

English Language Paper 1 Revision Guide

1 hour 45 minutes (spend 15 mins of this reading the source)

Section A - Reading – 40 marks

- Q1 – 4 marks
- Q2 – 8 marks
- Q3 – 8 marks
- Q4 – 20 marks

Section B - Writing - 40 marks

(24 marks for content and 16 marks for technical accuracy.)

Spend roughly one minute on each mark.

Section A is assessing your reading skills. This means your ability to understand information from a text (AO1), to analyse how language and structure create meaning (AO2), and to make judgements about how effectively a text conveys ideas to the reader (AO4)

In Language Paper 1 you will have **one** fiction text to read.

To help with time-management and to maximise your marks we recommend the following approach to Language Paper1:

STEP ONE: Active Reading of the source for 15 minutes (see below)

STEP TWO: Do Q5 – the writing task (45 minutes)

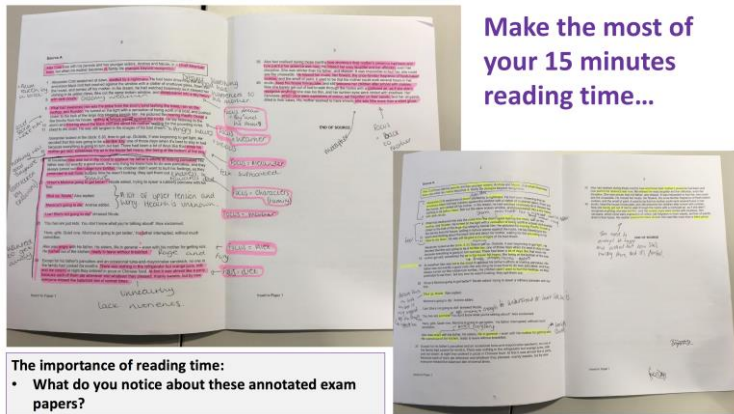
STEP THREE: Do Q4 – evaluation of ideas and methods (25 mins)

STEP FOUR: Do Q2 (10 mins), Q3 (10 mins) and Q1 (4 mins)

We have organised the resources below in this order.

ACTIVE READING SKILLS

Spend the first 15 minutes reading the text using ACTIVE READING SKILLS



Make the most of your 15 minutes reading time...

The importance of reading time:
• What do you notice about these annotated exam papers?

ACTIVE READING SKILLS

This involves looking ahead at the exam paper questions **before reading the insert** to help focus your reading.

STEP 1 - The first step involves reading the information given to you on page one and at the beginning of the extract. Read and underline key information about the text (name, author, when written, text-type, where it is set, etc)

STEP 2 – Now look at **Question 4** as this gives you a good idea about key ideas in the text. Look at the information from the ‘reader’ – **what do you learn about the main ideas in text?** Write what you find at the top of the insert.

A reader said, ‘This part of the story, where Alice decides to continue digging for the object, is very mysterious, and suggests her discovery may be life-changing.’

STEP 3 – Now read the extract slowly and carefully. **Identify the Five W’s** (Who, What, Where, When, Why)

STEP 4 - Focus on how the text is structured.

- Number the paragraphs
- Highlight the first sentence of each paragraph
- Give each paragraph, or section, a brief label (eg *Alice drinking – scenery*) for the first paragraph.
- Where can you see any conflict? How is tension created? What do you notice about any shifts in focus (places, people, time, mood)? Beginning/ending? Patterns? Repetition?

Read the extract below.

Source A

Alex Cold lives with his parents and two younger sisters, Andrea and Nicole, in a small American town, but when his mother becomes ill, family life changes beyond recognition.

1 Alexander Cold awakened at dawn, startled by a nightmare. He had been dreaming that an enormous black bird had crashed against the window with a clatter of shattered glass, flown into the house, and carried off his mother. In the dream, he had watched helplessly as it clasped her clothing in its yellow claws, flew out the same broken window, and disappeared into a sky heavy
5 with dark clouds.

6 What had awakened him was the noise from the storm: wind lashing the trees, rain on the rooftop, and thunder. He turned on the light with a sensation of being adrift in a boat, and pushed closer to the bulk of the large dog sleeping beside him. He pictured the roaring Pacific Ocean a few blocks from his house, spilling in furious waves against the rocks. He lay listening to the
10 storm and thinking about the black bird and about his mother, waiting for the pounding in his chest to die down. He was still tangled in the images of his bad dream.

Alexander looked at the clock: 6.30, time to get up. Outside, it was beginning to get light. He decided that this was going to be a terrible day, one of those days when it's best to stay in bed because everything is going to turn out bad. There had been a lot of days like that since his
15 mother got sick; sometimes the air in the house felt heavy, like being at the bottom of the sea.

16 At breakfast Alex was not in the mood to applaud his father's efforts at making pancakes. His father was not exactly a good cook; the only thing he knew how to do was pancakes, and they always turned out like rubber-tyre tortillas. His children didn't want to hurt his feelings, so they pretended to eat them, but any time he wasn't looking, they spit them out.

20 'When's Momma going to get better?' Nicole asked, trying to spear a rubbery pancake with her fork.

'Shut up, Nicole,' Alex replied.

'Momma's going to die,' Andrea added.

'Liar! She's not going to die!' shrieked Nicole.

25 'You two are just kids. You don't know what you're talking about!' Alex exclaimed.

'Here, girls. Quiet now. Momma is going to get better,' his father interrupted, without much conviction.

Alex was angry with his father, his sisters, life in general – even with his mother for getting sick. He rushed out of the kitchen, ready to leave without breakfast.

30 Except for his father's pancakes and an occasional tuna-and-mayonnaise sandwich, no one in the family had cooked for months. There was nothing in the refrigerator but orange juice, milk and ice cream; at night they ordered in pizza or Chinese food. At first it was almost like a party, because each of them ate whenever and whatever they pleased, mainly sweets, but by now everyone missed the balanced diet of normal times.

35 Alex had realised during those months how enormous their mother's presence had been and how painful her absence was now. He missed her easy laughter and her affection, even her discipline. She was stricter than his father, and sharper. It was impossible to fool her; she could see the unseeable. He missed her music, her flowers, the once-familiar fragrance of fresh-baked cookies, and the smell of paint. It used to be that his mother could work several hours in her studio, keep the house immaculate, and still welcome her children after school with cookies.

40 Now she barely got out of bed to walk through the rooms with a confused air, as if she didn't recognise anything; she was too thin, and her sunken eyes were circled with shadows. Her canvases, which once were explosions of colour, sat forgotten on their easels, and her oil paints dried in their tubes. His mother seemed to have shrunk; she was little more than a silent ghost.

You can practise your Active Reading Skills on this extract here...

Section B - Question 5 (40 marks – 45 minutes)

11

Section B: Writing

You are advised to spend about 45 minutes on this section.

Write in full sentences.

You are reminded of the need to plan your answer.

You should leave enough time to check your work at the end.

0 5

A magazine has asked for contributions for their creative writing page.

Either:

Write a description of a stormy sea as suggested by this picture:



Or:

Write a story that begins with the sentence: 'This was going to be a terrible day, one of those days when it's best to stay in bed because everything is going to turn out bad.'

(24 marks for content and organisation)

16 marks for technical accuracy)

[40 marks]

You have a choice of **two tasks** which may be descriptive or narrative.

Think of your writing as the *opening* of a story or a short scene from a film, rather than the whole novel or film.

Use the source material to help you with structure and vocabulary.

Level 3 13-18 marks Consistent, Clear Communication	Upper Level 3 16-18 marks	Content <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Communication is consistently clear• Tone, style and register are clearly and consistently matched to purpose and audience• Increasingly sophisticated vocabulary and phrasing, chosen for effect with a range of successful linguistic devices Organisation <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Effective use of structural features• Writing is engaging, using a range of, clear connected ideas• Coherent paragraphs with integrated discourse markers
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The Planning and Writing Process:



Mind map – think around the task, use your imagination, get a range of ideas



Plan – organise your ideas – impose a structure: a beginning, middle and end



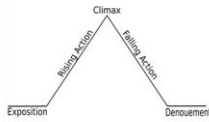
Write – get your ideas down in clear developed **paragraphs** using interesting **vocabulary** and a range of **sentence** types...

Aim for **five** paragraphs, each with **five** sentences.



Structure

Create a five-part plan



Describe a winter scene as suggested by this picture:



How can you create conflict with the weather?

The wind can *howl*
The cold can *bite* or *grip* with its *icy fingers*... etc

How can you create conflict using time?

- You are waiting for something...
- It is getting colder (or warmer, or darker...)

How can you create some conflict?

- Individual against individual (*protagonist* against the *antagonist*)
- Individual against nature
- Individual against society
- Individual against technology
- Individual against self

Try some **contrast** features

- Inside to outside
- Group to solitary
- Noise to silence
- Light to dark

Language

- ▶ Use **figurative language** (metaphor, simile, personification)
- ▶ **Sensory description** (smell, sound, taste, touch...)
- ▶ Focus on a **small detail** (a fly buzzing, a dripping tap, a crack in the wall...)

Use a **range of sentence** types.

1. **Simple** sentences: *The Tyrant Lizard raised itself. It exhaled.*
2. **Compound** sentences: *The monster turned its head and it stared at the hunters.*
3. **Complex** sentences: *In the slime, tiny insects wriggled, so that the entire body seemed to twitch and undulate, even while the monster itself did not move.*

Try some of the **Slow Writing** rules:

1. This sentence must be just **one word**
2. This sentence must start with an **adverb**
3. This sentence must contain some **alliteration**
4. This sentence must focus on the **sense of smell/taste/touch or hearing – focus on a small detail**
5. This sentence must contain a **rule of three**
6. This sentence must have a **subordinate clause**
7. This sentence must **start with the word 'Despite' or 'As'**
8. This sentence must contain a **simile**
9. This sentence must contain **personification**
10. This sentence must be exactly **the same as the first one.**

'Crafting' your language - three essentials:

- ▶ Use **figurative language** (metaphor, simile, personification)
- ▶ **Sensory description** (smell, sound, taste, touch...)
- ▶ Focus on a **small detail** (a fly buzzing, a dripping tap, a crack in the wall...)

Try some of the *Slow Writing* rules:

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10. This sentence must be exactly the same as the first one.

Structure:

Six o'clock. The sun had nearly set and ...

By seven o'clock, I could really feel the cold. It was like...

As the darkness closed in, I noticed that....

Use short sentences for effect:

Cold. I had never felt so cold. In my bones, in my blood.

• Try different sentence starters:

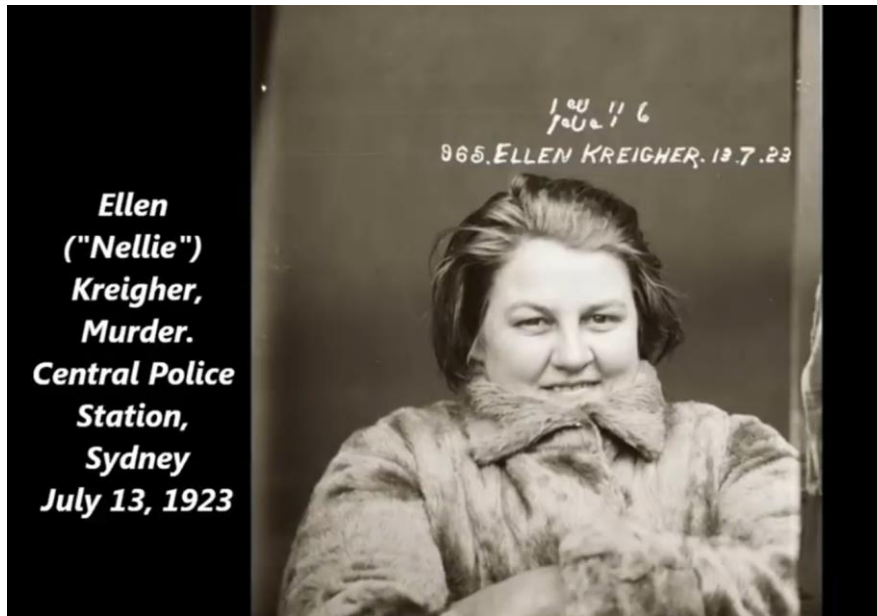
- *Cautiously, I crept forward...*
- *Exhausted, I put the ...*
- *Shining the torch, I could ...*
- Reverse the word order in sentences:
 - *I looked at the pathway and then sat down.*
 - *Sitting down, I looked at the pathway.*

• Place words together which sound similar:

- *The trees whispered in the wind* (alliteration)
- *I folded the cold blanket* (assonance)
- Choose verbs which create **metaphors**
 - *The wind howled*
 - *The leaves played in the wind*
 - *The lamp-post glowered down at me*



Q5 Write a story based on this image.



I smile at the camera. The photographer seems surprised and looks at the policeman. I just hug myself in my new fur coat. Gently, I caress the soft fur – it feels like rolls of velvet, it feels like luxury. I feel like a princess. I haven't always felt like this.

When I first met John I almost fainted – he was so handsome, like a film star. He was my Prince Charming and he told me I was his princess. He promised me he would give me the world. All I ever wanted was a real fur coat and he told me that when he had the money he would. He started coming home late and told me, with a mischievous smile, that the fur coat would soon be mine. Of course, I believed him; why wouldn't I? We were happy, like children at Christmas or the first time you drink champagne – it was wildly exciting, fizzy and... dangerous.

Then it all changed. I shouldn't really have even been there, but I had forgotten to get bread and I cut through the streets to the old bakery. I hadn't been through this particular side street before, and I noticed a café on the corner. I saw John inside and my heart leapt – he looked happy and had that smile that I love so much. I smiled and walked towards him but then I saw he was with someone else. They were holding hands. They were drinking wine. She was wearing a coat: a fur coat. It was as if someone had punched me in the stomach – it actually felt like a real physical force. I turned around and staggered home, my mind full of scorpions. I was raging, my heart was on fire... and then I went very cold.

When I killed them, I was surprised at the mess. Blood everywhere. They were in bed so luckily no blood got on the coat.

Finish this story...

Question 4 (20 marks – 20-22 minutes)

0 4

Focus this part of your answer on the second half of the source from **line 16 to the end**.

A student said 'This part of the story, set during breakfast time, shows that Alex is struggling to cope with his mother's illness.'

To what extent do you agree?

In your response, you could:

- consider your own impressions of Alex
- evaluate how the writer shows that Alex is struggling to cope
- support your response with references to the text.

[20 marks]

How do I approach Question 4?

This is an evaluative question so you are being asked to give your opinion about a given statement. Questions 1, 2 and 3 have built up towards this question and you will use a mixture of these different types of analysis in Q4. In the question above you are being asked to agree or not with the statement **that Alex is struggling to cope with his mother's illness**. You need to explain what **methods** the writer uses to make us think that this is the case, and you need to support your points with **references to the text**.

<p>Level 3 Clear, relevant evaluation 11-15 marks</p>	<p>Shows clear and relevant evaluation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Evaluates clearly the effect(s) on the reader• Shows clear understanding of writer's methods• Selects a range of relevant textual references• Makes a clear and relevant response to the focus of the statement	<p>Evaluate how this might affect the reader: <i>This might make the reader feel that ...</i></p> <p>Explain the writer's methods: <i>The writer uses ...</i></p> <p>Support your answer: <i>We can see this as it says, '...'</i></p> <p>Answer the question: <i>I agree that ...</i></p> <p><i>However, I'm not sure that ... because...</i></p>
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Key Phrases for Q4

- *I agree with the student that _____ . One of the reasons I think this is because of the way the writer describes...*
- *The use of... creates a sense of...*
- *Consequently, this makes it seem like...*
- *Another reason why I think the writer has made _____ is by the use of...*
- *The words/techniques/phrase... gives the reader the impression that he...*
- *However, you could argue that _____ and is actually ...*

EXAMPLE RESPONSE at Level 4

I agree completely in that Alex is struggling to cope with his mother's illness which is especially noticeable during this part of the story. This is evident during Alexander's outburst at his sister's predictions about his mother dying where he says, 'You two are just kids. You don't know what you're talking about!' Which shows a sense of denial from Alexander. This could then show Alexander looking for a sense of normality from his past of when his mother was well which however may not come true as predicted by his sister Andrea. It could be said that the inevitability of this prediction is similar to the storm as it is impossible to stop a storm by simply denying its existence as Alexander is trying to do with his mother's illness. Also, the storm could also represent the inevitable chaos within the house if his mother dies as there is already a chaotic structure in the cold household where 'each of them are whenever and whatever they pleased' and even goes so far as referring to the situation as 'almost like a party.'

Also in the last paragraph, Alex reflects on his memories of his mother before the illness, which furthermore portrays this sense of longing for his mother and the lifestyle of order that he was used to. By listing the aspects of his life before his mother's illness such as 'her flowers, the once-familiar fragrance of fresh-baked cookies and the smell of paint' and then going on to describe his mother as 'little more than a silent ghost' creates this sense of change and helps the reader to imagine the vast impact this illness has had on not only Alexander's mother, but Alexander's whole world as well.

Question 2 (8 marks – 8/9 minutes)

0 2

Look in detail at this extract from **lines 6 to 11** of the source:

What had awakened him was the noise from the storm: wind lashing the trees, rain on the rooftop, and thunder. He turned on the light with a sensation of being adrift in a boat, and pushed closer to the bulk of the large dog sleeping beside him. He pictured the roaring Pacific Ocean a few blocks from his house, spilling in furious waves against the rocks. He lay listening to the storm and thinking about the black bird and about his mother, waiting for the pounding in his chest to die down. He was still tangled in the images of his bad dream.

How does the writer use language here to describe the effects of the storm?

You could include the writer's choice of:

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

[8 marks]

This question assesses Language ie: Words / Phrases / Language Features / Language Techniques / Sentence Forms

Level 3 Clear, relevant explanation 5-6 marks	Shows clear understanding of <i>language</i> : <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Explains clearly the effects of the writer's choices of <i>language</i>• Selects a range of relevant textual detail• Makes clear and accurate use of subject terminology
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How do I approach Question 2?

1. Work out an **overview sentence (or thesis)** based on the focus of the question (eg. how the effects of the storm are presented) before you start to look in detail at language, eg. *The writer uses language to present the storm as violent and dangerous...*
2. Then, try to find **three different ways in which the writer uses language** (ie: Words / Phrases / Language Features / Language Techniques / Sentence Forms...) to convey this to the reader.
3. You must write about the **effect of the language on the meaning**.

Key Phrases for Question 2

- Another way in which the writer uses language to _____ is by using...
- The use of the word/phrase/technique... suggests
- This creates an impression/feeling/idea of...which makes the reader understand...
- Another way the writer uses language is by...

In this extract, the storm is described as being powerful and dangerous. **One way in which the writer uses language to describe the effect of the storm is by** describing how the wind was ‘lashing the trees.’ **The use of the powerful verb ‘lashing’ suggests that** the wind is whipping the trees. **This use of personification creates an impression of** the wind being alive and acting in a brutal and cruel way which makes the reader understand just how powerful it is. **Another way the writer uses language is by...**

Level 4 response

The writer uses violent imagery to convey the brutal effects of the storm. The wind is ‘lashing’ the trees, a verb implying it is so forceful it is ruthlessly thrashing them, as if nature is inflicting a cruel punishment on the landscape. In addition, the writer uses personification in ‘furious waves’ to suggest how the Pacific Ocean is pounding at the rocks, uncontrollably beating against them with anger and aggression. The writer also uses sound imagery to add to the impact of the visual description of the ocean ‘roaring’ by using an adjective to suggest the thunderous noise of the storm which sounds like a wild animal, full of rage as it attacks and devours its prey.

Question 3 (8 marks – 8/9 minutes)

0 3

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

This text is taken from the beginning of a novel.

How is the text structured to interest you as a 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.

[8 marks]

How do we comment on structure?

- What does the writer present to us at the beginning? What effect does this have?
- Where does our focus change and why? What effect on meaning?
- What happens after that? Again, what **effect**?
- How does it end? And how does this affect meaning?

<p>Level 3 Clear, relevant explanation</p> <p>5-6 marks</p>	<p>Shows clear understanding of structural features:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explains clearly the effects of the writer's choices of structural features • Selects a range of relevant examples • Makes clear and accurate use of subject terminology
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How do I approach Question 3?

- Go through and find as many things as you can based on the bullet points in the question – do not write about language!
- Pick your strongest **THREE** to take forward (if you have nothing to say about why the writer used it, don't put it in your answer)
- Top tip: write a word next to each paragraph about what it is focused on eg- weather, character; event- look for where it changes. Does it 'zoom in' or 'zoom out'? How does it open- what is the reader first introduced to?

You must think about **the effect on the meaning** of the structure. For example:

- Creates a particular atmosphere or mood (you need to say what this is, eg. *tense, sad, joyful, sinister, mysterious...*)
- Sets the scene so the reader understand something important about when, or where the story is set
- Introduces a character, or what sort of frame of mind the character is in
- Introduces a problem or a disruption to the original mood – maybe a new character arrives, or something happens...
- Maybe a flashback to something earlier to help explain to the reader

Key Phrases for Question 3

- *At the beginning of the text the writer focuses our attention on...*
- *For example, he writes...*
- *This creates a sense of/makes the reader feel...*
- *The writer then changes the focus of the text to... where the narrator...*
- *This creates a sense of...*

Example response – Level 3

The text is divided into two parts: in the first half, the **writer focuses our attention on a single character, Alexander Cold, before later showing how he interacts with the rest of his family.** The very first line of the text explains that Alex is waking in his bed 'at dawn, startled by a nightmare', **so person, place and time are immediately established.** The focus then narrows to details of the dream, where a huge black bird 'carried off his mother'. The use of the word 'startled' in the first sentence **creates a sudden and abrupt opening,** and this, together with the focus on the nightmare which follows, **instils a sense of unease in the reader.** After this we switch to Alex's frightened reaction, and **learn that he thinks it's going to be a bad day.** The sentence 'There had been a lot of days like that since his mother got sick' is important because it is the first mention of his mother being ill. **It reminds us of the nightmare at the beginning, and at this point we understand the meaning of it and that Alex is scared she might die.**

Question 1 – (4 marks – 4 minutes)

Section A: Reading	
Answer all questions in this section. You are advised to spend about 45 minutes on this section.	
0 1	Read again the first part of the source from lines 1 to 5. List four things about the bird in Alex's nightmare from this part of the source. [4 marks]
1	_____

2	_____

3	_____

4	_____

Keep your answers really simple. Make clear separate points. No need for lots of inference and definitely **no** language analysis.

AO1	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Identify and interpret explicit and implicit information and ideas• Select and synthesise evidence from different texts.
This assesses bullet point 1 identify and interpret explicit and implicit information and ideas	
Indicative content; students may include: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• It was black• It was enormous• It crashed against the window• It shattered the glass• It flew into the house• It carried off Alex's mother• It had yellow claws• It disappeared into the dark sky	
Or any other valid responses that you are able to verify by checking the source.	

Example Language Paper 1

Extract from The Time Machine – H.G. Wells

At this point, the narrator has just exited the time machine after its first journey.

‘The machine was standing on a sloping beach. The sea stretched away to the south-west, to rise into a sharp bright horizon against the wan sky. There were no breakers and no waves, for not a breath of wind was stirring. Only a slight oily swell rose and fell like a gentle breathing, and showed that the eternal sea was still moving and living. And along the margin where the water sometimes broke was a thick incrustation of salt—pink under the lurid sky. There was a sense of oppression in my head, and I noticed that I was breathing very fast. The sensation reminded me of my only experience of mountaineering, and from that I judged the air to be more rarefied than it is now.

‘Far away up the desolate slope I heard a harsh scream, and saw a thing like a huge white butterfly go slanting and fluttering up into the sky and, circling, disappear over some low hillocks beyond. The sound of its voice was so dismal that I shivered and seated myself more firmly upon the machine. Looking round me again, I saw that, quite near, what I had taken to be a reddish mass of rock was moving slowly towards me. Then I saw the thing was really a monstrous crab-like creature. Can you imagine a crab as large as yonder table, with its many legs moving slowly and uncertainly, its big claws swaying, its long antennæ, like carters’ whips, waving and feeling, and its stalked eyes gleaming at you on either side of its metallic front? Its back was corrugated and ornamented with ungainly bosses, and a greenish incrustation blotched it here and there. I could see the many palps of its complicated mouth flickering and feeling as it moved.

‘As I stared at this sinister apparition crawling towards me, I felt a tickling on my cheek as though a fly had lighted there. I tried to brush it away with my hand, but in a moment it returned, and almost immediately came another by my ear. I struck at this, and caught something threadlike. It was drawn swiftly out of my hand. With a frightful qualm, I turned, and I saw that I had grasped the antenna of another monster crab that stood just behind me. Its evil eyes were wriggling on their stalks, its mouth was all alive with appetite, and its vast ungainly claws, smeared with an algal slime, were descending upon me. In a moment my hand was on the lever, and I had placed a month between myself and these monsters. But I was still on the same beach, and I saw them distinctly now as soon as I stopped. Dozens of them seemed to be crawling here and there, in the sombre light, among the foliated sheets of intense green.

Questions on The Time Machine

Q1 – List four things that you learn about the place in paragraph 1?

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4

Q2 - Look carefully at this extract

‘Far away up the desolate slope I heard a harsh scream, and saw a thing like a huge white butterfly go slanting and fluttering up into the sky and, circling, disappear over some low hillocks beyond. The sound of

its voice was so dismal that I shivered and seated myself more firmly upon the machine. Looking round me again, I saw that, quite near, what I had taken to be a reddish mass of rock was moving slowly towards me. Then I saw the thing was really a monstrous crab-like creature. Can you imagine a crab as large as yonder table, with its many legs moving slowly and uncertainly, its big claws swaying, its long antennæ, like carters' whips, waving and feeling, and its stalked eyes gleaming at you on either side of its metallic front? Its back was corrugated and ornamented with ungainly bosses, and a greenish incrustation blotched it here and there. I could see the many palps of its complicated mouth flickering and feeling as it moved.

How does the writer use language here to describe the thoughts and feelings of the narrator?

You could include the writer's choice of:

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

(8 marks)

Q3

You now need to think about the whole of the Source.

This text is from the opening of a novel.

How has the writer structured the text to interest you as a reader?

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.

(8 marks)

Q4.

Focus this part of your answer on the second part of the Source from line 19 ('As I stared at this sinister apparition...') to the end.

A student, having read this section of the text said: "The writer brings the characters' fear and uncertainty to life for the reader. It is as if you are at the same beach as them."

To what extent do you agree?

In your response, you could:

- write about your own impressions of the character
- evaluate how the writer has created these impressions
- support your opinions with references to the text.

[20 marks]

Section B: Writing

You are advised to spend about 45 minutes on this section.
Write in full sentences.
You are reminded of the need to plan your answer.
You should leave enough time to check your work at the end.

Q5: Your school magazine will be publishing a collection of creative writing written by students.

EITHER: Write a story about a conflict as suggested by this image:



OR: Write a description about a place that has had a lasting impression on you.

(24 marks for content and organisation
16 marks for technical accuracy)
[40 marks]

GCSE English Language

Paper 1 Explorations in creative reading and writing

This extract comes from the middle of the novel 'The Blind Assassin'. Iris has had a difficult relationship with her sister, who has lived with her and her husband since their parents' death when she was fourteen.

Ten days after the war ended, my sister Laura drove a car off a bridge. The bridge was being repaired: she went right through the Danger sign. The car fell a hundred feet into the ravine, smashing through the treetops feathery with new leaves, then burst into flames and rolled down into the shallow creek at the bottom. Chunks of the bridge fell on top of it. Nothing much was left of her but charred smithereens.

I was informed of the accident by a policeman: the car was mine, and they'd traced the licence. His tone was respectful: no doubt he recognized Richard's name. He said the tires may have caught on a streetcar track or the brakes may have failed, but he also felt bound to inform me that two witnesses - a retired lawyer and a bank teller, dependable people - had claimed to have seen the whole thing. They'd said Laura had turned the car sharply and deliberately, and had plunged off the bridge with no more fuss than stepping off a curb. They'd noticed her hands on the wheel because of the white gloves she'd been wearing.

It wasn't the brakes, I thought. She had her reasons. Not that they were ever the same as anybody else's reasons. She was completely ruthless in that way.

"I suppose you want someone to identify her," I said. "I'll come down as soon as I can." I could hear the calmness of my own voice, as if from a distance. In reality I could barely get the words out; my mouth was numb, my entire face was rigid with pain. I felt as if I'd been to the dentist. I was furious with Laura for what she'd done, but also with the policeman for implying that she'd done it. A hot wind was blowing around my head, the strands of my hair lifting and swirling in it, like ink spilled in water.

"I'm afraid there will be an inquest, Mrs. Griffen," he said. "Naturally," I said. "But it was an accident. My sister was never a good driver."

I could picture the smooth oval of Laura's face, her neatly pinned chignon, the dress she would have been wearing: a shirtwaist with a small rounded collar, in a sober colour - navy blue or steel grey or hospital-corridor green. Penitential colours - less like something she'd chosen to put on than like something she'd been locked up in. Her solemn half-smile; the amazed lift of her eyebrows, as if she were admiring the view.

The white gloves: a Pontius Pilate gesture. She was washing her hands of me. Of all of us. What had she been thinking of as the car sailed off the bridge, then hung suspended in the afternoon sunlight, glinting like a dragonfly for that one instant of held breath before the plummet? Of Alex, of Richard, of bad faith, of our father and his wreckage; of God, perhaps, and her fatal, triangular bargain. Or of the stack of cheap school exercise books that she must have hidden that very morning, in the bureau drawer where I kept my stockings, knowing I would be the one to find them.

Chignon: a type of pinned up hairstyle, similar to a bun

Pontius Pilate: the man who condemned Jesus to death and famously 'washed his hands' to show he didn't approve of the sentence he had to give.

Penitential: repentance- when you are sorry for what you have done

Section A: Reading

1. Read the first paragraph again.

List four things we learn about the way the car crashed.
(4 marks)

2. Look in detail at the fourth paragraph.

How does the writer use language here to describe Iris' reaction? You could include the writer's choice of:

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

(8 marks)

3. You now need to think about the whole of the Source.

This text is from the middle of a novel.

How has the writer structured the text to interest you as a 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.

(8 marks)

4. Focus this part of your answer on the first half of the source.

A student said 'This part of the story, re-telling a devastating moment in Laura's life, reveals a distance between the two sisters.' To what extent do you agree?

In your response, you could:

- consider your own impressions of Iris
- evaluate how the writer shows that Iris feels distant from her sister
- support your response with references to the text

(20 marks)



Section B: Writing

5. A magazine has asked for contributions for their creative writing page.

Either:

Write a description of passengers boarding a train as suggested by this picture (picture of a passengers boarding a train).

Or

Write a story that begins with the sentence:

'The problem with putting on a mask to face the outside world, is that at some point there will come a point when you are unable to take it off.'

(24 marks for content and organisation and 16 marks for technical accuracy) [40 marks]