

# A GUIDE TO AQA ENGLISH LANGUAGE PAPER 1 GCSE

## EXPLORATIONS IN CREATIVE READING AND WRITING

### SECTION B



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## Overview

**Paper 1: Explorations in Creative Reading and Writing** is designed to test how well you can understand a **fiction** text and how effectively you can craft your own writing.

Section B (Question 5) focuses on **writing** and tests your ability to create **engaging, technically accurate** and **well-crafted fiction**, demonstrating control over language and structure.

Each exam question is built around a specific skill, known as an **Assessment Objective (AO)**. These objectives are the exact criteria examiners use to award marks, so understanding what each AO is will help you shape your answers and write with purpose and confidence.

This booklet explains the **two options** you will get for Question 5, the skills and assessment objectives it targets, and how to approach **Language Paper 1: Section B** so you can enter the exam knowing exactly how to succeed.

The aim of this paper is to engage students in a creative text and inspire them to write creatively themselves by:

- In section B, writing their own creative text, inspired by the topic that they have responded to in section A to **demonstrate their narrative and descriptive skills in response to a written prompt, scenario or visual image.**

**-AQA English Specification**



This paper tests your ability to read and understand a **fiction** extract and produce a piece of creative/imaginative writing.

You have **1 hour 45 minutes in total**. Plan your time carefully, spending roughly half on reading and questions and half on your writing task in Section B.

**AQA**

Please write clearly in block capitals.

Centre number

Candidate number

Surname

Forename(s)

Candidate signature

I declare this is my own work.

# GCSE ENGLISH LANGUAGE

Paper 1 Explorations in creative reading and writing

Thursday 23 May 2024

Morning

Time allowed: 1 hour 45 minutes

### Materials

For this paper you must have:

- **Source A** – provided as a separate insert.

### Instructions

- Answer **all** questions.
- Use black ink or black ball-point pen.
- Fill in the boxes at the top of this page.
- You must answer the questions in the spaces provided.
- Do not write outside the box around each page or on blank pages.
- If you need extra space for your answer(s), use the lined pages at the end of this book. Write the question number against your answer(s).
- Do all rough work in this book. Cross through any work you do not want to be marked.
- You must refer to the insert booklet provided.
- You must **not** use a dictionary.

### Information

- The marks for questions are shown in brackets.
- The maximum mark for this paper is 80.
- There are 40 marks for **Section A** and 40 marks for **Section B**.
- You are reminded of the need for good English and clarity of expression.
- You will be assessed on the quality of your **reading** in Section A.
- You will be assessed on the quality of your **writing** in Section B.

### Advice

- You are advised to spend about 15 minutes reading the extract and planning your answer.
- You are advised to plan your answer to **Question 5** before you start writing.
- You should make sure you leave sufficient time to check your answers.

For Examiner's Use	
Question	Mark
1	
2	
3	
4	
5	
<b>TOTAL</b>	

Do not worry about using every line for your responses. Examiners award marks for **clarity, accuracy and relevance**. Not for writing more than necessary!



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## The Question

### 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

Your school is asking students to contribute some creative writing for the monthly newsletter.

**Either:** Write a description suggested by this image.



or

Write the opening of a story about discovering an abandoned place.

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

**[40 marks]**

5



# The Question

Leaving some time to **proofread and edit** your Section B response is essential for ensuring your writing is clear and accurate.

## 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

Your school is asking students to contribute some creative writing for the monthly newsletter.

Remember to match your **tone** and **style** to the **audience** and **purpose** of the writing.

Here are some examples of briefs you may be given:

- A magazine has asked for contributions to its creative writing section
- Your local library is running a creative writing competition
- Your school or college is inviting students to contribute writing for its website

**Either:** Write a description suggested by this image.

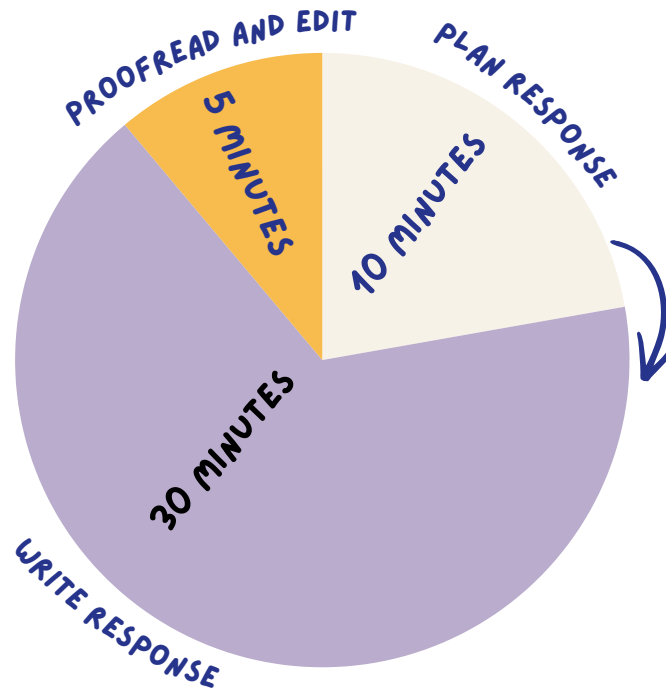
**or**

Write the opening of a story about discovering an abandoned place.

Choose whichever prompt suits your strengths. However, this doesn't mean you can't be **descriptive** in your story or include a sense of **plot** in your description.

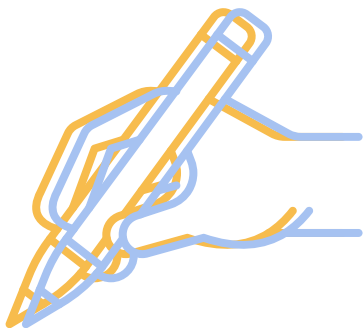


## Recommended Timings



Make sure you leave yourself around **45 minutes** for this question, as Question 5 is worth **50% of your overall mark** for Language Paper 1.

You will be given **two options** for how to structure your writing. Either:



A description suggested  
by the image



The opening of a story/ narrative



## Descriptive and Narrative Writing

Even though both options in Section B are marked using the same mark scheme, you should use the features of the specific type of writing you choose.

Below are some key features of descriptive writing and narrative writing:

### **SENSORY DETAIL**

Describe what you can hear, see, smell, touch, taste.

### **DESCRIPTIVE WRITING**

Helps the reader imagine a scene, person, or feeling.

### **MOOD**

Create a clear atmosphere (e.g. tense, calm, eerie).

### **IMAGERY**

Use comparisons (simile, metaphor, personification) to make writing vivid.

### **ADJECTIVES /ADVERBS**

Use precise vocabulary to add detail and make your description more vivid.

### **FOCUS ON EFFECT**

Describe the scene in a way that creates a clear feeling or atmosphere.

### **HOOK THE READER**

Grab their attention (e.g. mystery, action, tension).

### **NARRATIVE OPENING**

Tells the beginning of a story, introducing character, setting, or situation.

### **HINT OF CONFLICT**

Suggest a problem or tension to come.

### **SETTING**

Establish where and when the story takes place.

### **CHARACTER(S)**

Introduce a character if you choose to include one.

### **MOOD/TONE**

Create a clear atmosphere (e.g. tense, happy, unsettling).



## Planning Strategies



These simple strategies can help you **generate ideas** and plan your paragraphs for both descriptive writing and a narrative opening. You can use whatever works for you – this can be one of the approaches or a combination of them.

### THE 'TOP-DOWN' APPROACH

Look at the image from top to bottom and describe what you notice in order.

This naturally gives you a set of paragraphs e.g. sky → buildings/trees → people/objects → ground.

- 1 Pale, wintry sky → muted tones create a bleak atmosphere  
Snow-covered mountains → vast landscape emphasises isolation

2



Bright red train cuts across the landscape → striking contrast disrupts the stillness

Juxtaposition between vivid train and pale surroundings

4

Cracks in the ice → fractured patterns suggest tension and danger

Cool blue tones → reinforce the harsh, cold setting

3

Man with his dog on the ice → companionship in a desolate setting, human presence seems small and fragile.

Frozen, glass-like lake → smooth surface suggests stillness and cold



## THE 'QUESTIONING' APPROACH

**Write quick questions around the image** to spark ideas. For example, if the picture shows a person:

- **Why** are they here?
- **How** are they feeling?
- **What** happened just before this moment?
- **What** is about to happen next?

Select the most interesting or unusual ideas and use them to shape your description or narrative opening.

### WHY ARE THEY HERE?

Man lives here - he feels compelled to look out after sensing something unusual out of the window.

### WHAT HAPPENED BEFORE THIS?

A quiet evening interrupted by a sudden disturbance. Man lives alone on a street where nothing usually happens.



### HOW ARE THEY FEELING?

Tense, apprehensive, suspicious, curious.

### WHAT'S GOING TO HAPPEN NEXT?

He realises he is being watched in return. The boundary between inside and outside begins to blur.



## THE 'BOXES' APPROACH

**Draw 4-5 small boxes** around different parts of the image (foreground, background, a person, an object, a detail).

Each box can become a zoomed-in paragraph, helping you avoid vague descriptions and focus on specific, rich details. You might choose to focus on a particular part of an image, for example by zooming in on a tree in the background or the expression on someone's face.

Multicoloured hot air balloons create a striking contrast against the vast sky.

Endless clear blue sky creates a sense of tranquillity.

The distant island appears remote and unreachable. It is surrounded by the endless open water.



A narrow road carved into fragile, crumbling cliffs leads towards the lighthouse.

The lone lighthouse stands guard, watching over the still sea and horizon.



## Planning checklist

While the approaches above may help you generate creative ideas, it can be useful to make a quick plan of the **techniques/features** you want to include to help you secure marks. This can be in note form and should act as a reminder to demonstrate certain skills.

Here is an example of a checklist you may jot down during your planning time to refer back to:

- Use at least 4 different types of punctuation ! , ; ?

---
- Vary sentence length and paragraph length

---
- Include a one-sentence paragraph

---
- Use at least 2 structural features e.g. zoom in

---
- End with a rhetorical question

---
- Try and include 5 of the ambitious new words I learned

---



# AQA Mark Scheme Summary

TOP BAND

## A05 Content and Organisation

Communicate clearly, effectively and imaginatively, selecting and adapting tone, style and register for different forms, purposes and audiences.

Organise information and ideas, using structural and grammatical features to support coherence and cohesion of texts.

Level	Skills Descriptors
Level 4  19-24 marks  <b>Compelling, Convincing Communication</b>	<b>Content</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Communication is convincing and compelling</li> <li>• Tone, style and register are assuredly matched to purpose and audience</li> <li>• Extensive and ambitious vocabulary with sustained crafting of linguistic devices</li> </ul> <b>Organisation</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Varied and inventive use of structural features</li> <li>• Writing is compelling, incorporating a range of convincing and complex ideas</li> <li>• Fluently linked paragraphs with seamlessly integrated discourse markers</li> </ul>

## A06 Technical Accuracy

Students must use a range of vocabulary and sentence structures for clarity, purpose and effect, with accurate spelling and punctuation. (This requirement must constitute 20% of the marks for each specification as a whole.)

Level	Skills Descriptors
Level 4  13-16 marks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sentence demarcation is consistently secure and consistently accurate</li> <li>• Wide range of punctuation is used with a high level of accuracy</li> <li>• Uses a full range of appropriate sentence forms for effect</li> <li>• Uses Standard English consistently and appropriately with secure control of complex grammatical structures</li> <li>• High level of accuracy in spelling, including ambitious vocabulary</li> <li>• Extensive and ambitious use of vocabulary</li> </ul>



# Student-friendly Mark Scheme

TOP BAND

## A05 Content and Organisation

Write clearly, creatively, and in a way that suits the task, audience, and purpose.

Organise your ideas carefully, using paragraphs and structure to make your writing flow.

Level	Skills Descriptors
<b>Level 4</b> 19-24 marks <b>Compelling,            Convincing            Communication</b>	<p><b>Content</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Your writing is <b>clear, convincing</b> and <b>interesting</b> to read. Remember – examiners have read certain plots or endings many times before (e.g. stories about zombie apocalypses or endings where it was all a dream!)</li> <li>The <b>tone</b> and <b>style</b> match your <b>purpose</b> and <b>audience</b> really well.</li> <li>You use a <b>wide range of ambitious vocabulary</b> accurately and effective <b>language techniques</b> (e.g. personification, adjectives, sensory language)</li> </ul> <p><b>Organisation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>You use a variety of interesting <b>structural features</b> (e.g. openings, shifts, endings)</li> <li>Your <b>ideas</b> are thoughtful, engaging, and complex</li> <li>Your <b>paragraphs are accurate</b> and flow smoothly from one to the next</li> </ul>

## A06 Technical Accuracy

Use a range of vocabulary and sentence structures to make your writing clear and effective. Check your spelling, punctuation, and grammar are accurate.

Level	Skills Descriptors
<b>Level 4</b> 13-16 marks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sentences are always correctly formed and easy to read</li> <li>You use a <b>variety of punctuation types correctly</b> (e.g. commas, colons, dashes, question marks, hyphens)</li> <li>You <b>vary your sentence types accurately</b> to make your writing interesting</li> <li><b>Spelling is mostly or wholly accurate</b>, including more challenging words</li> <li>You use a wide range of <b>interesting and ambitious vocabulary</b></li> </ul>



# AQA Mark Scheme Summary

HIGH-MID  
BAND

## A05 Content and Organisation

Communicate clearly, effectively and imaginatively, selecting and adapting tone, style and register for different forms, purposes and audiences.

Organise information and ideas, using structural and grammatical features to support coherence and cohesion of texts.

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

## A06 Technical Accuracy

Students must use a range of vocabulary and sentence structures for clarity, purpose and effect, with accurate spelling and punctuation. (This requirement must constitute 20% of the marks for each specification as a whole.)

Level	Skills Descriptors
Level 3  9-12 marks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sentence demarcation is mostly secure and mostly accurate</li> <li>• Range of punctuation is used, mostly with success</li> <li>• Uses a variety of sentence forms for effect</li> <li>• Mostly uses Standard English appropriately with mostly controlled grammatical structures</li> <li>• Generally accurate spelling, including complex and irregular words</li> <li>• Increasingly sophisticated use of vocabulary</li> </ul>



# Student-friendly Mark Scheme

HIGH-MID  
BAND

## A05 Content and Organisation

Write clearly, creatively, and in a way that suits the task, audience, and purpose.

Organise your ideas carefully, using paragraphs and structure to make your writing flow.

Level	Skills Descriptors
<p><b>Level 3</b></p> <p>13-18 marks</p> <p>Consistent Clear Communication</p>	<p><b>Content</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Your <b>writing is consistently clear</b> and easy to understand</li> <li>The <b>tone</b> and <b>style</b> match your <b>purpose</b> and <b>audience</b> well.</li> <li>You use more <b>advanced vocabulary</b> and phrasing to make your writing interesting</li> <li>You include <b>language techniques</b> on purpose to have an effect</li> </ul> <p><b>Organisation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>You use <b>different structural features</b> effectively (like openings, endings, and paragraphs)</li> <li>Your writing is <b>interesting</b>, with ideas that connect clearly</li> <li><b>Paragraphs are well-organised</b> and use linking words to flow smoothly</li> </ul>

## A06 Technical Accuracy

Use a range of vocabulary and sentence structures to make your writing clear and effective.

Check your spelling, punctuation, and grammar are accurate.

Level	Skills Descriptors
<p><b>Level 3</b></p> <p>9-12 marks</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>You use a <b>range of punctuation</b>, usually correctly</li> <li><b>Most sentences are correctly formed</b> and easy to read</li> <li>You <b>try different types of sentences</b> to make your writing more interesting</li> <li><b>Spelling is generally accurate</b>, even with tricky words</li> <li>You are <b>starting</b> to use more <b>ambitious</b> and <b>interesting vocabulary</b></li> </ul>



# AQA Mark Scheme Summary

MID-LOW  
BAND

## A05 Content and Organisation

Communicate clearly, effectively and imaginatively, selecting and adapting tone, style and register for different forms, purposes and audiences.

Organise information and ideas, using structural and grammatical features to support coherence and cohesion of texts.

Level	Skills Descriptors
Level 2  7-12 marks  <b>Some successful Communication</b>	<p><b>Content</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Communicates with some sustained success</li> <li>• Some sustained attempt to match tone, style and register to purpose and audience</li> <li>• Conscious use of vocabulary with some use of linguistic devices</li> </ul> <p><b>Organisation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Some use of structural features</li> <li>• Increasing variety of linked and relevant ideas</li> <li>• Some use of paragraphs and some use of discourse markers</li> </ul>

## A06 Technical Accuracy

Students must use a range of vocabulary and sentence structures for clarity, purpose and effect, with accurate spelling and punctuation. (This requirement must constitute 20% of the marks for each specification as a whole.)

Level	Skills Descriptors
Level 2  5-8 marks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sentence demarcation is mostly secure and sometimes accurate</li> <li>• Some control of a range of punctuation</li> <li>• Attempts a variety of sentence forms</li> <li>• Some use of Standard English with some control of agreement</li> <li>• Some accurate spelling of more complex words</li> <li>• Varied use of vocabulary</li> </ul>



## Student-friendly Mark scheme

### A05 Content and Organisation

Write clearly, creatively, and in a way that suits the task, audience, and purpose.

Organise your ideas carefully, using paragraphs and structure to make your writing flow.

Level	Skills Descriptors
<b>Level 2</b>  7-12 marks  Some successful Communicat ion	<b>Content</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Writing is <b>generally clear</b> and <b>mostly effective</b></li> <li>• Some <b>awareness of tone and style</b> to suit the task</li> <li>• Uses some varied vocabulary and language devices</li> </ul> <b>Organisation</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Some use of <b>structural features</b></li> <li>• <b>Ideas are linked</b> and becoming more developed</li> <li>• <b>Uses paragraphs</b>, with some <b>attempt</b> at linking ideas</li> </ul>

### A06 Technical Accuracy

Use a range of vocabulary and sentence structures to make your writing clear and effective.

Check your spelling, punctuation, and grammar are accurate.

Level	Skills Descriptors
<b>Level 2</b>  5-8 marks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• You use a <b>range of punctuation, usually correctly</b></li> <li>• <b>Most sentences are correctly formed</b> and easy to read</li> <li>• You <b>try different types of sentences</b> to make your writing more interesting</li> <li>• <b>Spelling is generally accurate</b>, even with tricky words</li> <li>• You are <b>starting</b> to use more <b>interesting vocabulary</b>, most of your vocabulary is simple</li> </ul>



## Summary of Assessment Objectives (AOs)

### A05 - Content and organisation (24 marks)

A05 is about **what** you say and how well your piece is built. It rewards writing that:

- Develops ideas purposefully (a clear atmosphere, character, or moment).
- Is **organised logically**, with smooth flow and well-managed paragraphs.
- Has a **controlled** opening, development, and ending.
- Feels **deliberately crafted**, with a consistent tone, use of structural features and a strong sense of direction throughout.

**A05 is WHAT you write and how engaging it is.**

### A06 - Technical accuracy (16 marks)

A06 is about **how** correctly and clearly you write. It focuses on:

- Spelling, punctuation and grammar (**SPaG**)
- Sentence structure and variation
- Accuracy and clarity
- Paragraphing

**A06 is HOW accurately and clearly you write it.**

You don't need to write pages. Having a few **well-developed & detailed** paragraphs is better than pages of disconnected ideas.

Avoid writing lots of lengthy **dialogue** in your writing. If you decide to include it, keep it brief.

## TOP TIPS

**Variation** is key! Vary your paragraph lengths, sentence lengths and sentence types.

The picture is there to give you an idea, but you don't need to describe everything in it. Use it as a **starting point for your imagination!**



## Guide to using paragraphs

Paragraphs help you control **focus**, **atmosphere**, and **pacing**. Most should be around 4–7 sentences but it's important to vary your paragraph lengths to create effect.

Start a new paragraph when your focus shifts – think of it like a camera moving to a new shot. The **TIPTOP** acronym is a useful reminder of when to begin a new paragraph:

### WHEN TO START A NEW PARAGRAPH

#### TIME

When the timing shifts. For example, moving to a different day, season, or moment, or jumping forwards/backwards in time.

#### PLACE

When the setting changes, or even when the focus moves to a different part of the same setting.

#### TOPIC

If you're making a new point, introducing a new argument, or changing viewpoint, start a new paragraph.

#### PERSON

When the focus moves to a different character, or someone new starts speaking.

#### AO6 Technical Accuracy

<p>Lower Level 1</p> <p>1-3 marks</p> <p><b>Simple, Limited Communication</b></p>	<p><b>Content</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Limited communication</li> <li>Occasional sense of matching tone, style and register to purpose and audience</li> <li>Simple vocabulary</li> </ul> <p><b>Organisation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Limited or no evidence of structural features</li> <li>One or two unlinked ideas</li> <li>No paragraphs</li> </ul>
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**Not using any paragraphs will limit your mark for AO6 to a maximum of 3 marks.**



## Writing a Description



Write a description suggested by this image.

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

**[40 marks]**

You **do not need to describe every detail in the image** – it is there to provide ideas and inspiration.

Use it as a **starting point** to create a vivid description and approach it in a way that suits you, for example, zooming in on a particular part of the image (like the 'boxes' approach).

The example paragraph below would achieve marks in the **top band** (Level 4 on the mark schemes) if it had more paragraphs of a similar quality:

### TOP BAND RESPONSE

Perched on the crest of the hill, the lighthouse stood alone, as though the world had forgotten it. It faced the wind without resistance; its stone walls worn smooth by years of quiet endurance. The ground below was lifeless, a brittle spread of brown grass, thin and fragile, broken only by stubborn traces of melting snow. The air carried a sharp chill, stinging the skin, while the scent of damp earth lingered, thick and oppressive. Above, the sky hung pale and endless, draining colour from everything below, as if the landscape itself were slowly fading. How long had it stood there, unseen?





## WHY THIS IS TOP BAND IN A05 AND A06

### A05 (Content & Organisation)

- Sustained atmosphere of isolation and bleakness
- Communication is clear and engaging throughout
- Sophisticated use of language devices ("**stone walls worn smooth by years of quiet endurance**")
- Precise, crafted description ("**brittle spread of brown grass**")
- Varied sentence lengths used deliberately to shape pace and emphasis

### A06 (Technical Accuracy)

- Varied sentence structures (simple + complex)
- Secure, deliberate punctuation (e.g. semicolon, commas)
- Precise, high-level vocabulary ("**perched**", "**endurance**", "**oppressive**")
- Consistently accurate spelling and grammar

The example paragraph below would achieve marks in the **low-mid band** (Level 2 in the mark schemes) if it had more paragraphs of a similar quality:

#### MID-TOP BAND RESPONSE

I slowly made my way up the hill towards the house, not really sure why I had come. It stood at the top and its windows were dark and unwelcoming. The wind moved around me and the trees rustled softly. My footsteps crunched against the frozen ground. The air felt cold on my skin. The closer I got, the more uneasy I felt, as if something wasn't quite right. For a moment I thought about turning back, but I decided to keep going.





## WHY THIS IS MID-LOW BAND IN A05 AND A06

### A05 (Content & Organisation)

- Writing is clear but not complex or sophisticated
- Some awareness of tone and style (cold, lifeless setting)
- Some use of imagery and language techniques including sensory language (“**as if the place had been forgotten**”)
- Ideas are linked and relevant
- Some use of structure (ideas move clearly through the setting)

### A06 (Technical Accuracy)

- Sentences are mostly clear and correctly punctuated
- Punctuation used accurately but without much variation (commas, full stops)
- Some variety in sentence types
- Some varied vocabulary used appropriately
- Spelling and grammar mostly accurate (misspelling of “**forgoten**”)

<b>Level 2</b>  7-12 marks  Some successful Communicat ion	<p><b>Content</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Writing is <b>generally clear</b> and <b>mostly effective</b></li> <li>• Some <b>awareness of tone and style</b> to suit the task</li> <li>• Uses some varied vocabulary and language devices</li> </ul> <p><b>Organisation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Some use of <b>structural features</b></li> <li>• <b>Ideas are linked</b> and becoming more developed</li> <li>• <b>Uses paragraphs</b>, with some <b>attempt</b> at linking ideas</li> </ul>
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### TOP TIP:

Remember to use the techniques you explored in **Section A** to **inspire** your own writing.

You have already analysed writer’s methods in Questions 2–4 – now **apply** them in your response.

(Without directly copying ideas or sentences from the insert of course!)



## Writing a Narrative Opening



### STORYTELLING

Write the opening of a story about [...]

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

**[40 marks]**

This question asks you to write a **narrative opening** of a story. For example, the prompt might be about 'discovering an abandoned place' or 'a human meeting an animal'.

The question states, '**You may choose to use the picture provided for ideas**', which means using the image isn't essential. You are encouraged to **use your imagination** and develop your own ideas when answering this question.

### MID BAND RESPONSE

I shouldn't have gone up to the house. Even now, I can still remember the way the wind howled around it, as though it were urging me to turn back. Goosebumps prickled along my arms as a deep, unrelenting sense of dread took hold. Perched at the crest of the hill, silent and unmoving, the house seemed to watch me. The closer I got, the quieter everything became – no birds, no movement, only the hollow crunch of my footsteps against the frozen ground. Something about it felt wrong; not obvious, not explainable, just something deeply, unmistakably wrong, something almost sinister. By then, it was already too late to leave. Ignoring the instinct that screamed at me to run, I continued forward, drawn in despite myself.

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## WHY THIS IS TOP BAND IN A05 AND A06

### A05 (Content & Organisation)

- Communication is convincing and compelling throughout
- Tone and style are assuredly matched to purpose (tense, foreboding narrative voice)
- Sustained crafting of linguistic devices ("**the house seemed to watch me**", "**something deeply, unmistakably wrong**")
- Ambitious and precise vocabulary ("**unrelenting sense of dread**", "**perched at the crest**")
- Varied and deliberate structural control (clear progression towards tension and inevitability)
- Fluently linked ideas creating a cohesive and engaging narrative

### A06 (Technical Accuracy)

- Wide range of sentence structures used for effect (short opening, developed complex sentences)
- Secure and deliberate punctuation (e.g. semicolon, dash)
- Increasingly sophisticated vocabulary used accurately ("**unrelenting**", "**sinister**", "**hollow crunch**")
- Controlled and accurate spelling, punctuation and grammar throughout

#### MID BAND RESPONSE

I slowly made my way up the hill towards the house, unsure of why I had come in the first place. It stood quietly at the top, its windows dark and unwelcoming. The wind moved around me, making the trees rustle softly, while the sound of my footsteps echoed against the frozen ground. The closer I got, the more uneasy I began to feel, as if something wasn't quite right. For a moment, I thought about turning back, but instead, I carried on.





## WHY THIS IS MID-LOW BAND IN A05 AND A06

### A05 (Content & Organisation)

- Writing is generally clear and mostly effective in describing the setting
- Some awareness of tone (uneasy, slightly tense atmosphere)
- Some use of simple imagery (“**windows were dark and unwelcoming**”, “**footsteps crunched**”)
- Ideas are linked and show some development (movement up the hill towards the house)
- Some use of structure (clear but simple progression through the scene)

### A06 (Technical Accuracy)

- Most sentences are clear and easy to read
- A range of punctuation is used, usually correctly (commas, full stops)
- Some variety in sentence types (short and longer sentences)
- Spelling is generally accurate, with occasional errors (“**decided**”)
- Vocabulary is mostly simple with some attempts to be more interesting (“**uneasy**”, “**unwelcoming**”)

## COMMON MISTAKES TO AVOID

**Don't memorise a response** before the exam and try to force it into the task. Your response should be shaped by the question you're given, not adapted from something pre-prepared.

Don't let your writing become a series of random ideas. Make sure it has a **clear structure**, with a beginning, middle, and end, so **your ideas develop and flow logically**.





# Proofreading

Take around **5 minutes** at the end to **check** and **improve** your writing. This is your chance to correct errors, refine your ideas, and push your response into a higher band (particularly for AO6).

If you created a quick checklist of features or techniques before writing, make sure you refer back to it.

## PARAGRAPHS

- Each **paragraph** has a clear focus or main idea
- **Ideas flow** logically from one paragraph to the next (TIPTOP)
- **Linking words** are used to guide the reader

## LANGUAGE & VOCABULARY

- Vocabulary is precise and appropriate to the task
- **Language devices** are used deliberately to create effect
- Repetition is avoided unless used for emphasis

## SENTENCES & PUNCTUATION

- **Sentence lengths** are varied (short for impact, longer for detail)
- **A range of punctuation** is used accurately (e.g. commas, colons, semicolons, hyphens)
- Sentences are **clear** and easy to read

## SPELLING & GRAMMAR

- Standard English is used consistently
- **Tense** is controlled and consistent throughout
- **Spelling is accurate**, especially for common and key words

### TOP TIP:







Read regularly to improve your writing. Exposure to different types of texts (e.g. stories, articles, descriptions) helps you build vocabulary and understand what makes writing effective.

- Use at least 4 different types of punctuation !, ; ?
- Vary sentence length and paragraph length
- Include a one-sentence paragraph
- Use at least 2 structural features e.g. zoom in
- End with a rhetorical question
- Try and include 5 of the ambitious new words I learned



## Section B Summary

QUESTION	FOCUS	AO + MARKS	TO DO
<p align="center"><b>5</b> <b>DESCRIPTION</b></p> 	 <p align="center"><b>DESCRIBING</b></p>	<p align="center"><b>A05</b> <b>[24 marks]</b></p>	<p><b>Content</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Craft your writing to be <b>convincing and compelling</b></li> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Match <b>tone, style, and register</b> to <b>purpose</b> and <b>audience</b></li> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Use <b>ambitious</b> and <b>varied vocabulary</b></li> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Use various <b>language techniques</b></li> </ul> <p><b>Organisation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Use a variety of <b>structural features</b></li> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Include a <b>range of convincing and complex ideas</b></li> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <b>Link paragraphs fluently</b></li> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Use <b>connectives seamlessly</b></li> </ul>
<p align="center"><b>OR</b></p> <p align="center"><b>5</b> <b>NARRATIVE OPENING</b></p> 	 <p align="center"><b>STORYTELLING</b></p>	<p align="center"><b>A06</b> <b>[16 marks]</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Use <b>full stops, commas,</b> and <b>capital letters correctly</b> consistently</li> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Use a <b>range of punctuation</b> accurately</li> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <b>Vary your sentence types</b> to make your writing effective</li> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Use <b>Standard English</b> throughout your writing</li> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Keep your <b>grammar clear and controlled</b>, even in longer sentences</li> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Check your <b>spelling</b> carefully, especially trickier words</li> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Use <b>ambitious vocabulary</b> where it is appropriate and relevant</li> </ul>

