THE LOWDOWN ON THE EXAM!

Paper 1 - Explorations in Creative Reading & Writing

- The exam is 1 hour 45 minutes long.
- The exam is worth 50% of your GCSE English Language course.
- The paper is marked out of 80 (40 marks for reading & 40 marks for writing).
- You will have one source to read, interpret and analyse. The source will be a 20th or 21st century text.
- Question 1 will ask you to find 4 answers from the Source.
- Question 2 will ask you about language within the Source.
- Question 3 will ask you about how the Source is structured.
- Question 4 will ask you to consider whether you agree or disagree with a given statement.
- Question 5 will ask you to write a narrative or descriptive piece based on an image or theme linked to the image.
- You MUST allow time to check your work!
- Allow 10 minutes reading time for Section A.

**Section A - Reading**

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Miss W’s Top Tips!

• DO read all of the questions through first so that you know what information you are looking for when reading the Source.

• HIGHLIGHT & ANNOTATE the language features and interesting structural devices when first reading the Source.

• CHECK your work. It may seem like a waste of time, but studies have shown that students who check and change their work score better in exams than those who don’t.

• PQE/PEE in all of your reading answers (apart from Q1). Using embedded quotations demonstrates a greater degree of sophistication. It also saves time as you don’t have to write any unwanted words in your answer.
THE BASICS OF POINT, QUOTE & EXPLAIN

Go to https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=p6FxPtdTcfw for help with PQE.

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QUESTION 1

4 MARKS

5 MINUTES

Go to

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VCf_6mSpG28&t=281s

for help with this question.
QUESTION 1

The Lowdown!

• 1 mark is given for each correct answer.
• Responses must be true and drawn only from the lines specified.
• Students may quote or paraphrase.
• A paraphrased response covering more than one point should be credited for each point made.
• Responses that copy the whole section of the text should not be credited.
• 5 minutes.

EXAMPLE QUESTION (Taken from Miss W’s video on Question 1)

Please read ‘The War of the Worlds’ extract.

Read again the first part of the Source from lines 1-18.

List four things from this part of the text about the people’s reactions to the ‘Thing’.

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The War of the Worlds – H. G. Wells (1898)

Chapter Four - Extract

The end of the cylinder was being screwed out from within. Nearly two feet of shining screw projected. Somebody blundered against me, and I narrowly missed being pitched onto the top of the screw. I turned, and as I did so the screw must have come out, for the lid of the cylinder fell upon the gravel with a ringing concussion. I stuck my elbow into the person behind me, and turned my head towards the Thing again. For a moment that circular cavity seemed perfectly black. I had the sunset in my eyes.

I think everyone expected to see a man emerge—possibly something a little unlike us terrestrial men, but in all essentials a man. I know I did. But, looking, I presently saw something stirring within the shadow: greyish billowy movements, one above another, and then two luminous disks—like eyes. Then something resembling a little grey snake, about the thickness of a walking stick, coiled up out of the writhing middle, and wriggled in the air towards me—and then another.

A sudden chill came over me. There was a loud shriek from a woman behind. I half turned, keeping my eyes fixed upon the cylinder still, from which other tentacles were now projecting, and began pushing my way back from the edge of the pit. I saw astonishment giving place to horror on the faces of the people about me. I heard inarticulate exclamations on all sides. There was a general movement backwards. I saw the shopman struggling still on the edge of the pit. I found myself alone, and saw the people on the other side of the pit running off. Stent among them. I looked again at the cylinder, and ungovernable terror gripped me. I stood petrified and staring.

A big greyish rounded bulk, the size, perhaps, of a bear, was rising slowly and painfully out of the cylinder. As it bulged up and caught the light, it glistened like wet leather.

Two large dark-coloured eyes were regarding me steadfastly. The mass that framed them, the head of the thing, was rounded, and had, one might say, a face. There was a mouth under the eyes, the lipless brim of which quivered and panted, and dropped saliva. The whole creature heaved and pulsated convulsively. A lank tentacular appendage gripped the edge of the cylinder, another swayed in the air.

Those who have never seen a living Martian can scarcely imagine the strange horror of its appearance. The peculiar V-shaped mouth with its pointed upper lip, the absence of brow ridges, the absence of a chin beneath the wedge-like lower lip, the incessant quivering of this mouth, the Gorgon groups of tentacles, the tumultuous breathing of the lungs in a strange atmosphere, the evident heaviness and painfulness of movement due to the greater gravitational energy of the earth—above all, the extraordinary intensity of the immense eyes—were at once vital, intense, inhuman, crippled and monstrous. There was something fungoid in the oily brown skin, something in the clumsy deliberation of the tedious movements unspeakably nasty. Even at this first encounter, this first glimpse, I was overcome with disgust and dread.

Suddenly the monster vanished. It had toppled over the brim of the cylinder and fallen into the pit, with a thud like the fall of a great mass of leather. I heard it give a peculiar thick cry, and forthwith another of these creatures appeared darkly in the deep shadow of the aperture.

I turned and, running madly, made for the first group of trees, perhaps a hundred yards away; but I ran slantingly and stumbling, for I could not avert my face from these things.
QUESTION 2

8 MARKS

10 MINUTES

Go to

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=leR4fYoCvOs

and

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6T4eX1GGhC0

for help with this question.

aceyourexams.wordpress.com  www.youtube.com/aceyourexams
QUESTION 2

The Lowdown!

• This question is based on an extract from the Source (specified lines).

• It will ask you to analyse the effect of language (words) on the reader.

• You must comment on the EFFECT of the words in the quote you have chosen. How do they make the reader feel?

• Don’t worry about specific language features - look for words and phrases which answer the question.

• Make sure you take your answers from the line numbers in the question!

• Write 3 paragraphs.

• 10 minutes.

EXAMPLE QUESTION (Taken from Miss W’s video on Question 2)

Please read ‘The Sign of Four’/‘The Tragedy of Pondicherry Lodge’ extract.

Look in detail at lines 54-66 of the source.

How does the writer use language to describe how the characters are feeling?

You could include the writer’s choice of:

★ words and phrases

★ language features and techniques

★ sentence forms (I would advise NOT to use this bullet point).

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The Tragedy of Pondicherry Lodge

It was nearly eleven o'clock when we reached this final stage of our night's adventures. We had left the damp fog of the great city behind us, and the night was fairly fine. A warm wind blew from the westward, and heavy clouds moved slowly across the sky, with half a moon peeping occasionally through the rifts. It was clear enough to see for some distance, but Thaddeus Sholto took down one of the side-lamps from the carriage to give us a better light upon our way.

Pondicherry Lodge stood in its own grounds, and was girt round with a very high stone wall topped with broken glass. A single narrow iron-clamped door formed the only means of entrance. On this our guide knocked with a peculiar postman-like rat-tat.

"Who is there?" cried a gruff voice from within.

"It is I, McMurdo. You surely know my knock by this time."

There was a grumbling sound and a clanking and jarring of keys. The door swung heavily back, and a short, deep-chested man stood in the opening, with the yellow light of the lantern shining upon his protruded face and twinkling distrustful eyes.

"That you, Mr. Thaddeus? But who are the others? I had no orders about them from the master."

"No, McMurdo? You surprise me! I told my brother last night that I should bring some friends."

"He ain't been out o' his room today, Mr. Thaddeus, and I have no orders. You know very well that I must stick to regulations. I can let you in, but your friends must just stop where they are."

This was an unexpected obstacle. Thaddeus Sholto looked about him in a perplexed and helpless manner. "This is too bad of you, McMurdo!" he said. "If I guarantee them, that is enough for you. There is the young lady, too. She cannot wait on the public road at this hour."

"Very sorry, Mr. Thaddeus," said the porter, inexorably. "Folk may be friends o' yours, and yet no friends o' the master's. He pays me well to do my duty, and my duty I'll do. I don't know none o' your friends."

"Oh, yes you do, McMurdo," cried Sherlock Holmes, genially. "I don't think you can have forgotten me. Don't you remember the amateur who fought three rounds with you at Alison's rooms on the night of your benefit four years back?"

"Not Mr. Sherlock Holmes!" roared the prize-fighter. "God's truth! how could I have mistook you? If instead o' standin' there so quiet you had just stepped up and given me that cross-hit of yours under the jaw, I'd ha' known you without a question. Ah, you're one that has wasted your gifts, you have! You might have aimed high, if you had joined the fancy."
"You see, Watson, if all else fails me I have still one of the scientific professions open to me," said Holmes, laughing. "Our friend won't keep us out in the cold now, I am sure."

"In you come, sir, in you come, — you and your friends," he answered. "Very sorry, Mr. Thaddeus, but orders are very strict. Had to be certain of your friends before I let them in."

Inside, a gravel path wound through desolate grounds to a huge clump of a house, square and prosaic, all plunged in shadow save where a moonbeam struck one corner and glimmered in a garret window. The vast size of the building, with its gloom and its deathly silence, struck a chill to the heart. Even Thaddeus Sholto seemed ill at ease, and the lantern quivered and rattled in his hand.

"I cannot understand it," he said. "There must be some mistake. I distinctly told Bartholomew that we should be here, and yet there is no light in his window. I do not know what to make of it."

"Does he always guard the premises in this way?" asked Holmes.

"Yes; he has followed my father's custom. He was the favorite son, you know, and I sometimes think that my father may have told him more than he ever told me. That is Bartholomew's window up there where the moonshine strikes. It is quite bright, but there is no light from within, I think."

"None," said Holmes. "But I see the glint of a light in that little window beside the door."

"Ah, that is the housekeeper's room. That is where old Mrs. Bernstone sits. She can tell us all about it. But perhaps you would not mind waiting here for a minute or two, for if we all go in together and she has no word of our coming she may be alarmed. But hush! What is that?"

He held up the lantern, and his hand shook until the circles of light flickered and wavered all round us. Miss Morstan seized my wrist, and we all stood with thumping hearts, straining our ears. From the great black house there sounded through the silent night the saddest and most pitiful of sounds, — the shrill, broken whimpering of a frightened woman.

"It is Mrs. Bernstone," said Sholto. "She is the only woman in the house. Wait here. I shall be back in a moment." He hurried for the door, and knocked in his peculiar way. We could see a tall old woman admit him, and sway with pleasure at the very sight of him.

"Oh, Mr. Thaddeus, sir, I am so glad you have come! I am so glad you have come, Mr. Thaddeus, sir!" We heard her reiterated rejoicings until the door was closed and her voice died away into a muffled monotone.
Go to
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Lz_4_PAO8Vs
and
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZFB_pUs5Q7M&t=338s
for help with this question.
QUESTION 3

The Lowdown!

• Will ask you to comment on the EFFECT of structural features.
• DON'T analyse the language (words) of the quote.
• This question focuses on the Source as a whole - beginning, middle and end.
• Simple PQE.
• Aim for 3 paragraphs.
• 10 minutes.

EXAMPLE QUESTION (Taken from Miss W’s video on Question 3)

Please read ‘The Sign of Four’/‘The Tragedy of Pondicherry Lodge’ extract.

You now need to focus on the whole of the Source.
How has the writer structured the text to interest you as the reader?
You could write about:
★ what the writer focuses your attention on at the beginning
★ how and why the writer changes this focus as the Source develops
★ any other structural features that interest you.
QUESTION 4

20 MARKS

25 MINUTES

Go to

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jJ-8ErCbEAl

and

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d8SCqnm-BGE_E

and

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DeXJOAJa-Qhs

for help with this question.
QUESTION 4

The Lowdown!

• Will ask you to consider whether you agree or disagree with a statement.

• You must consider how the writer uses 'methods' = language & structure = to either support or contradict the statement.

• Start your answer with a general statement which answers the question = do you agree or disagree? To what extent?

• It is EASIER to AGREE with the statement as you will find more examples to support your point of view.

• Write about both sides of the 'argument' - what makes you agree and disagree?

• Aim for 5-6 paragraphs.

• 25 mins.

EXAMPLE QUESTION (Taken from Miss W’s video on Question 4)

Please read ‘The Sign of Four’/’The Tragedy of Pondicherry Lodge’ extract.

Focus your answer on the first part of the Source from line 1 to line 39.

A student, having read this section of the text, said: ‘The writer has created characters who are all fearful of something.’

To what extent do you agree?

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In your response, you could:

★ write about your own impressions of the characters
★ evaluate how the writer has created these impressions
★ support your opinions with references from the text.
QUESTION 5

40 MARKS
45 MINUTES

Go to
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UIJaSS-l8aBM&list=PLyZP5h7XiUn0QuFfpLW1Scy17kZJx-doAK

for the Question 5/Section B Playlist.
QUESTION 5

The Lowdown!

• You will be given a choice of two questions. You must answer ONE of the two.

• You will be asked to write either a narrative (story) or descriptive piece based on an image or theme linked to the picture.

• You may be given two narrative questions, two descriptive questions or one of each type.

• 45 mins.

• 5 mins planning + 35 mins writing + 5 mins checking.

• Aim to structure your writing in an interesting way.

• READ MY RULES/Figurative language - include five different types in your writing.

• Include five different types of punctuation.

• 40 marks = half the marks on the paper!

EXAMPLE QUESTION (Taken from Miss W’s video on Question 5)

Write a description suggested by the picture.

or

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

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READING
QUESTIONS
FLOWCHARTS
Firstly, the writer uses the technique of violent verbs to describe the weather as...

"______"
Paper 1 - Question 3 Paragraph Structure

**POINT - answer the question - WHERE DOES THE WRITER FOCUS YOUR ATTENTION?**

- Character/Perspective
- Dialogue
- Setting
- Weather
- Tension/Atmosphere
- Structure - linear/flashbacks/circular

At the beginning of the extract…
The extract opens with…
The writer focuses your attention on…
As the extract develops…

**QUOTE**

"_______"

**EFFECT of structural technique**

- Understand importance of character/setting/dialogue
- Rise in tension/drama
- Focuses your attention on …
- Creates an impression
- Entertains the reader
- Interrupts the fluency of
- Leaves questions in the reader’s mind

**NO LANGUAGE ANALYSIS!**

TOP MARKS = WHY DOES THE FOCUS SHIFT WITHIN THE EXTRACT?
I agree/disagree/agree to a certain extent/disagree to a certain extent with the statement that “…”

POINT - answer the question

Firstly, the writer says/states/suggests/describes/uses ______________________ to show/explain/describe/inform/create an impression

This question is asking you to analyse how the writer uses language (techniques) and structure to achieve effects. You can comment on any of these features in relation to the specific question.

QUOTE “______”

DIE

Define word or phrase (language)
Imply - what does the word(s) suggest?
Effect on the reader

LINK back to the question

Does the comment/quote support or oppose the statement and WHY?
- Disagree, invalidate, support, contradict, endorse, aids, reinforces
TOP LEVEL
SAMPLE
ANSWERS
Firstly, the writer uses powerful verbs to describe how fearful the characters are. The characters are described as having ‘thumping’ hearts which suggests that their hearts can not contain the terror they are feeling. Furthermore, the verb ‘thumping’ implies that something extremely painful is taking place. It is evident that, after a period of increasing tension, the characters have now reached a pivotal point in the story; something awful is about to happen. The reader is left with a feeling of uncertainty as to whether the characters will be safe or not.

Secondly, Conan-Doyle depicts a sense of utter terror by explaining that the characters could hear ‘the shrill, broken whimpering of a frightened woman’. The use of numerous adjectives to describe the sound heard conveys the overwhelming fear that the character feels. For example, the adjective ‘broken’ suggests that the woman has been physically damaged by the fear. This is further supported by the use of the adjective ‘shrill’ which highlights that the scream is high-pitched and piercing. These two words convey a sense of horror and alarm which, coupled with the explanation of the woman being ‘frightened’, suggests to the reader that the woman is in a dangerous and deadly situation.

Finally, Conan-Doyle uses repetition of a key phrase to express the level of relief that the character feels at not being alone. The phrase, ‘I am so glad you have come!’ is repeated by the character Mrs. Bernstone, thus highlighting the fear that she had felt prior to the other characters’ arrival. The repeated use of the positive verb ‘glad’ stresses the importance of the visitors’ entrance as Mrs. Bernstone had been the character who had previously been ‘whimpering’. The use of the exclamation mark also signifies the strength of fear the character had felt as she is clearly overjoyed at receiving help from others. It is evident that, whilst there appears to be something to fear, the characters will work together to resolve the situation, therefore leaving the reader with hope that the mystery will be solved.
The opening of the Source is particularly interesting because the writer focuses on describing the weather. Conan-Doyle describes the night as being ‘fairly-warm’ and states that a ‘warm wind blew’, therefore creating a calm and peaceful atmosphere. However, the moon is also described as ‘peeping’ out from the clouds which creates a sense of mystery and intrigue for the reader. This contrast in tone and atmosphere generates tension as the reader is unsure why there is a juxtaposition of atmospheres. The focus on the weather highlights to the reader that the characters are in an uneasy and unnerving position which serves to heighten the tension immediately.

As the extract develops, the tension heightens as the writer shifts focus to another location. Once the characters are inside the ‘desolate grounds’, they are ‘plunged in shadow’, creating a sense of dark foreboding. The vivid description of the setting has the effect of building suspense; the lack of light suggests that something or someone is lurking in the shadows. The reader is not only apprehensive about the atmosphere which has been created, but they also feel a sense of urgency and need to discover what the cause of the menacing tone is. The shift in location aids in developing the sinister tone as it suggests that there isn’t an escape from the building or situation. The detail given to this particular location also signifies its prominence within the plot.

Throughout the Source, the writer leads the reader on a journey through the various locations that the characters frequent. The opening of the Source focuses on the external weather and then leads on to describe ‘Pondicherry Lodge’. The extract ends with a focus on the character of Mrs. Bernstone and her ‘reiterated rejoicings’. This shift in focus mimics the physical journey that the characters have taken; the reader is made to feel as if they are part of the narrative, engaging in the same activities as the main characters and discovering new clues to the mystery as the chapter unfolds. This narrative structure not only entertains the reader, but intensifies the fear and anguish they feel. These emotions are crucial to the success of a crime fiction text.

Point - focus
Quote/Evidence
Effect of structural technique
I agree to an extent with the above statement. I believe that the majority, but not all, of the characters display fear in the Source.

Firstly, it is evident at the beginning of the Source that the characters feel on edge at what is ahead of them. Conan-Doyle describes the night as being ‘clear enough’ to see, but the characters still take down one of the ‘side-lamps’. These murky images suggest that the characters are anxious of what may be lurking in the shadows. The description of the setting and the subsequent characters’ actions enable the reader to fully comprehend the fear that the characters feel right at the beginning of the extract.

Furthermore, the description of the ‘Lodge’ and the fact that it is surrounded by a ‘high stone wall’ implies that safety and security are paramount. The ‘iron-clamped door’ to the Lodge appears to be the only means of access, suggesting that there is a wish to keep visitors out, with access being granted to a few select people. The implication is such that the characters are fearful of allowing entry to something or someone; they feel a need to secure themselves in to the gated Lodge. The reader begins to question what could cause such a powerful emotion in the characters. Indeed, as the extract develops, the fear and distrust of the characters becomes ever more apparent, building tension and dramatic impact.

Additionally, the writer creates a situation in which the characters appear untrustworthy. The discourse between the character Mr. McMurdo and the guests emphasises this distrust and fear. The use of the adjective ‘distrustful’ to describe Mr. McMurdo’s eyes helps the reader understand that the character is fearful of allowing entry to the guests. The repeated questions, ‘That, you, Mr. Thaddeus? But who are the others?’ emphasise the concern the character feels at seeing the visitors. We also learn that Mr. McMurdo ‘must stick’ to the ‘regulations’. Conan-Doyle has created a character who is both fearful of guests and breaking his master’s rules. The reader is, yet again, left wondering what has caused this fear and anxiety.

Conan-Doyle also uses sentence structure to highlight the fear and uncertainty the characters feel. The short sentences, ‘But who are the others?’, ‘No, McMurdo’ and ‘You surprise me!’ are a deliberate technique to highlight the distrust felt between the characters. It is evident that the character is wary of letting the visitors enter the house. The short sentences create a feeling of anxiousness in the reader. The pace of the text mirrors the fear and anxiety that the character feels at that point in the Source. Again, it is clear that this character is fearful of something.

Throughout the majority of the Source, Conan-Doyle’s characters all appear to be fearful of something. However, there is one character who does not demonstrate any distrust, fear or anxiety; that character is Sherlock Holmes. When denied access to the Lodge, Holmes ‘genially’ responds to the character Mr. McMurdo and questions why he should be fearful of the visitors. Conan-Doyle’s description of Holmes’ demeanour suggests that he feels at ease in the situation because he is described as ‘laughing’. The cheerful disposition that Holmes exhibits contradicts the statement that all of the characters are fearful of something. Indeed, the implication is that the character actually finds the whole situation entertaining as opposed to frightening.
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