw a line under the section they ask about (so if they name lines 1-7, then draw a line under line 7)

After the **second question**, draw a line under the section they ask about (so if they name lines 8-16, then draw a line under line 16)

- ➔ They have already split it into three sections. Can you see a difference between them that you could write about?

Look at the main character, event, or place. What is different for them at the end in contrast to the beginning?

Begin by identifying the main change – then explore how the writer shows and develops this.

Helpful Terminology

Structural organisation

- Location
- Setting
- Changes *between the beginning and end* – in understanding a character, change of place or time
- Introduction / development / conclusion
- Linear
- Cyclical
- Flashback

Repetition

- Echoes
- Mirrors
- Recurring themes / motifs / images
- Cyclical structure

Narrative perspective

- Voice – 1st/2nd/3rd
- Change of perspective or viewpoint (*shifting from one character to another, or character to setting – like moving a camera*)
- Narrative focus (*a character, a place, time, an idea*)
- Dialogue
- Unreliable narrator

- Multiple characters
- Pace
- Contrast
- Tone or mood
- Revealing something hidden

The four key moments...

1. The opening

- What's happening?
- What's the focus?
- What's the writer trying to do/show?
- Does the opening foreshadow anything?
- What's the effect on the reader?

2. The next stage ...

- What's happening?
- What's the focus?
- What's the writer trying to do/show?
- Effect on the reader?
- Has there been a shift in focus/pace etc?
- Why has the writer done this?
- What is the effect of this shift on the reader?

3. The next stage ...

- What's happening?
- What's the focus?
- What's the writer trying to do/show?
- Effect on the reader?
- Has there been a shift in focus/pace etc?
- Why has the writer done this?
- What is the effect of this shift on the reader?

4. Conclusion

- What's happening? What is the writer focussing on?
- Has anything changed?
- Does the end link back to other parts of the text?

My notes:

What to include:

- *Three paragraphs.*
- *You can work chronologically or work by idea/technique*

Question 3 model answer

The extract begins with a dramatic opening sentence, “Hale knew that they meant to murder him.” This creates intrigue immediately, as a reader wants to know both who, why, and how he knows as Hale foreshadows his own death. The focus of the extract begins with Hale himself and ends with Halen “alone”, and is connected through the repetition of Hale with “inky fingers...bitten nails”, suggesting that Hale is central to the plot of the novel.

The writer structures the text chronologically to mirror Hale’s morning and there are references to his schedule on lines 11-15. This lengthy complex sentence suggests how busy and precise Hale’s schedule is. However, on lines 21-22 there is a further reference to time in the isolated sentence “yesterday”, “today”, “Tomorrow”. The end focus here marks a complete contrast and change of tone in the extract.

The writer goes on to present a contrasting picture of the seaside town than the one that has gone before. This juxtaposition suggests that Brighton is a different place for Hale than it is for the holiday makers. We are left with the solitary image of Hale “alone”, bringing the focus back to this character and whetting our appetite for the action to unfold and our questions as to who “they” are to be answered.

Question 3 self-assessment:

Highlight the statement in each column that describes the answer. Use this to work out the mark you should be awarded.

<p>7-8 marks</p> <p>Do they show <u>detailed and perceptive</u> understanding of <i>structure</i>?</p>	You use a range of subject terminology appropriately	You comment on an impressive and varied range of structural features.	Analyses the effects of the writer’s choice of <i>structural</i> features	Shows detailed and perceptive understanding of structural features
<p>5-6 marks</p> <p>Do they show that they <u>clear</u> understanding of <i>structure</i>?</p>	Uses subject terminology accurately	You correctly identify a range of structural features.	Clearly explains the effects of the writer’s choice of structural features	Shows clear understanding of structural features
<p>3-4 marks</p> <p>Do they show <u>some</u> understanding of <i>structure</i>?</p>	You use some terminology, but not always appropriately.	You correctly identify two or three structural features.	Attempts to comment on the effect of <i>structural</i> features	Shows some understanding of <i>structural</i> features
<p>1-2 marks</p> <p>Do they show <u>simple awareness</u> of <i>structure</i>?</p>	You use simple terms related to structure.	You correctly identify at least one structural feature.	Offers simple comment on the effect of <i>structure</i>	Simple references or examples

Question 4:

Focus this part of your answer on the second half of the source, **from line 18 to the end**.

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

To what extent do you agree?

In your response, you could:

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

20 marks - 20 minutes
Use the bullet points to guide your answer.

This question's a little more complicated because of the statement. The bullet points are also useful.

To achieve highly on this question, you must consider:

1. Write about the effects the writer is trying to create;
2. Which methods has the writer used to create this effect? What is a method? A method is anything the writer has done on purpose to create an effect
3. References: these can be examples of methods and/or quotations
4. Stay focused on what the statement is asking us to do

Must remember:

- Focus on the lines named in the question
- Quote frequently
- Use literary vocabulary
- Discuss the effect of the writing
- Explore – write thoughtfully and in detail about the way the writer is trying to create something

Top-band from the mark-scheme:

Level 4	At the top of the level critical evaluation will be perceptive and detailed	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Critically evaluates the text in a detailed way• Offers examples from the text to explain views convincingly• Analyses effects of a range of writer's choices• Selects a range of relevant quotations to validate views
Perceptive, detailed		
16-20 marks		

But what about?

➔ How much do I have to write?

Try to include two-three moments from the text to support the key words in the statement. Aim for around 1 ½ sides of paper.

➔ Can I refer to other parts of the extract?

Yes BUT you need to connect them to what you're writing about the section they name.

My notes:

What to include:

- *Brief introductory statement – agree, because...*
- *Three paragraphs with closely focused analysis*
- *Refer to the language of the question/introduction regularly*

Question 4 example:

Read the rest of the extract from “*The canal was narrow, the houses on either side seemed to close in upon it*” to the end of the extract. A student, having read this, said: “This part of the extract changes the atmosphere and mood quite dramatically.”

The canal was narrow, the houses on either side seemed to close in upon it, and in the daytime, with the sun’s reflection on the water and the windows of the houses open, bedding upon the balconies, a canary singing in a cage, there had been an impression of warmth, of secluded shelter. Now, almost in darkness, the windows of the houses shuttered, the water dank, the scene appeared altogether different, neglected, poor, and the long narrow boats moored to the slippery steps of cellar entrances looked like coffins.

‘I swear I don’t remember this bridge,’ said Laura, pausing, and holding on to the rail, ‘and I don’t like the look of that alleyway beyond.’

‘There’s a lamp halfway up,’ John told her. ‘I know exactly where we are, not far from the Greek quarter.’

They crossed the bridge, and were about to plunge into the alley-way when they heard the cry. It came, surely, from one of the houses on the opposite side, but which one it was impossible to say. With the shutters closed each one of them seemed dead. They turned, and stared in the direction from which the sound had come.

Molo, San Zaccaria, Fondamenta dell’Arsenale, San Martino – all areas of Venice
Biennale – a festival

Daphne Du Maurier’s *Don’t Look Now*

Question 4 Model answer:

Question focus: Change in mood.

As the statement suggests, the mood in this section changes from the previous. Before this section, the reader begins to feel that something is not as it seems, and this continues to create a sense of unease as Du Maurier develops a claustrophobic atmosphere.

The setting in this part of the extract is dark and confined. The “narrow” canals and houses that “close in”, as though they are being personified and gradually moving in to suffocate the characters walking through the streets. There is a contrast between Venice in daytime and Venice in darkness, the juxtaposition emphasising the way that the city changes completely at night and becomes a strange, frightening place. In daylight, there is “an impression of warmth, of secluded shelter” and it seems that the closeness of the city is comforting and secure, as “shelter” and “warmth” suggests safety and homeliness. We’re further reminded of this by the homely nature of the places on either side, with the bedding and a “canary singing in a cage”, suggesting something slightly strange and perhaps exotic, but equally welcoming and friendly.

But as the extract moves into night-time the city changes and becomes more threatening and claustrophobic. The “cage” takes on a different connotation, of being trapped. A single sound in darkness can also sound quite haunting, or sinister as it suggests that someone is there, unseen. The semantic field of disrepair – “dank”, “poor”, neglected”, darkness” – also suggests that this isn’t a city for tourists and excitement, but a place no-body would want to venture into. As Laura seems lost – “I swear I don’t remember this bridge” – the reader feels a further sense of foreboding as the atmosphere and mood become darker and more ominous. Using the verb phrase “holding onto the rail”, Du Maurier portrays Laura as frightened herself, looking for something to cling to for safety. Du Maurier further uses the imagery of death to add to this ominous impression. By referring to the canals, Du Maurier reminds the reader that this is set in Venice, with Italian connotations of glamour and decadence as well as Venice’s unusual status as a canal-based city. But the “cellar entrances” at the side of the canal are already threatening because they have connotations of going down, underneath the city to where unknown, dangerous things might lurk. By describing the narrow boats moored to their doors with the simile “like coffins”, it appears that in the dark Venice’s dead are obvious, rather than buried and hidden. The adjective “slippery” contributes the developing atmosphere of danger, as people are at risk of falling down into the cellars, and being lost in the darkness. As well as being claustrophobic, the shutters contribute to the gothic imagery as they are closed and “seemed dead.”

In the final paragraph of the extract, Du Maurier further increases the dramatic tension by using the verb “plunge” to describe her characters’ movement, creating an impression of them moving quickly and decisively but maybe also feeling like they are having to move quickly to avoid danger. The sudden piercing cry contrasts sharply with the welcoming singing of the canary in the beginning of this section, and the noise breaks through the narrative to shock the reader Just as the characters are shocked themselves

Question 5:

This is a creative writing question. You have a choice of two – one will have a picture prompt and the other will be a statement e.g.

Your school or college is asking students to contribute some creative writing for its website.

Either: Write a description suggested by this picture



Or: Describe an occasion when you felt unsure or challenged. Focus on the thoughts and feelings you had at that time.

Must remember:

- “Suggested by” **doesn’t** mean just describe the picture. You have to write imaginatively. But you *could* write, say, from the point of view of someone in the picture and suggest how they’re feeling at what they see. Or write from the point of view of an object in the picture. Or write about what is happening just out of the camera’s angle.
- Vary your writing – use imaginative language and sentence structures.
- Use a **wide range of punctuation** – including dashes, hyphens, brackets, semi-colons and colons as well as commas, exclamation and question marks, and full stops accurately.

Top-band from the mark-scheme: you get a mark out of 24 for content and organisation, and 16 for technical accuracy

		Technical accuracy	
Upper Level 4	<p>Content</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Register is convincing and compelling for audience • Assuredly matched to purpose • Extensive and ambitious vocabulary with sustained crafting of linguistic devices <p>Organisation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Varied and inventive use of structural features • Writing is compelling, incorporating a range of convincing and complex ideas • Fluently linked paragraphs with seamlessly integrated discourse markers 	Level 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sentence demarcation is consistently accurate • Wide range of punctuation is used with a high level of accuracy • Uses a wide range of appropriate sentence forms for effect • Uses Standard English consistently and appropriately with secure control of complex grammatical structures • High level of accuracy in spelling, including ambitious vocabulary • Extensive and ambitious use of vocabulary
22-24 marks		13-16 marks	

If you get stuck:

- **C** = Colours
- **A** = Adjectives/Adverbs
- **S** = Senses – all 5
- **S** = Sentence structures – use all
- **I** = Imagery – simile, metaphor, personification etc
- **E** = Emotive language

My notes:

What to include:

- If it's interesting to read, it's well-written!
- Wide range of literary devices
- Fluent cohesion – a beginning, middle and end.

