



# English Language Higher Tier

A Guide to the GCSE English Language Examination

Unit 1: Understanding and Producing Non-fiction Texts



## Writing

This booklet explains everything you need to know about the exam. It contains advice, texts, questions and model answers.

This booklet covers:

**Section B: Writing (Questions 5 and 6)**

Please make sure you take it to every English lesson.



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## THE ADVICE ON THE EXAM PAPER...

### Section B: Writing

Answer **both** questions in this section.

Time: one hour

25 minutes on Question 5 (worth 16 marks)

35 minutes on Question 6 (worth 24 marks)

## THERE ARE LOTS OF MARKS TO GAIN...

The two Writing tasks come in the second half of the exam. You may be feeling a little tired after the Reading questions but you must stay strong!

Together, the Writing tasks are worth **40 marks** - this represents **30% of your final grade**.

If you miss out one of these questions you will seriously underachieve. This means that 'writing stamina' is crucial - you must work with energy and determination to produce your best writing.



*Stay strong!*

## SPEND YOUR TIME WISELY...

As in the Reading section, you must divide your time sensibly between the tasks. Follow the advice given on the exam paper - Question 6 is worth more marks, so spend more time on it.



**Question 5 = 25 minutes**

**Question 6 = 35 minutes**

## **FROM THE MARK SCHEME - ASSESSMENT OBJECTIVES...**

### **1. Communication (AO3i)**

- Writing is formal and serious but also changes to suit the task.
- Writing is detailed and structured to keep the reader interested.
- Language is used to suit the task.

### **2. Organisation of Ideas (AO3ii)**

- Writing follows a plan, presenting a sequence of points from beginning to end.
- Sentences of different lengths flow together to build detail.
- Paragraphs flow together and are used to link points.
- Different paragraph lengths are used to emphasise points.

### **3. Use a range of sentence structures, with accurate punctuation and spelling (AO3iii)**

- Accurate punctuation is used to present a variety of sentence lengths.
- Formal English is used although language may be adapted to suit the style of a task.

### **Key points:**

- You must write in a formal style but also be able to show that you understand the style required by the question.
- You must use a VARIETY of sentence / paragraph length to show that you are in control of the message you are getting across to your reader. Longer sentences / paragraphs are used to develop detail; shorter sentences / paragraphs are used to emphasise points.

**Question 5**

students wrote in a free and personal way, whilst using standard English.

The purposes to describe and explain were achieved by most students and responses were usually grounded in real experience.

**Less successful responses did not deal with both purposes**

The most successful writing was succinct and creative with a range of features.

some examiners noted a weakness in paragraphing.

You can see from these comments that the examiners want you to write in a way that is creative but uses standard English. Most tasks require you to use language that is formal and polite, and to avoid using slang.

Your writing must be planned and structured in paragraphs - with a clear beginning and conclusion.

This task required candidates to both describe and explain. The best answers did both of these things very clearly and responded to each part of the question. This is why we advise you to highlight the key parts of questions! You should also make sure that you revise the features of writing that describes and explains.

**Question 6**

The best answers criticised modern society's obsession with celebrity culture, and presented thoughtful moral arguments.

Some students offered a safer response which stayed close to the ideas contained in the title whereas others used examples of role models, such as Martin Luther King.

nearly all criticised unintelligent celebrities and overpaid footballers.

Writing was accurate and well structured.

The task here required candidates to argue their personal view about what makes a good role model. Again the examiners commented on the importance of responding directly to the requirements of the task and planning a well structured argument (paragraphs!).

To prepare for Question 6, you must revise the techniques of writing to argue and persuade.

**Conclusion**

The most successful students were those who read and understood the specific requirements of each question

So read the questions carefully, highlight the key points and plan your answer.

## WRITING FOR THE EXAM - STYLE & TECHNIQUE...

**Top Tip:** There is important work to do before you start to write.



*Build a clear structure!*

Planning time = thinking time

You can't write well if you don't think about:

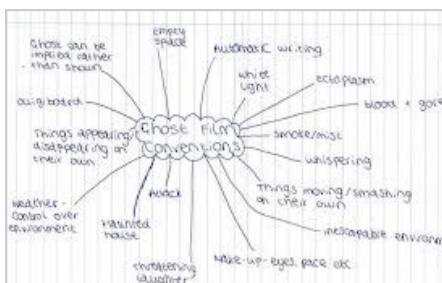
- (i) what to say - content
- (ii) how to say it - style

Studies of exam performance have shown that students who write brief plans before each Writing task achieve the best grades.

**You must plan.**

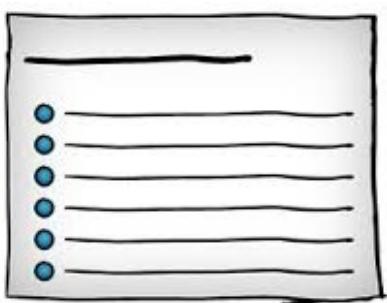
The most popular ways to plan are:

- Spider diagram



Plan in your answer booklet - it shows the examiner that you have thought about structure.

- List of bullet points



As you write, you will think of more ideas - add them to your plan or jot them in the margin.

Number the points on your plan to work out the flow of your writing - this is called **sequencing**.

# THE STRUCTURE OF YOUR WRITING...

## 1. INTRODUCTION

- ✓ keep it brief and punchy - make an impact on the reader from the start.
- ✓ show clearly that you are focusing on the key points in the task.

## 2. A SEQUENCE OF LINKED PARAGRAPHS

- ✓ work through the points in your plan.
- ✓ try to make your ideas flow together by presenting smooth links between your key points - as if you are taking your reader on a guided journey.

### Useful words and phrases to link ideas

Also      As well as this,      Moreover,      Thus,      Consequently,  
Next,      Finally,      Meanwhile,      Before      After      Later,  
However,      Although      In spite of      Apart from      When  
Yet,      Above all,      In particular,      Especially,      Significantly,  
Indeed,      Notably,      for example      such as      for instance  
As revealed by      Equally,      In the same way,      Similarly,      Unlike  
Like      Whereas      Instead of      Alternatively,      Otherwise,  
On the other hand,      Surprisingly,      Oddly,      Happily,      Thankfully,

## 3. 'CONCLUDE THE WRITING' - THE ENDING

- ✓ Make an impact on your reader by planning a punchy ending (a short paragraph can be effective) - leave your reader with something to think about.
- ✓ Your ending should show that you have remained focused on the key points in the task (**content**).
- ✓ Write it in an appropriate **style** to fit the task.

## 4. CHECK YOUR WRITING

- ✓ This exam must show off your **BEST** writing - so check for silly errors.
- ✓ The examiners are quite happy to see changes and corrections in your writing.

## SEQUENCING YOUR POINTS...

A look back at the mark scheme will remind you how important it is that your writing is well structured:

- Writing follows a plan.....a sequence of points from beginning to end.
- Paragraphs.....link points and flow from one idea to another.

It is therefore a good idea to number the points on your plan in an order that addresses the requirements of the task and presents a logical sequence.

Simply work out how best to **BEGIN** and **END** your writing, then number the points in between.

### BEGINNING...

Your opening paragraph has two important aims:

- make an **impact** in your reader and grab their attention.
- show the examiner that you are writing in the **correct style**.



*Aim true!*

Consider Question 5 from the May 2012 exam. The question paper informs candidates that a 'blog' is 'a regular online piece of personal writing'.

Candidates should therefore write in a style that is 'regular' and 'personal'. It is sensible for candidates to present these features in their opening lines to demonstrate to the examiner that they are writing in the correct style.

For example:

*Hello again, followers and friends. Today I am going to describe an experience that taught me a valuable lesson about myself. I should warn you that I will be sharing a troubling experience but you will be relieved to learn that there is a happy ending!*

## **WHAT THE EXAMINERS ARE LOOKING FOR...**

*It's good news - you are not expected to write too much:*

## **FROM THE MARK SCHEME...**

The following points are included in the mark scheme for every Writing task.

They clearly show the importance of planning a strong beginning and ending to each piece of writing.

✓ **Candidates' writing should be 'succinct' (concise) and 'focused'**

You don't have to write a novel! The length of your writing should reflect the number of marks and the time available.

✓ **Show that the topic and task are understood**

Your opening lines should show that you are writing in the required style and that you are on task.

✓ **Conclude the writing**

End your writing in a way that is suitable for the style and the task. Leave your reader with something interesting or exciting to think about.

*It is important to BEGIN and END your writing in a way that shows clearly that you are writing in an appropriate style and answering the question directly.*

## SOME COMMON WRITING STYLES IN EXAM TASKS...

As a general rule, keep your writing **formal** and **polite** - your writing should not sound like speech (even if writing a speech or a blog!). This means:

- **Do not** use slang, such as **gonna**, **cos**, **innit** etc.
- **Do not** use shortened words such as **don't**, **can't**, and **it's** - these are generally reserved for speech and apostrophes are often used incorrectly in exams!
- **Do not** begin sentences with '**And**', '**But**' or '**Because**'.

**Whatever tasks you are given, you must impress the examiner with your writing skills.**

Make sure that you know exactly **what** you are writing about and **who** you are writing for. Write in a **formal** style but use language that suits your **subject** and your **audience** where you can.

### **NEWSPAPER / MAGAZINE / WEBSITE ARTICLE**

This task is very common. It is favoured by examiners because it allows candidates to write about issues in depth, which most often relate to 'young people' in some way. Writing an article about something allows you to write in a style that is **personal** but also that **reflects on a subject with more maturity**, considering the **wider issues** that relate to it. This means that there is room for your **personal experiences** alongside **more thoughtful comments**.

### **LETTERS (to local newspaper / website etc)**

If you are asked to write a letter, you do not need to write an address.

If the letter is **formal** - start with *Dear Sir or Madam*, and end with *Yours faithfully*.

If the letter is **personal** - start with *Dear [name]*, and end with *Yours sincerely*.

**Most letters are formal - a letter task is no excuse to slip into casual language or slang.**

Popular tasks are to write a letter to the editor of a local newspaper or the local council about an issue relating to young people. A letter is a personal and direct form of writing so you should express your personal thoughts and opinions if the task allows - don't be afraid to get passionate!

### **BLOG**

The exam board have defined a blog as 'a **regular** piece of **personal** writing'. 'Blog' tasks are similar to letters - they are formal but require a personal touch. A 'regular' and 'personal' piece of writing suggests an informal style but be careful - as with a letter, this is no excuse to use casual language or slang. The content and structure of your blog should be enough to suggest the 'regular and personal' nature of the writing, particularly the way you begin and end.

### **WRITING A SPEECH**

Speeches tend to fit the 'argue' / 'persuade' tasks as you are addressing an audience directly.

Remember to **address your audience** throughout the speech - use language that appeals to them and build your structure to have an effect on your audience - take them on a journey!

## QUESTION 5 - DESCRIBE, EXPLAIN, INFORM...

QUESTION 5 requires you to write to DESCRIBE, EXPLAIN or INFORM. Most often, you are required to write something that mixes two of these styles - e.g. 'describe' and then 'explain'.

Here are some tips about how to make it clear to the examiner that you are writing in the correct style/s:

### DESCRIBE

We experience the world through our **senses**, so to describe something well you must put into words everything that your senses experience in that situation - what do you **see, hear, smell, touch and taste?** Personal description should also include comments about your **feelings** and **emotions**.

#### For example

You have been given the task of describing a **trip to the seaside**. You know that you have to include lots of details and appeal to the senses. The best way to go about this would be to imagine that you have been driven to the seaside and told to get on with it. As you step out of the car, describe **what you see, what you hear, what you smell, what you feel, how you feel** etc.

#### Tips:

##### ✓ Use lots of carefully chosen adjectives (describing words):

e.g. consider the different effects created by the following adjectives that describe temperature:

hot      warm      snug      baking      stifling      scorching      blistering      sizzling

##### ✓ Use lots of carefully chosen adverbs (describe how things are done):

e.g. consider the different effects created by the following adverbs that describe travelling:

wearily      confidently      merrily      hopefully      speedily      reluctantly      cautiously

##### ✓ Use similes and metaphors (to describe things in imaginative ways):

A metaphor says that something is something else, e.g. *The classroom was a cold cell in a dark prison.*

A simile compares things using the words 'like' or 'as...as', e.g. *The house was as quiet as a library.*

### EXPLAIN

Writing to explain really means stating clearly:

##### ✓ **why or how** something happened

##### ✓ **why or how** you felt a particular way

e.g. It may be easy to name your favourite song but it is not so easy to say **why** you like it.

e.g. Your feelings about something may have changed but **how** have they changed?

A clear explanation requires lots of detail.

Use phrases such as:    'This happened because...'   

'As a result of this...'

'As a consequence of this...'

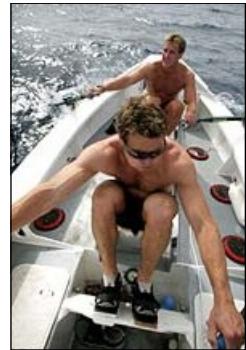
'I felt a little happier after...'

'What this meant was...'

'My feelings changed because...'

### Task: the features of descriptive writing

1. Read the following extract, taken from *The Crossing* by James Cracknell and Ben Fogle. The book is a true account of the authors' participation in a rowing race across the Atlantic Ocean. Here, Ben Fogle describes a dramatic capsize.
2. With a partner, underline all the features of descriptive writing you can find in the extract. Look for the following features:  
*personal feelings and emotions    dramatic verbs    adjectives  
metaphors    similes    variety of sentence structure for effect  
questions    variety of paragraph length for effect    direct speech*



*Describe this!*

I watched as a vast wave gathered behind the boat, soaring above the cabin, a wall of white water towering over our tiny boat. Once again I dug the oars in to propel us forward, but the wave was too big. For a moment it felt like we were moving backwards as we were sucked into the belly of the wave, the horizon disappearing as the churning surf enveloped the stern of the boat. I felt the aft lift, as a torrent of water crashed over the boat and I felt myself falling backwards. I was aware of the boat collapsing on top of me. I struggled to pull my feet from the stirrups to no avail. The world went black. I felt a weight on top of me and then a rush of cold water as my body was brutally submerged into the bottomless Atlantic Ocean. My feet were sucked from my shoes as I clung on to the oars for dear life, but then they too were dragged from my clasp. My mind went blank as I tumbled through the surf, spun around roughly like clothes in a washing machine.

I was somewhere underwater, but which way was up? Everything was midnight black. I panicked as I grabbed the water, desperate for something to clutch on to. There was nothing. No boat, just inky cold water.

I had been under water for a seeming eternity and had started to panic. It felt as though my lungs were collapsing and I struggled to find which way to swim. I felt my hand break the surface as my body burst from the depths of the ocean. 'Paaaaaaah,' I gasped as my body screamed for air.

'James!' I cried. There was no sign of him, nor the boat. I was in the middle of the ocean without a life jacket, being tossed around in the surf like a rag doll. I spun around in the water, gripped by panic.

There was the boat, a black upturned hull. 'James!' I screamed again. Nothing. Nothing in life had prepared me for this. No amount of planning could have readied me. What now? The boat seemed an incomprehensible distance away. How could I be so far from it? Who would ever find me out here? I had to get back on that boat.

## INFORM

- ✓ Give lots of information - explain it as clearly as possible - use direct 'statement sentences'.
- ✓ Use anecdotes (personal stories) to support the points you make.
- ✓ Sound like you are knowledgeable and 'in charge' - use technical or subject specific language.
- ✓ Make up facts and statistics to make your information sound convincing.

### Top Tip

You must avoid just writing a list of things you know about something.

E.g. if you are given the task to inform readers about the leisure facilities in your area, don't just list what they are. Give lots of details about each one - describe what facilities are on offer, where they are, who uses them most and how they can be improved etc.

## **QUESTION 6 - ARGUE, PERSUADE...**

QUESTION 6 requires you to write to ARGUE or PERSUADE. These writing styles have many techniques in common. Here are some tips:

### ARGUE

- ✓ Write a clear plan, outlining the key points of your argument together with notes about the evidence you can use to support them.
- ✓ Order your points into a logical argument that starts strongly and reaches a clear conclusion.
- ✓ Explain your points - back them up with any (sensible) evidence you can think of.
- ✓ Make up statistics to help to prove your points.
- ✓ Add a bit of passion! If the task allows it, get personal - explain your own strong feelings.
- ✓ Link ideas - let them flow to build your argument. Use words like: 'So...'; 'but...'; 'however...'; 'therefore...'; 'because...'.
- ✓ Start your argument with a strong point that states your position clearly.
- ✓ Reach a definite conclusion - 'So then we can see that...!'

### One side OR the other?

You must read the question very carefully to see what you are required to argue about. The task usually makes it clear whether you are to argue for OR against something, so be clear about that.

Do not offer a balanced argument if you are required to represent just ONE SIDE of an argument, or you will find it difficult to build up enough passion to argue effectively for your side!

### Counter Arguments

It is sometimes effective to consider what people may say against your argument (these are called counter arguments) and then answer those points to discredit them. The exam board have warned that candidates sometimes get carried away with counter arguments to the point that they end up presenting a balanced argument when they should be arguing for just one side. Be careful.

## PERSUADE

- ✓ Pay attention to the requirements of the task to be sure about your subject and audience - who are you trying to persuade and what about?
- ✓ Make your general argument and the points you make as clear as possible
- ✓ Think around the subject to present a creative persuasive argument
- ✓ When your overall point is clear, use a selection of persuasive techniques to sound more convincing

### Persuasive Techniques

#### **1. Rhetorical Questions**

A rhetorical question is a question used to make a strong point. They are used in situations that do not expect an answer because it is clear what the answer should be.

e.g. *You don't want that to happen do you? Is this the behaviour we expect of a civilised society?*

#### **2. Language Choice - Emotive Language - Hyperbole (exaggeration)**

Language is called 'emotive' when it causes people to feel emotional. Different words have different connotations - they suggest different things to people. For example, consider the impact of the word 'slaughtered' in this line taken from an animal charity leaflet: *The harsh reality is that they're being slaughtered by poachers for their bones and precious fur.*

Emotive language is often used to persuade people by making them feel excitement, anger, guilt or sympathy.

e.g. *We found Elsa in a gutter, she had no home, no food and no family, she was filthy, starving and emaciated.*

Use language to have an effect on your audience - consider the impact of the word 'starving' rather than 'hungry'. Exaggerate and emphasise points where necessary.

#### **3. Repetition**

Repetition is a very important persuasive technique. A repeated word, phrase, or idea can be used to great effect. Repetition can also be used to give a piece of persuasive speech or writing a powerful overall structure, as it can be used to emphasise, highlight or return to key issues and ideas.

#### **4. Opinions**

Opinions are personal ideas and beliefs. You may not be able to prove that your opinions are true but to persuade somebody you must make it clear that you believe what you say. Present your opinions in a direct way and make sure that you explain them thoroughly. Think carefully about what others may say to challenge your opinions so that you can answer opposing points of view before they come up.

e.g. *I believe that...*      *It is clear to see...*      *One may conclude...*

#### **5. Facts**

A persuasive argument can be given a sense of greater authority by the inclusion of carefully selected factual information. The facts must support the argument that is being made.

e.g. *The chickens live in a cage not 40 centimetres square; they don't even have enough room to turn around.*

## PERSUADE (continued)

### **6. Statistics**

It always sounds impressive if you can back up a persuasive argument with facts and figures. A staggering 98% of Knights Templar pupils agree that statistics make an argument sound more convincing, even when they are made up. Like that one. Try to think of statistics to support your arguments - you could always question classmates to come up with the results of a poll of school children!

### **7. Anecdotes**

Anecdotes are personal stories and examples from your personal experience that can be used as evidence to support your argument.

### **8. Rule of three**

A list of three things is an effective way of emphasising a key point, such as, *A smarter school uniform would improve pupils' confidence, maturity and self-pride*. The 'rule of three' can also be used to build up to a contrasting final point.

e.g. *We don't want your money, we don't want your old clothes but we do want your help.*

### **9. Conditional Appeal**

If you do something, you will get something. If you agree to this, you will get that. Only by doing that, can we achieve this.

### **10. Personal appeal**

The use of words such as *you*, *we* and *our* helps to establish a friendly, politely informal tone. It also creates a sense of working together to achieve a common goal.

e.g. *We need you; without your help we can't help them....*

### **11. Direct and commanding tone / Counter argument**

Your persuasive argument can be given authority by a strong, commanding tone. You must at all times sound convincing and unwavering in your beliefs. You may find it helpful to begin sentences with verbs - command words,

e.g. *Come to the best restaurant in Baldock. or Try one today.*

It is also helpful to consider counter arguments - things that could be said against your argument. This will help you to build a strong argument and sound even more persuasive!

e.g. *Some may argue that changes to the school uniform would be expensive. This is not so because...*

### Task: Analysing a persuasive text to see persuasive techniques in action.

Draw lines to link these language features with examples in the text. Discuss with a partner how and why the features have been used.

Slogan and headline



Commanding language

**ADOPT HIM TODAY.  
OR LOSE HIM FOREVER.**

Rhetorical question

Will you help the snow leopard claw its way back from the brink?

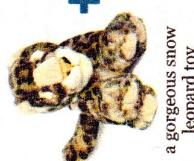
Metaphor (image)

Snow leopards have survived in the Himalayas for thousands of years. But right now, there are as few as 300 left in Nepal. The harsh reality is that they're being slaughtered by poachers for their bones and precious fur – and they urgently need your help if they are to live on.

By adopting a snow leopard today, you'll help protect this endangered big cat for future generations.

Facts

Statistics



a gorgeous snow leopard toy  
an adoption pack  
regular updates from the field

from just £3 a month =

**£3 a month**

Adopt a snow leopard today by filling in the form  
below, visiting [protectasnowleopard.com](http://protectasnowleopard.com)  
or calling 0845 200 2391

Personal appeal

Emotive language

Word choice:  
Verbs/Adverbs

Word choice:  
Noun phrase

Word choice:  
Adjectives

Pun  
(a play on words)

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**ADOPT HIM TODAY.  
OR LOSE HIM FOREVER.**

Will you help the snow leopard claw its way back from the brink?

The purrfect gift!

Your present. Their future. For as little as £3 a month, you or your loved one will receive an adoption pack, an adorable cuddly toy and regular updates from people on the ground working tirelessly to help save the beautiful snow leopard. What's more, you'll have the satisfaction of knowing you're helping us to train and equip courageous anti-poaching rangers. And you'll discover what it takes – and how it feels – to help save a species.

Snow leopards have survived in the Himalayas for thousands of years. But right now, there are as few as 300 left in Nepal. The harsh reality is that they're being slaughtered by poachers for their bones and precious fur – and they urgently need your help if they are to live on.

By adopting a snow leopard today, you'll help protect this endangered big cat for future generations.

from just £3 a month =

**£3 a month**

Adopt a snow leopard today by filling in the form below, visiting [protectasnowleopard.com](http://protectasnowleopard.com) or calling 0845 200 2391

<u>Persuasive Language Technique</u>	<u>Definition</u>	<u>Example from Advertisement</u>	<u>Explanation - how does it help the advert to achieve its purpose?</u>
Slogan	A catchy phrase used to promote or advertise something, such as a product to buy or a charity.		
Commanding language	Direct language that sounds like it is giving an instruction or telling the reader what to do.		
Rhetorical question	A question that is used to make a statement or get a clear point across. Often used with emotive language to gain sympathy.		
Facts and statistics	These are used to back up and give authority to an argument. Look out also for opinions presented as facts!		
Word choices - adjectives	Describing words		
Word choices - verbs and adverbs	Action words and words that describe how things are done.		
Word choices - noun phrases	Phrases that are used instead of the name to focus on a particular feature.	'endangered big cat' people on the ground'	
Emotive language	Words chosen for their emotional impact - often to gain the reader's sympathy.	'The harsh reality is they are being slaughtered by poachers for their bones and precious fur'	
Pun	A play on words - can sound catchy or amusing.		
Metaphor	An image used to compare something to in order to focus on a particular aspect.	'Will you help the snow leopard <u>claw its way back from the brink?</u> '	
Personal appeal - use of second person	Appealing directly to the reader by referring to them using the word 'you'.		
Personification	A description of something that is not human as a person.	'Adopt him today. Or lose him forever.'	

## Snow Leopard Adoption Campaign (WWF): the use of persuasive language

**ADOPT HIM TODAY OR LOSE HIM FOREVER.**

The dramatic, commanding tone here stresses the need to act quickly.

**Will you help the snow leopard claw its way back from the brink?**

A direct appeal to the reader, addressing them in the second person - 'you' - and using a rhetorical question. The phrase 'claw its way back from the brink' is a dramatic metaphor highlighting the perilous position of this endangered species.

**But right now, there are as few as 300 left in Nepal.**

The use of statistics for a direct and dramatic impact - made to sound more dramatic by the use of the phrase 'as few as'.

**The harsh reality is that they're being slaughtered by poachers for their bones and precious fur - and they urgently need your help if they are to live on.**

The language here has been crafted to have an emotional impact on the reader (emotive language) - this has influenced the choice of adjectives, verbs and adverbs.

Consider the impact of the following:

- **harsh** reality (adjective); **precious** fur (adjective)
- **slaughtered** (verb)
- **urgently** (adverb)

**By adopting a snow leopard today, you'll help protect this endangered big cat for future generations.**

This line again appeals directly to the reader, 'you'll help'. The snow leopard is referred to in a different way, using a 'noun phrase' (a phrase that is used to refer to something and emphasise something about it) - 'endangered big cat' - instead of the noun (name) 'snow leopard'. This encourages the reader to view the snow leopard sympathetically by using the adjective 'endangered' and relating it to a popular domestic pet.

**Your present. Their future.**

This is a pun - a play on words - playing on the double meaning of 'present' as 'the present time' and 'a gift'.

**For as little as £3 a month, you or your loved one will receive an adoption pack, an adorable cuddly toy and regular updates from people on the ground working tirelessly to help save the beautiful snow leopard.**

**What's more, you'll have the satisfaction of knowing you're helping us to train and equip courageous anti-poaching rangers. And you'll discover what it takes - and how it feels - to help save a species.**

Consider the impact of the following language choices:

- **as little as**
- **you or your loved one**
- **an adorable** cuddly toy (adjective)
- **regular updates from people on the ground** (noun phrase)
- **working tirelessly** (adverb)
- **beautiful** snow leopard (adjective)
- **What's more**
- **the satisfaction of knowing you're helping us**
- **courageous** anti-poaching rangers (adjective)
- **- and how it feels -**
- **save a species**

**The purrrfect gift!**

This is another pun ('purrrfect' = perfect) designed to appeal to cat-loving readers.

**Adopt a snow leopard today by filling in the form below, visiting [protectasnowleopard.com](http://protectasnowleopard.com) or calling 0845 200 2391**  
This is commanding language to prompt swift action.

### Task: Persuasive Writing

1. Write a letter to the editor of your local newspaper to persuade them to support a local charity or community project of your choice.

Write no more than one side of A4 paper (less than you would write in the exam).  
Use as many persuasive techniques in the letter as you can.
2. When you finish, exchange letters with a partner and underline the persuasive techniques you see in their letter.
3. Class discussion: which persuasive techniques proved to be most effective?

### Tasks: Pick and Mix Techniques

#### Task A

Write the names of the five writing styles that could be tested in the exam at the head of five columns on paper or in your English book:

Inform      Describe      Explain      Argue      Persuade

Add techniques from the table on the next page to each list to match the techniques with an appropriate writing style (you may use the techniques more than once).

#### Task B

Using as many of the techniques for the appropriate purpose as you can, spend 15 - 20 minutes writing a response to one of the following tasks:

1. You have won a competition at your local travel agency to travel for two weeks to a destination of your choice. The travel agent has asked you to write a page for their website describing your trip. Write the web page.
2. Choose an activity that you are interested in: a sporting activity, musical skill or hobby. Write an article for your college magazine informing other students about your chosen activity, and what to do if they would like to try it for themselves.
3. Write a letter to your school governors explaining the improvements you would like to see made to sports facilities in your school or college.

### Task: Pick and Mix Techniques

Match the following writing techniques with the five writing styles that could be tested in the exam:

Inform

Describe

Explain

Argue

Persuade

Interesting verbs and adverbs	Adjectives
Using the senses	Metaphor and Simile
Technical/ subject specific words	Lists
Facts & Statistics	Opinions
Hyperbole (exaggeration)	List of three
Reasoning	Personal opinions and feelings
Using comparisons	Repetition
Involving the reader through direct address ('You')	Anecdotes (true / personal stories)
Commanding language (instructions / demands / strength of purpose)	Emotive language (to make the reader feel emotions or share yours)
Variety of sentence lengths	Variety of paragraph lengths

## QUESTION 5 ADVICE...

### QUESTION 5

MAY 2012

Write an entry for your online blog which describes a time when you felt uncertain or unsure about a situation you were in and explain how you overcame it. (16 marks)

Writing style: online blog - describe and explain

(Advice given on the exam paper confirms that an 'online blog' is 'a regular piece of personal writing'.)

Content: There are **TWO** parts to the content required here:

- (i) describe a time you felt uncertain or unsure...
- (ii) ...explain how you overcame it.

**Warning: some Writing tasks have two or more parts to respond to!**

You may be asked to write about two different things (as here) or be required to write in two different styles (e.g. describe and explain).

**Highlight the important instructions in each Writing task.  
Missing one part of a task will mean that you drop marks.**



## MOCK FEEDBACK...



Students described their 'uncertain situation' in detail. Feelings and emotions were described, though in less detail. The overall style of the piece was presented accurately as a formal piece of personal writing - serious but with a familiar, conversational tone at times.



Some students missed the second part of the task and so lost marks. The task requires you to explain how you overcame your uncertain feelings. This encourages students to show a clear change in their feelings and emotions. The best students were able to reflect on this change.

## PRACTICE TASK: GETTING STARTED...

Write an opening paragraph for the following **Question 5** tasks:

### June 2011

**Q5** Sometimes difficult decisions have to be made. Describe a decision that you, or someone you know, had to make and explain the consequences. Your piece will appear in the Real Lives section of your local newspaper.

### January 2012

**Q5** Write a letter which you hope will be published in your local newspaper. Inform readers what leisure facilities are available for young people and families in your area and explain how you think they could be improved.

**Before you start to write** you must 'unpick' each question to work out what you are required to do. For each, highlight the key words that show:

- (i) what to write about (content)
- (ii) how to write it (style)

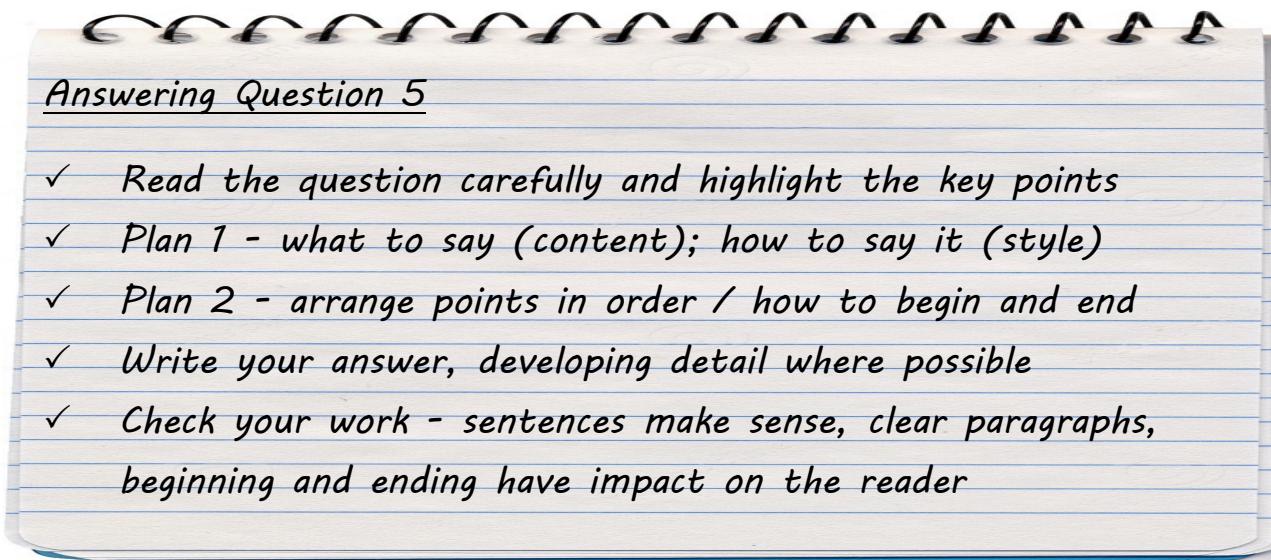


*(Remind yourself of the 'blog' question on the previous pages to see how to 'unpick' a question to focus on the key points.)*

**EXTENSION TASK:** Write a second opening paragraph for each task. Which paragraph do you prefer in each case and why?

## PRACTICE QUESTION: **QUESTION 5 - BUILDING AN ANSWER**

Let's check that you know what to do:



Follow these stages to plan, structure, write and check your answer to the following question from November 2012:

5 The travel section of your local newspaper is inviting readers to write about their favourite place. Write a letter to the editor describing a favourite place you know and explaining why others would like it.

- ✓ **Read the question carefully and highlight the key points**

You will notice from this that you are required to write about a 'favourite place' in a 'letter' that both 'describes' and 'explains'.

- ✓ **Plan 1 - what to say (content); how to say it (style)**

Think about a place that you know well enough to describe and can say good things about - you must be able to explain your feelings about your 'favourite' place! Use a spider diagram or a list of bullet points to jot down your ideas.

You must write a letter to a newspaper editor, so you must begin in the style of a formal letter, i.e. *Dear Sir or Madam* or *Dear Editor*.

Your letter must show clear features of both writing to describe and writing to explain. The content must also be suitable for the travel section.

✓ ***Plan 2 - arrange points in order / how to begin and end***

The opening lines of your piece should show the examiner that you are writing in the correct style and that you have understood the requirements of the question.

Plan an appropriate opening paragraph - try to make an impact on your reader (in this case, the editor of your local newspaper).

You must then organise the points on your plan into a logical sequence. When you write, try to make it clear that each paragraph flows from the previous one.

Your final sentences should give the reader a sense of conclusion. This means that they should feel that you have ended your writing appropriately, usually in a polite tone,

✓ ***Write your answer, developing detail where possible***

Remember that it is important to very clearly meet the different demands of the task - for this task you are required to describe and then explain.

It is, therefore, important that you demonstrate the techniques you have learned when 'writing to describe' and 'writing to explain'.

✓ ***Check your work - sentences make sense, clear paragraphs, beginning and ending have impact on the reader***

You have worked hard up to this point, so do not let any silly mistakes slip through the net!

You MUST read through your work!

Above all, check that your SENTENCES are clearly marked by capital letters and full stops, and that your PARAGRAPH BREAKS are clear.

You must also check that the beginning and ending of your piece are punchy and that they show that you are on task.

## QUESTION 6 ADVICE...

### QUESTION 6

MAY 2012

It has been said that: 'People who save lives or help improve the lives of others are the true role models of today.'

Write an article for a newspaper in which you argue your view about what makes a good role model. (24 marks)

Writing style: a newspaper article presenting an personal argument.

Your argument should present a series of linked points leading to a conclusion. Your points must be supported by examples - these could be things you know or have experienced yourself, as well as points about celebrities etc.

Content: The comment used to introduce the task is worth considering in your argument - the examiners have included it for a reason!

Here the comment ('It has been said that...') is leading you to consider the idea of 'true role models'.

This invites you to:

- compare worthy and unworthy role models
- question whether the general perception of role models in society is in some way unfair.

**Warning: be clear about exactly what it is you are arguing for or against!**

## MOCK FEEDBACK...



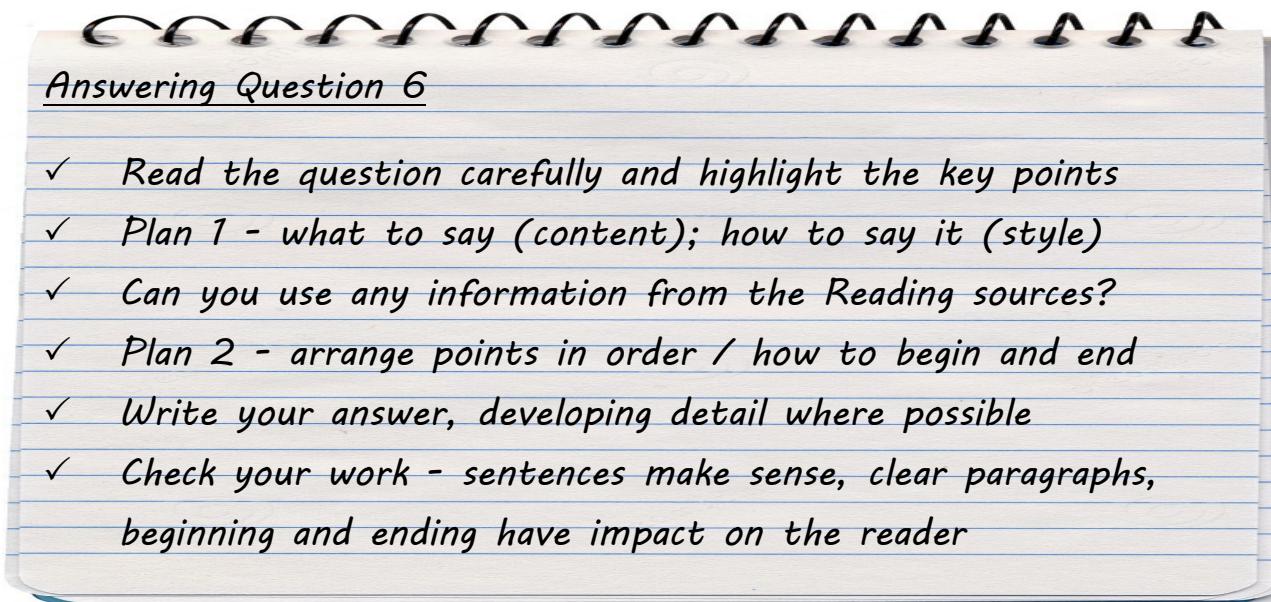
Students communicated strong views on this issue and had a lot to say. Writing was passionate and well organised. The best answers developed a flowing ARGUMENT to present THEIR VIEWS on the matter, building to a clear CONCLUSION. Suitable examples were used to support points.



Some students missed the key point of the title - WHAT makes a good role model - focusing instead on WHO makes a good role model. Lots of celebrities were described at length, as were doctors, but their qualities should have been used as examples to support the main argument.

## PRACTICE QUESTION: **QUESTION 6** - BUILDING AN ANSWER

Let's check that you know what to do:



Follow these stages to plan, structure, write and check your answer to the following question from November 2012:

6 A recent report states: 'Homelessness in the UK is a crisis that is destroying the lives of people, especially young people.'

Write an article for your school or college newspaper persuading young people to support charities which help the homeless. (24 marks)

✓ **Read the question carefully and highlight the key points**

This is the 'argue' or 'persuade' question. Check exactly what you are required to 'argue' or 'persuade' about - are you given a choice or are you told to present one side of an argument?

✓ **Plan 1 - what to say (content); how to say it (style)**

You must be persuasive but you are not expected to be an expert! Think about how the issue of homelessness might affect young people. Be creative in your thinking - come up with a few general points and then add your personal thoughts. What **PERSUASIVE TECHNIQUES** can you use?

Your article is designed to persuade young people, so it must make a strong impression from the beginning. Use a strong point from your plan and express it in a punchy way that makes your point clear from the start.

**✓ Can you use any information from the Reading sources?**

SOMETIMES the subject that you are asked to write about for Question 6 is related to one of the three texts you have read for Questions 1 - 4. If this is the case, you may be able to use some of the information from that text in your writing. In November 2012, Section A required candidates to read an article from *The Big Issue* - a magazine related to a charity for the homeless.

The text is shown on the next page - can you highlight anything in the article to help your writing?

**✓ Plan 2 - arrange points in order / how to begin and end**

The opening lines of your piece should show the examiner that you are writing a punchy, persuasive article aimed at **YOUNG PEOPLE**. Try to make an impact on your reader.

Make sure that the points on your plan follow a logical sequence of paragraphs.

Your final sentences should give the reader a sense of **CONCLUSION**. End your article with a strong persuasive point.

How can features such as short sentences, rhetorical questions or strong images (metaphors/ and similes) help you to write a strong conclusion?

**✓ Write your answer, developing detail where possible**

Remember that it is important to very clearly meet the different demands of the task. In this case, make it clear that you are writing to persuade **YOUNG PEOPLE** to **SUPPORT HOMELESS CHARITIES**.

Make your use of **PERSUASIVE TECHNIQUES** CLEAR.

**✓ Check your work - sentences make sense, clear paragraphs, beginning and ending have impact on the reader**

You MUST read through your work!

Check that your **SENTENCES** are clearly marked by capital letters and full stops, and that your **PARAGRAPH BREAKS** are clear.

## Street Life

Journalist Sophie Haydock spent a night on the streets in aid of the homeless charity *Simon on the Streets*

After a night sleeping rough in a cardboard box, I considered myself lucky. The absolutely worst part about the experience was finding out, after the rain came down heavily at 4.30 am, that soggy cardboard does not make a good duvet. But compared with all the things that threaten to disturb a homeless sleeper in the night – rats, thugs, police officers moving you on, other homeless people stealing your blankets – a downpour was the most bearable.

What's more the night had been mild. As I bedded down in the early hours, I was grateful for my sheltered spot under a leafy tree at the back of the parish church in Leeds city centre. It seemed safe compared with a darkened alley or fire escape: typical destinations for genuinely homeless people in any city in the UK.

I was one of 50 people who had volunteered to take part in a sponsored sleep-out in September for Leeds-based homeless charity *Simon on the Streets*. It helps rough sleepers with an outreach based service that provides a soup run, breakfast club, a peer support group and an intensive programme for people who are difficult to reach or who have slipped through the net.

*Simon on the Streets* organised the sleep-out to raise awareness about homelessness in Leeds. Its director, Clive Sandle, puts the number of homeless people they deal with on a regular basis at between 50 and 100 but adds that the accurate number of rough sleepers in any city can “never properly be known”. It costs *Simon on the Streets* in the region of £2,000 a year to provide intensive support to one homeless person. The sleep-out raised £6,500.

The night began at 10 pm. We gathered in Leeds City Square, and were taken on a walk around the city centre. Clive pointed out rough sleeping hotspots. One was where *Simon on the Streets* used to hold a soup run close to the city’s shopping hub. But the soup run was forced to stop after local residents complained to the council, having spent weeks making their feelings known directly by throwing fruit out of their windows.

After the hour-long walk we settled at the church for the night with a polystyrene cup of hot vegetable soup from a soup kitchen. Then we were left to our own devices. The lowest point of the night was the early morning rain. However, despite the discomfort, my experience was but one night under soggy cardboard. We were all very aware that it was still a million miles removed from the genuine experience of people who have no other place to go but the streets.

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## **GENERAL WRITING ADVICE - COMMON ERRORS TO AVOID...**

### **'a lot' / 'as well'**

These are both written as two words - they should not be written 'alot' and 'aswell'.

### **its / it's**

**its** meaning 'belonging to it' has **no apostrophe** (this breaks the apostrophe rule)

e.g. The dog chased **its** ball.

**it's** with an apostrophe means '**it is**' (it helps to always read it to yourself that way)

e.g. **It's** a lovely day.

**Use it is in your exam unless there is a reason to use the informal it's.**

### **bought / brought**



**buy** in the past tense is **bought** (both words begin with '**b**')

e.g. I want to **buy** some sweets. They **bought** some sweets.

**bring** in the past tense is **brought** (both words begin with '**br**')

e.g. You may **bring** a friend to the party. She **brought** a friend to the party.

### **I / me**

Use '**I**' and '**me**' in a list as you would do on their own:

e.g. **I** went to the shop. My friend and **I** went to the shop.

The party was for **me**. The party was for Jo, Ellie and **me**.

### **Choose the correct verb form**

'**we was**' is wrong - it should be '**we were**'. ('**you were**' and '**I was**' are also correct)

'look what **I done**' is wrong - it should be '**I did**' or '**I have done**'.

## **GENERAL WRITING ADVICE - COMMON ERRORS TO AVOID...**

### **there / their / they're**

- there = a place (like 'where' and 'here')
- their = relates or belongs to 'them'
- they're = a shortened version of 'they are' (used mostly in speech)

### **your / you're**

- your = belonging to you
- you're = 'you are' abbreviated (informal/speech)

### **wear / where / were**

- you 'wear' clothes
- 'where' refers to a place (it has 'here' in it - like 'there')!
- 'were' = 'are' in the past tense.

**Many people use 'could of' - this is incorrect.**

This is because 'could of' is often mistaken for 'could have' as it sounds like 'could've'.

The same mistake is made with 'should have' - people incorrectly use 'should of'.

### **to or too?**

'too' means 'an excessive amount of something' - as in 'That is too much.'

'too' also means 'in addition' or 'as well' - as in 'I'll have that one too.'

Both meanings relate to something extra, so always remember the extra 'o'.

### **affect / effect**

**Affect** = verb (something that happens)

The loud music affected my ability to concentrate!

**Effect** = noun (a thing)

The effect of the music was that I couldn't concentrate!

## GENERAL WRITING ADVICE - COMMON ERRORS TO AVOID...

### advise / advice

advise = verb (something you do)

advice = noun (a thing)

e.g. I advise you to follow my advice.



Charlie practised every day

The same is true of practise / practice

Practise = verb (something you do)

Practice = noun (a thing)

e.g. 'I practise my skills at football practice.'

**Practice is often used incorrectly - 'I need to practice my skills' is wrong!**

**'I need to practise my skills' is correct - use 's' as it is something you do.**

### lie / lay

Do not use 'lay' when you should use 'lie'

'I am going to lay down' is wrong - it should be 'I am going to lie down'.

'I am laying on my bed' is wrong - it should be 'I am lying on my bed'.

To 'lay' means to place something down - the past tense is 'laid'

E.g. Lay the mat by the door. The hen laid an egg.



### lose / loose

'You might lose a shoe if your lace is loose.'

**Lots of people write 'loose' when they mean 'lose' - so take care!**

### whether / weather

'Whether we go depends on the weather.'

## GENERAL WRITING ADVICE - PUNCTUATION...

### Apostrophes

Apostrophes are used in two ways:



1. to **shorten words** (abbreviate) in informal language and speech - the apostrophe replaces the missing letter.

e.g. is not - **isn't**    they are - **they're**    it is - **it's**    we are - **we're**

#### IMPORTANT NOTE

Writing tasks in the exam generally require a formal style, so try to avoid using apostrophes to shorten words in this way.

These words may be useful if you are asked to write a spoken form of language, such as a script, or in a style that requires informal features, such as a magazine article, a blog or an information leaflet aimed at teenagers, but take care!

2. to **show belonging**

e.g. **the boy's book**    **the dog's bed**    **this morning's lesson**

When something belongs to more than one person the apostrophe follows the plural word.

e.g. **the children's toys**    **the pupils' essays**    **the women's toilet**

### Common Mistakes

It is wrong to add apostrophes to make words plural.

E.g. It is **wrong** to write 'I waited several **day's** for the **present's** and **card's** to arrive.'



Similarly, verbs ending with an s do not require an apostrophe.

E.g. It is **wrong** to write **see's**, **need's**, **buy's**, **jump's** etc.

## **GENERAL WRITING ADVICE - PUNCTUATION & GRAMMAR...**

### Capital letters

Use capital letters:

- to begin sentences.
- to begin the particular names of people and places, e.g. Tom, Baldock, England.
- to begin days and months, e.g. Sunday, May, but **not seasons**, e.g. summer.
- for the pronoun 'I'.

### Paragraphs

Start a new paragraph when there is a change of focus or progression in your writing:

- time
- place
- subject or topic
- speaker

Plan each Writing task as a **sequence** of paragraphs.

### Writing Direct Speech

Use **speech marks** around direct speech, i.e. when someone is talking in your writing.

- Use punctuation **before** the closing speech marks.
- e.g. "Good morning." or "Good morning," said the teacher.
- Use a **capital letter to start speech** unless the sentence is carrying on from before.
- e.g. "Hello," said the teacher, "how are you?"
- Use a **comma before** speech marks in a sentence.  
e.g. The teacher said, "Good morning."

*Try to avoid using  
direct speech as it does  
not suit many tasks.*

### Tenses

- Most writing is in the **past tense**  
I walked to school smiling, it was a sunny day.
- You may wish to use the **present tense**  
I am walking to school smiling, it is a sunny day.

*Stick to one or  
the other!*

## **GENERAL WRITING ADVICE - SPELLING...**

There are several things you can do to improve your spelling:

1. Learn common mistakes and words that are useful in the exams.
2. Learn some useful spelling rules.
3. Make a list of the words that you often spell incorrectly.

### **1. Common mistakes**

**definitely** - contains the word 'finite'

**separate** - contains 'a rat'

**responsible** - 'ible' not 'able'

**because** - 'big elephants can't always use small exits'

**beginning** - double 'n' in the middle

**disappear** - 'dis - appear'

**business** - there is a 'bus in' this word

**could; would; should** - 'o u lucky duck' = 'ould'

**bought; thought; fought** - 'o u great hairy twit' = 'ought'

**does** - not 'dose'

### **Words that are useful in the exams**

#### **English Language - Reading tasks**

**adjective**

**sentence** - contains 'ten'

#### **English Language - Writing tasks**

*You are often required to describe your feelings:*

**embarrassed / embarrassing** - double 'r' and double 's'

**surprise** - has an 'r' - '**surprise**'

**adrenaline**

**excited / exciting** - has '**exc**'

#### **Poetry exam**

**rhythm** - '**rhythm has your two hips moving**'

**rhyme**

**stanza**

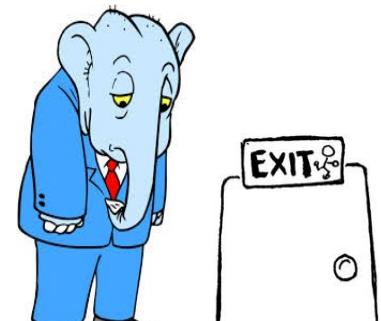
**metaphor**

**simile**

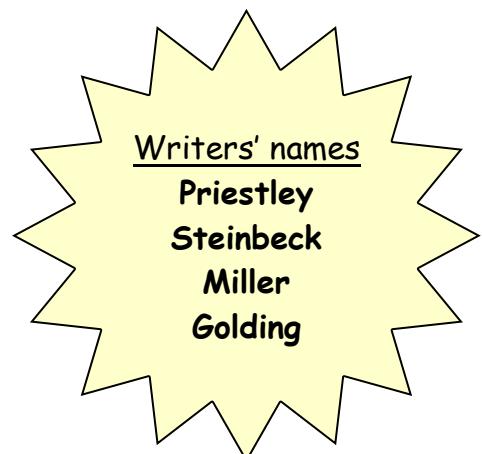
#### **Literature exam**

**playwright**

**author**



*Eric hated small exits!*



2. Learn some useful spelling rules

'full' endings drop the second 'l' (careful; useful; wonderful; faithful; skilful; powerful; mouthful; spoonful)

'fully' endings use double 'l' (carefully; usefully; skilfully; powerfully)

'i' before 'e' except after 'c' (pice; believe; friend; chief; thief) (receive; ceiling)

Exceptions to this rule include: eight, weight, height, weird, seize.

Drop 'e' before 'ing' (savee - saving; tastee - tasting; hate - hating; wavee - waving)

Double consonant after a short vowel sound (happy, begging, middle, hopping, puddle)

Plurals - for consonant + 'y' endings the 'y' becomes 'ies' (baby - babies; lolly - lollies)

3. Make a list of the words that you often spell incorrectly.

## A SUMMARY OF HELPFUL HINTS...

1. Standard English is usually required - with perhaps a few well chosen variations to suit the style/ audience required by the question.
2. Look for advice on the exam paper about the **style** of the text you are required to write. Start your writing in an appropriate 'voice' to show the examiner that you are on task.
3. If the task requires you to do something, then **DO IT!** A task may have two or more stages - if you only respond to half a task, you can't get full marks!
4. If the task requires you to describe personal feelings, do so.  
Look for opportunities to describe a change in your feelings.
5. It should be clear to see in every paragraph that you are answering the task directly.
6. Always include a **variety of SENTENCE lengths** - longer sentences can be used to build descriptive detail and short sentences can be used to emphasise key points.
7. Use a **variety of PARAGRAPH lengths** in the same way. This shows that you are in control of the structure of your writing and using paragraphs for effect.
8. Avoid using DIRECT speech if it can be avoided.  
**REPORTED speech is a much better option** - this is where you just refer to what somebody said without the need for speech marks, e.g. *My mum asked me what I wanted and I told her that I didn't mind.*
9. Don't repeat stories from TV, films or, worse, computer games - most of the time **they do not suit the task** which means that your writing is not focused and direct. Your ideas don't have to be original but your writing must respond to the task.
10. Do not start sentences with connectives - e.g. 'and', 'but', 'because' - unless you have a very good reason for doing so - it should be a deliberate choice, used for effect.
11. Do not use brackets, use commas around extra information in a sentence.
12. Try to visualise your finished piece before you write - how does it grab the interest of the reader at the start and leave them with something to think about at the end?
13. Be specific about anything you describe - add detail.
14. Do not use apostrophes to abbreviate words unless it is necessary for your writing style. E.g. Write **do not** and **it is** rather than **don't** and **it's**.

## **TASK: LOOKING FOR EVIDENCE THAT ANSWERS ARE ON TASK...**

Read the answers to Question 5 and Question 6 (taken from actual 2012 exam) presented on the following pages and then answer the questions below.

**MAY 2012**

### **Exam Answer - Question 5: Tasks**

1. Highlight or underline words, phrases and sentences in the writing that show how the candidate has:
  - ✓ included ideas that respond directly and appropriately to the task
  - ✓ written in a suitable style that describes and explains
2. In your own words, explain how this writing is a good example of description and also explanation.
3. Find an example of a metaphor and a simile in the writing. What are they used to describe?
4. How does this candidate's description of personal feelings contribute to the success of the writing?
5. The examiner has commented on the exam script that the writing is 'structured and developed'. What evidence can you find to support these comments, for example, what is good about the way the writing begins and ends?

### **Exam Answer - Question 6: Tasks**

1. Read the task and highlight the key points to consider when planning an answer.
2. Read the candidate's plan.  
What makes it an effective plan?  
Consider:
  - the content of the argument
  - the way the plan is set out on the page
3. The examiner has commented on the exam script that the argument is 'convincing'. Highlight the words, phrases and sentences in the text that help to present a convincing argument. In just a sentence or two, explain in your own words what makes this an effective argument.
4. What is good about the way the writing begins and ends?

**5** Write an entry for your online blog which describes a time when you felt uncertain or unsure about a situation you were in and explain how you overcame it.

You should aim to write no more than two and a half sides in response to this question.  
(16 marks)

**Blog:** a regular online piece of personal writing.

**MAY 2012**

**Question 5**

It was Alton Towers again, oh no! I hated rides and everyone knew it. Whether it's rollercoasters, waltzers or the teacups, I despised it all with a passion. But this time I was year 9, and felt utterly embarrassed. Early get-up to watch my friends on rides. Great!

Early bright light burned through my windows and lit up my psychedelic green and purple walls as I battered my alarm clock into submissive silence. 'This year I'm going on a ride,' I drilled into my head. I knew I wouldn't.

The coach was a tin full of sardines - vacuum packed in. Time flowed slow like honey off a silver spoon and children laughing and nattering away filled the air. I was queasy. 'Finally going on the rides, eh Jamie?' My heart skipped a beat!

Zooming past fields of green with hopeless sheep in them, dreading the experience. The coach pulls to a halt on the superheated matt black tarmac. Baking sun and blistering wind didn't impede anyone, as a torrent of hyperactive school kids flooded into the park. Queuing was immense. Not the queue, the experience. My eyes grew, pupils expanded. Matthew's voice seemed distant, it was all too real. My hands were at this point dripping with sweat.

I grew more aware of the experience as I neared the ride, and I was shaking. I don't know how I sat in the seat, but I did. In a trance, I allowed them to strap me in. Here we go!

As the ride started, it seemed too slow. No one was screaming. But then we hit the drop... I was holding on for dear life. Out of my control. All I saw was a blur of a queue and euphoria took over. At the end of the ride everyone staggered down the blue carpet and out of the way of the ride.

I never have found my sanity again, as every time we go to Alton Towers I am fighting to be first!

*Convincing and compelling communication. Structured and developed. 10/10  
Complex grammatical structure. Variety of sentence forms. 6/6*

**6** It has been said that: 'People who save lives or help improve the lives of others are the true role models of today.'

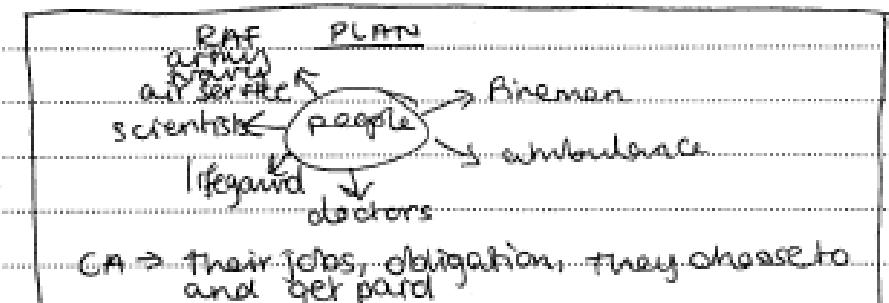
Write an article for a newspaper in which you argue your view about what makes a good role model.  
(24 marks)

**MAY 2012**

This candidate's plan is an excellent example of how to plan both **content** and **structure**:

It has been said that: 'People who save lives or help improve the lives of others are the true role models of today.'

Write an article for a newspaper in which you argue your view about what makes a good role model.  
(24 marks)



choice to take job, risk lives (or  
others, volunteers (lifeguard))

P1) Intro - argument P2) what role models

P2) list of jobs that are rolemodels

P3) so many celebrities and false people  
(plastic surgery etc)

P4) Stats - lives lost by rescuers - expert opinion

P5) final, agree completely  
punchline - lots of lives to save (res) - any  
better rolemodel please ~~be my guest~~ ... be my guest

### **Question 6**

I agree completely that people who save lives or help improve the lives of others are the true role models of today. A role model should be someone to look up to. Someone who has all the qualities of goodness, compassion, love and strength. Wouldn't you agree?

In our society today, we are surrounded by unsung heroes! People who spend their days saving, helping and improving our own days, weeks, months and years. Our TV's are littered with celebrities and emaciated models who live their lives being famous for simply being famous. The 'celebs' receive billions of pounds for tanning and wearing the latest swimwear while courageous men and women receive a modest wage for choking on smoke to carry us from a burning building, racing through the streets to shock the heart of someone's mother, father, brother back into action. Firemen and women, doctors, nurses, lifeguards, scientists and emergency rescue services toil day and night to keep the human race, well... running.

Some people may say that it is their job to save our lives, it is no brave thing to quench a fire for money.

However, you must see that it was their choice of job. The money had nothing to do with it! Had these saviours wanted millions they would never have come anywhere near their current employment.

Like I mentioned above, we are constantly bombarded with celebrities, 'blockbusters' and the next fashionable thing to wear! Photoshopped faces plastered on bill boards. These are no role models! There is no substance to them. No goodness. Just plastic and glitter! Unfortunately, the youth of today have grown up with these ideals. They suffer lies and media brain-washing while the true role models are left in the gutter!

A survey completed by the department of social care and health found that 15% of lives lost in emergency situations are those of the rescuer themselves: firemen caught in a blast, lifeguards drowned in unruly seas, the list goes on. An expert on the emergency services, Dr Johanna Spence told me, "Our everyday supermen and women are being barely recognised, our society has left them behind while they save life after life. More money is spent on an episode of Eastenders than in their annual budget for ambulances! Sometimes I feel I am the only one who cares anymore!"

This is why I agree completely that the people who help others are the true role models in today's world. The work of saving and improving others' lives is completely selfless. These heroes live their lives to save our lives. These are the kind of role models we need. No sparkles or plastic, just simple grit, determination and overwhelming compassion for other people. If you think there is any better role model, please...be my guest!

*Convincing and compelling. 16/16  
Uses complex grammatical structures. 7/8*

## **TASK: LOOKING FOR EVIDENCE OF VARIETY & CONTROL...**

Read the answers to Question 5 and Question 6 (taken from actual 2013 exam) presented on the following pages and then answer the questions below.

**JUNE 2013**

### **Exam Answer - Question 5: Tasks**

1. Highlight or underline words, phrases and sentences in the writing that show how the candidate has:
  - ✓ included ideas that respond directly and appropriately to the task
  - ✓ written in a suitable style that describes and explains
2. In your own words, explain how this writing is a good example of description and also explanation.
3. How has this candidate used a **variety of sentences** for effect?
4. How has this candidate used **different paragraph lengths** for different purposes?
5. The examiner commented on the exam script that this candidate presented a 'wide range of details' and 'consciously crafted structure'. What evidence can you find to support these comments?

### **Exam Answer - Question 6: Tasks**

1. Read the task and highlight the key points to consider when planning an answer.
2. Read the candidate's plan.  
What makes it an effective plan?  
Consider:
  - the content of the argument
  - the way the plan is set out on the page
3. The examiner has commented on the exam script that the argument is 'convincing'. Highlight the words, phrases and sentences in the text that help to present a convincing argument. In just a sentence or two, explain in your own words what makes this an effective argument.
4. What is good about the way the writing begins and ends?

## **EXAM QUESTIONS - JUNE 2013...**

- 5 A website called The Best and the Worst is asking for contributions.  
Write an entry for it which describes the best meal you ever had and the worst.  
Explain the reasons for your choices. (16 marks)

- 6 There is evidence that many young people are not eating, exercising or spending their leisure time properly and that this is damaging their health and life chances.

Write an article for *Living Today* magazine which persuades young people to improve their diet and lifestyle. (24 marks)

### **Good Planning - Crack the Code**

This candidate wisely took a little time to consider the requirements of the question before starting to write.

F - magazine article L - formal / A - young people P - to persuade  
Do not write outside the box

10  
maybe chatty

6 There is evidence that many young people are not eating, exercising or spending their leisure time properly and that this is damaging their health and life chances.

Write an article for *Living Today* magazine which persuades young people to improve their diet and lifestyle. (24 marks)

The notes on the exam paper show that the candidate had a checklist of points to consider to make sure that they were answering the question correctly. The candidate wrote the following on the exam paper - but what does the 'FLAP' code mean - what points did the candidate consider before writing?

### **Discussion Task**

Unscramble the letters to crack the code.

Would you find this or something similar helpful in an exam?



F - magazine article

F = MORF =

L - formal / maybe chatty

L = GANEGLU =

A - young people

A = CEEANUDI =

P - to persuade

P = UPREOPS =

## Variety and Control

The exam board has made it clear that they want to see that candidates are in control of their writing. This means that they want to see writing that has clearly been crafted to answer each task directly.

So how can you show that you are in control of the message you present in your writing? Here are five easy ways to show that you know what you are doing:

### **1. Write in a style or 'voice' that suits the task**

Make this clear particularly in the way that you begin and end each piece of writing.

### **2. Use language that suits the task**

e.g. a piece of descriptive writing must contain features such as adjectives (describing words), adverbs (describe actions), similes (...was like a...), personal thoughts and feelings, as well as appeal to the reader's senses.

### **3. Use of a range of punctuation for effect**

This is easier than you think - here is a recap:

commas	to separate items in a list to surround extra information in a sentence instead of brackets
semi-colons	to link points that go together in one sentence (a semi colon stands for 'as well as this...' or 'and another thing...')
colons	to introduce lists/explanations: a colon is a 'springboard' into an explanation
inverted commas	to show 'sarcasm'
exclamation marks	to show emotion
question marks	to indicate a question - don't forget to use them
apostrophes	to show possession to abbreviate words (only use for speech/informal styles)
capital letters/ full stops	to show sentence breaks clearly
speech marks	If you must use direct speech, use punctuation within the speech marks - try to stick to 'reported' speech instead!

#### 4. Use a VARIETY of sentences

The examples of good work provided by the exam board suggest that they like to see a mixture of sentence lengths being used for effect. Longer sentences are used to present longer pieces of description or explanation. Shorter sentences are used to emphasise a point, create a sense of tension or drama, or to show emotion.

Your sentences should **flow together**. Try to use linking words (connectives) such as 'and', 'then', 'but' and 'because' only once in a sentence. Do not begin sentences with 'And', 'But' or 'Because'.

You can also present a variety of sentences by starting them in different ways. The different ways of starting a sentence shown below are all followed by a comma.

Start with a time	<i>E.g. before, during, earlier, later, since, meanwhile, whenever, already, until.</i> Since the start of the season, Simon had played in every match.
Start with a place	<i>E.g. on, inside, within, outside, throughout, near, beyond, among, below, beneath, towards.</i> Inside the box, she could feel something moving.
Start with an adverb	<i>E.g. amazingly, surprisingly, happily, sadly, stupidly, crazily.</i> Happily, no one had noticed that Laura had been wearing her jumper inside out.
Start with verb + ing action' or 'doing' word + ing	<i>E.g. hoping, thinking, wondering, feeling, walking, looking, jumping, standing, talking, listening, fearing, dreaming.</i> Seeing that it was dark, Charlie turned on the lights.
Start with verb + ed action' or 'doing' word + ed	<i>E.g. excited, worried, concerned, tired, elated, exhausted, satisfied, agitated, annoyed, amused.</i> Exhausted after her walk, Ellie fell asleep.
Start with a reservation	<i>E.g. although, even if, whereas, despite, if, in spite of.</i> Although Annabel loved sleeping, she had to get up for school.

#### 5. Use a VARIETY of paragraphs

You **MUST** write in clear paragraphs. Use a mixture of long and short paragraphs to show that you can control the message you communicate in your writing.

Long paragraphs are used to develop points and ideas. Short paragraphs should be used every now and then to emphasise a point/ idea/ emotion/ change of feelings etc.

5 A website called *The Best and the Worst* is asking for contributions.

Write an entry for it which describes the best meal you ever had and the worst. Explain the reasons for your choices. (16 marks)

**JUNE 2013**

**Question 5**

My contribution to this website is the story of when I went to Heston Blumenthal's restaurant. The whole evening was a roller coaster ride with highs and lows, and even loops.

As soon as I walked into the room I could smell heaven. The room was filled with joyful, excited people eating beautifully presented meals; it was almost impossible to get a seat. Eventually, when we did get a table I was sat next to the wide window that was letting in waves of heat, which soon began to annoy me.

The first meal came to the table. I was shocked. Snail jelly. Yes, you heard me correctly world - snail jelly! Who would even think of eating it? The green gloo oozed over the side of the bowl. The heat from the window, which acted like a magnifying glass, made the jelly runny and sticky. I was not enjoying myself. The smell was horrific; it smelled like acid mixed with mango and dirt. Each bite was like torture; it was getting worse and worse as I ate. By the time I had finished, the bowl looked like a wasteland with little jelly graves where I had been unable to bear the taste. I felt sorry for my taste buds because I made them go through that terrifying experience: it was definitely the worst meal I had ever eaten.

Fifteen minutes later a tall, slim and scary looking man came over and asked, "Ready?" I did not know if I was ready but I reluctantly replied with a smile but an uncertain tone...

The next meal arrived; the waiter carried over a huge box. My mind whirled. What could it be? The enormous box landed on the table with a thud. My fingers danced around the lock and then I opened it. At first it was dark inside, even with the light beaming through the window. I could not make out what was inside. I felt around and pulled a few things but I soon realised what it was. An edible jewellery box! There were onion rings, giant spaghetti loops and even a poached brooch. The creamy egg dripped open and I dipped my edible toast necklace into the runny yolk and ate away.

After twenty minutes of beautiful eating, I only had one thing left. It was a fancy bracelet made from crystallised sugar and it had four ruby sweets in the centre. I took one bite into the glowing piece of artwork, almost feeling guilty that I was going to digest the magnificent bracelet. When I finished the bracelet, every last bite, I realised something. Even though my first meal was sickening, the second meal had to be the best meal I have had... Ever.

**6** There is evidence that many young people are not eating, exercising or spending their leisure time properly and that this is damaging their health and life chances.

Write an article for *Living Today* magazine which persuades young people to improve their diet and lifestyle. (24 marks)

**JUNE 2013**

**Question 6**

Collectively, as a nation, Britain is getting fat. Unfortunately, the majority of those becoming precariously chubby are us young people. Every year the total increases as more of us become overweight, overfat and, worst of all, obese.

But it is not just a case of people shovelling in snack after snack, dessert after dessert, that is causing this worrying incline in national fatness, it is also a combination of overeating and a severe lack of exercise and insufficient physical activity that is doing the damage. Let's face it, the 'youth of today' spend far less time 'playing out' than 'the youth of yesterday'. Just ask your grandparents! And I ask you now: do you really want to become a couch potato?

One of the many reasons that has led to this very 'large' (pardon the pun) increase in fatness is the rapid, monumental rise of technology. X-boxes, Playstations, laptops, iPads and Kindles, to name just a few, are undoubtedly the holy grail of a teenager's life. But, as hard to take as it is, these luxurious appliances are actually having a pretty bad effect on our health.

Nowadays, technology is everywhere you look. Social networking sites like Facebook and Twitter are more or less becoming an integral part of most teenage girls daily functioning. Games like Call of Duty and FIFA are fast becoming the apple of everyday teenage boys' eyes. I'm not saying we should ditch these wondrous things forever, just maybe we should lay off them a little and maybe, you know, breathe some fresh air. Is that too much to ask? I think most of us would 'largely' (sorry, again) benefit from spending some of our leisure time exercising our bodies, not just our thumbs...

Another dominating factor in the sharp incline in the porkyness of our nation, along with the rise of technology, is our unbalanced diets. This is the big one (no puns now, I'm serious). Despite my apparent sarcasm and leniency towards the technological aspects of our lives, this is where I become serious. Very serious. The diet of us young people is becoming a massive problem within our society and I personally believe it to be the largest contributing factor towards the high obesity levels amongst us teenagers. A recent survey carried out by the National Health Service revealed that a staggering 78% of British teenagers don't follow the recommended nutritional intake for someone of our age. Now that's scary! And now you see why this is a problem that needs to be addressed. Quickly. It is not hard to do; all we need to do is look at how much we are eating before we, well...eat it. And make sure that whatever you are eating, that you stick to the recommended amounts, such as your five a day of fruit and vegetables. I guarantee you that it will pay off.

Well, I'm sorry to end on a fairly sour note but it had to be done. I strongly believe that if everyone of us teenagers just takes the step to cut down a little bit on our use of technology and makes more effort to follow a healthier, more balanced diet, then we can eliminate chubby childhoods for future generations, not just our own. Together we can make a difference. So let's do it!

### Task: Creative sentences

A sentence has to make sense on its own; it is usually described as a complete unit of thought that can stand independently.

Sort the following list into which could be sentences and which could not.

<u>Example</u>	<u>Sentence</u>	<u>Not a sentence</u>
The car park		
Reaching for his pocket		
Clouds of smoke danced in the moonlight		
It was raining		
Three uniformed figures lingered		
The automatic doors glided open		
Huddled together near the doors as if for safety		
Outside the main doors		
A tall security guard took out a cigarette and lit it		

Read the following piece of descriptive writing by a student. They have used the ideas from the table to write a paragraph of descriptive writing. Add full stops and capital letters to divide the writing into sentences.

It was seven fifteen am the immense Merry Hill Shopping Centre was virtually deserted the car park stretched out on all sides it was like a vast treeless plain it was empty except for five cars they were huddled together near the doors as if for safety outside the main doors were three uniformed guards they lingered there one tall guard reached for his pocket he took out a cigarette and lit it clouds of smoke danced in the lamplight the automatic doors glided open silently

You can make your writing more interesting by using a variety of different types of sentence. Read the paragraph again (see next page). It has now been divided into sentences. Think about:

- what works well
- whether the student has used any sentence variety
- what could be improved to make the paragraph more interesting

It was seven fifteen am. The immense Merry Hill Shopping Centre was virtually deserted. The car park stretched out on all sides. It was like a vast treeless plain. It was empty except for five cars. They were huddled together near the doors as if for safety. Outside the main doors were three uniformed guards. They lingered there. One tall guard reached for his pocket. He took out a cigarette and lit it. Clouds of smoke danced in the lamplight. The automatic doors glided open silently.

If you stick to simple sentences, your writing ends up sounding rather dull and boring. It sounds like a list of points rather than creative writing. It is important to use a variety of sentence structures in order to create interest and impact.

### Powerful sentences

The following sentence has got lots of potential to be more interesting:

**The figure emerged noiselessly into the merciless rain from the dark blanket of trees.**

Changing the order of the words in the sentence (adding commas where appropriate) makes it more interesting. Consider:

From the dark blanket of trees, the figure emerged noiselessly into the merciless rain.

**Into the merciless rain, from the dark blanket of trees, the figure emerged noiselessly.**

**Noiselessly, from the dark blanket of trees, the figure emerged into the merciless rain.**

Put the following list of complete and incomplete sentences together to complete an improved version of the piece of descriptive writing.

The immense Merry Hill Shopping Centre was virtually deserted.  
which stretched out on all sides like a vast treeless plain,  
The car park,  
Reaching for his pocket,  
clouds of smoke danced in the lamplight.  
7.15 am.  
was empty except for five cars,  
huddled together near the doors as if for safety.  
Outside the main doors,  
three uniformed guards lingered.  
a tall security guard took out a cigarette and lit it;  
Silently, the automatic doors glided open.

Read the following redraft of the descriptive paragraph.

Consider how the sentences have been used to make the writing more interesting and give it impact.

Could you add or change anything to make the writing even more effective as a piece of descriptive writing?

7.15 am. The immense Merry Hill Shopping Centre was virtually deserted. The car park, which stretched out on all sides like a vast treeless plain, was empty except for five cars, huddled together near the doors as if for safety. Outside the main doors, three uniformed guards lingered. Reaching for his pocket, a tall security guard took out a cigarette and lit it; clouds of smoke danced in the lamplight. Silently, the automatic doors glided open.

#### Task: A little variety...

It is very important that you use a mixture of long and short sentences and paragraphs in order to present your personal voice and give your writing a sense of drama, emotion and control.

To see the effect that can be created by varying the length of your sentences, have a go at the following:

- (i) write two paragraphs, each 8 sentences long, to describe something that you either love or hate (food, TV programme, film, celebrity, music etc).
- (ii) write two paragraphs to describe the same subject but this time your sentences should follow this word count: 5, 8, 11, 3, 3, 8, 12, 14, 6, 6, 10, 4, 12, 6, 8, 3. You must also make one paragraph shorter than the other for effect.

As a class, discuss the effect of varying the length of your sentences and paragraphs.

## **PAST PAPERS - SECTION B - QUESTIONS 5 AND 6...**

(Some questions include 'Indicative content' which is a list of points that the examiners are looking for.)

### **June 2011 H**

- 5** Sometimes difficult decisions have to be made. Describe a decision that you, or someone you know, had to make and explain the consequences. Your piece will appear in the Real Lives section of your local newspaper.

#### Indicative content

- Show that the topic and task are understood - that decisions have to be made and that they can have important consequences or implications.
- Show that the second part of the task is understood - that they are to write an example of such a decision. This may be from their own experience or that of others - or 'made up'.
- Present an example of a 'decision' e.g. moving house, moving location, going travelling, personal relationships etc.
- Develop reasons and explanations and explore the implications of the decision.
- Show awareness of the purposes of the writing (to describe and explain) and the audience (people who read the Real Lives column in their newspaper).
- Conclude the writing.

- 6** Many people believe that it is our duty to cut back on our use of the world's resources, and that we must invest in greener forms of energy for the future - whatever the cost.

Write an article for an environmental website which argues **for or against** this idea.

#### Indicative content

- Candidates' responses should be thoughtful, considered and persuasively argued.
- Show that the topic is understood - that there is an issue about our using up of the earth's resources generally, which is leading to environmental problems.
- Identify some of these issues, e.g. pollution, reduction of rain forests, global warming.
- Show understanding that people believe that 'greener' sustainable energy production, like wind farms, is a good way forward. But some people don't.
- State a clear point of view on the topic.
- **Employ, perhaps, some ideas from the Reading material.**
- Develop ideas to support the point of view expressed - use anecdote and, for higher marks, moral or ethical arguments to support views and ideas.
- Conclude the writing.

## January 2012 H

- 5 Write a letter which you hope will be published in your local newspaper. Inform readers what leisure facilities are available for young people and families in your area and explain how you think they could be improved.

- 6 'Life is too easy for young people today. They lack challenges and don't have to fight for anything.'

Write an article for a magazine of your choice which persuades your readers that this statement is **either right or wrong**.

## May 2012 H

- 5 Write an entry for your online blog which describes a time when you felt uncertain or unsure about a situation you were in and explain how you overcame it.

### Indicative content

- Show that the topic and task are understood.
- Develop and describe their feelings of, e.g. vulnerability, lack of confidence, fear etc.
- Explain how the situation was resolved by overcoming the problem or issue, including thoughts and feelings as well as actions.
- For higher marks describe how the experience changed them as a person for the better, i.e. moving from story telling to reflection.
- Conclude the writing.

- 6 It has been said that: 'People who save lives or help improve the lives of others are the true role models of today.'

Write an article for a newspaper in which you argue your view about what makes a good role model.

### Indicative content

- Show that the topic is understood - that it is about what kind of person the candidate thinks makes a good role model.
- Candidates might think about individuals quite different to those suggested by the quotation - a family member, historical figure etc. Why do they make good role models?
- Develop persuasive reasons for the choice.
- Conclude the writing.

### November 2012 H

- 5 The travel section of your local newspaper is inviting readers to write about their favourite place.

Write a letter to the editor describing a favourite place you know and explaining why others would like it.

- 6 A recent report states: 'Homelessness in the UK is a crisis that is destroying the lives of people, especially young people.'

Write an article for your school or college newspaper persuading young people to support charities which help the homeless.

### January 2013 H

- 5 Write an entry for your blog describing your favourite time of year and explaining why you like it.

- 6 'There's no point making the effort and taking the risk of travelling the world, disturbing people and animals as you go, when you can see it all on TV or the Internet.'

Write a magazine article which persuades young people **either** to travel **or** stay at home.

### June 2013 H

- 5 A website called *The Best and the Worst* is asking for contributions.

Write an entry for it which describes the best meal you ever had and the worst. Explain the reasons for your choices.

- 6 There is evidence that many young people are not eating, exercising or spending their leisure time properly and that this is damaging their health and life chances.

Write an article for *Living Today* magazine which persuades young people to improve their diet and lifestyle.

### November 2013 H

- 5 Your local newspaper is to feature the topic 'Being Outdoors'.

Write a short article for the paper which describes your experience of the outdoors and explains the benefits the outdoors can have for you.

- 6 'Talent shows like The X Factor provide cheap television, gossip and nothing of any value. There are better programmes than these.'

Argue for **or** against the views expressed in this quotation. Your piece will appear on the entertainment pages of a website.

## Section B: Writing

Here is a summary of what you need to do to build a good answer to each question:

- ✓ Spend 25 minutes on Question 5 and 35 minutes on Question 6.
- ✓ Highlight what you have to do in each question - you may be required to do one thing and then another.
- ✓ Write in formal, polite English but use language that suits your purpose and audience:

Question 5 - Describe, Explain, Inform

Question 6 - Argue, Persuade

- ✓ Plan your ideas on the exam paper. Make sure that each piece of writing begins and ends strongly.
- ✓ Vary the length of your sentences and paragraphs for effect.
- ✓ Write in good detail - include personal stories, thoughts and feelings where appropriate.

Finally...

When you finish the two Writing tasks, you must read each piece again! Run a finger along the lines as you read to focus your mind.

Double check that:

- ✓ sentences are properly punctuated - full stops, question marks etc
- ✓ spellings look correct
- ✓ paragraph breaks are clear
- ✓ each sentence makes sense!

**There are more marks to gain by reading through your writing to correct errors and check that it all makes sense than by writing an extra paragraph.**