

# GCSE English Language: Virtual Communities

Spring 2023



## Welcome

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## Overview

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- Criteria for AO2 language
- Teaching selection of language examples
- Activities to encourage analysis

## AO2

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AO2: Explain, comment on and analyse how writers' use language and structure to achieve effects and influence readers, using relevant subject terminology to support their views.

### Skills

- Selection
- Understanding the impact
- Critical analysis

## June 2022 mean marks

PAPER 1 Section	Question	AO	Max. mark	2019	2022	+/-
A Reading	1	AO1	4	3.04	3.83	-0.11
	2	AO2	8	3.75	3.73	-0.02
	3	AO2	8	3.26	3.26	=
	4	AO4	20	9.74	9.52	-0.22

PAPER 2 Section	Question	AO	Max. mark	2019	2022	+/-
A Reading	1	AO1	4	3.53	3.75	+0.22
	2	AO1	8	3.78	3.60	-0.18
	3	AO2	12	6.32	5.73	-0.58
	4	AO3	16	6.77	6.88	+0.11

## Findings from the June 2022 exams

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Where students did less well:

- **Selecting appropriate language examples** Students find it difficult to comment on examples they don't really understand or are unable to make the links between.
- concentrating on why the language feature selected is effective **rather than making inferences**.
- maintaining focus on the effect of language **not making generalised comments**

## Discussion point

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What methods do you use to teach language selection and analysis with your students?

## Building confidence

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1. Analysis over inference – what is the difference?
2. Restricted signification
3. Figurative use of language
4. Specific selection of words
5. Cumulative effect / impact
6. Ideas before methods
7. Big idea planning



# 1. Analysis over inference

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## Analysis over inference

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- Students need to concentrate on why the language feature selected is effective **rather than making inferences**.
- Think of inference as ‘prediction’ and analysis as the ‘why’.
- Inference questions will focus on what can be understood or predicted by something. For example, what do we learn about x from this description? The skills in this type of question will be selection of evidence and comment on what is ‘learnt’.
- Analysis questions will focus on ‘how’ and ‘why’ a writer has chosen specific language choices. For example, how does the writer create a sense of x in this extract? These are language focused questions and require students to consider the impact of writers’ choices.

## 2. Restricted signification

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## Restricted signification

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- “a flare of agony”
- This quotation was a popular selection by students in the November 2020 GCSE English Language paper 2 exam.
- Many students commented on either ‘flare’ or ‘agony’.
- However, analysis of the word ‘flare’ produced more successful responses.
- Why should this be so?

## Polysemy v monosemy

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- **Polysemy:** these are words with a variety of meanings. By choosing these words, students will be able to elaborate and therefore analyse in more detail/offer more perceptive responses.
- **Monosemy:** these are words which have a restricted meaning. These words offer less scope for interpretation.
- For example, with 'agony', students tended towards synonymising (the word 'agony' shows that he is in pain)

## The 'drop-down menu' of signification

flare [noun] ▲

Option 1

a sudden brief burst of bright flame or light

Option 2

a device producing a very bright flame, used especially as a signal or marker.

Option 3

a sudden burst of intense emotion.

flare [verb] ▲

Option 1

burn or shine with a sudden intensity.

Option 2

suddenly become intense or violent.

Option 3

suddenly become angry.

agony [noun] ▲

Option 1

extreme physical or mental suffering.

## Which of these responses are clear comments on the effects of language?

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### From GCSE English Language paper 2, November 2020

1. The writer uses emotive language to show how he feels. He says that 'a wave of nausea and pain 'swept' over me'. The verb swept emphasises how he became nauseous and how bad the pain was.
2. The writer uses metaphors to infer how much pain he is in as a 'wave of nausea' hits him. The reader envisages a wave in the sea crashing over his head.
3. The writer refers to a 'flare of agony'. The noun 'agony' suggests that he is feeling a great deal of pain.

## Bringing it all together: showing your 'working out'

The writer refers to a 'flare of agony'.

The noun 'agony' suggests that he is feeling a great deal of pain.

Level 2

A – selection of detail

B – 'working out'

C – comments on/analysis of effect

The writer refers to a 'flare of agony' when describing the pain in his leg.

We associate a flare with a sudden flash of light, creating an intense emotion.

The use of the noun 'flare' therefore suggests that the pain is sudden, like an explosion of agony.

Level 3



### 3. Figurative use of language

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## How does the writer use language to create a dramatic mood?

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I was answered through the stillness of night by a loud and fiendish laugh. It rang on my ears long and heavily; the mountains re-echoed it, and I felt as if all hell surrounded me with mockery and laughter. Surely in that moment I should have been possessed by frenzy and have destroyed my miserable existence but that my vow was heard and that I was reserved for vengeance. The laughter died away, when a well-known and abhorred voice, apparently close to my ear, addressed me in an audible whisper, "I am satisfied, miserable wretch! You have determined to live, and I am satisfied."

I darted towards the spot from which the sound proceeded, but the devil eluded my grasp. Suddenly the broad disk of the moon arose and shone full upon his ghastly and distorted shape as he fled with more than mortal speed.

## Activity

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“a loud and fiendish laugh”

Loud	Fiendish	Laugh

## Activity

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### **Just because it's figurative...**

- hell surrounded me
- possessed by frenzy
- the broad disk of the moon arose

## Is there a hierarchy of selection?

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- *Verbs* [eg, darted; surrounded; heard; died; arose; shone; fled]
- *Adjectives* [eg, abhorred; miserable; broad; ghastly; distorted; mortal]
- *Nouns* [eg, hell; mockery; shape laughter; wretch; disk]
- *Adverbs* [eg, suddenly; heavily; away]
- *Prepositions* [eg, through; upon; towards; to; from]
- *Pronouns* ...

## Semantic fields ...

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### ***movement***

- stillness
- darted towards
- proceeded
- eluded
- arose
- fled
- speed

### ***sound***

- loud
- laugh\laughter
- rang
- ears/ear
- re-echoed
- heard
- voice
- whisper

## A check-list for selecting textual detail

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- Does the word have more than one meaning? [*possessed*]
- Does the word convey a particular mood that resonates with the whole of the text? [*hell, devil*]
- Does the word have figurative/symbolic significance? [*fiendish*]
- Does the word form part of a pairing which enhances each word's significance? [*ghastly and distorted*]
- Does the word have any ironic weighting? [*mortal, wretch*]

## 4. Specific selection of words

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## Specific selection of words

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Consider the following sentence from a description of a decaying house.  
Which word has the most effect?

‘Grim paint was peeling off like skin burnt by the sun, **sick** black paint leaving a yellowy white wound beneath.’

**Would students select this word to discuss?**

- It’s a short word
- Everyone knows what ‘sick’ means
- But what if it wasn’t there?

## Specific selection of words

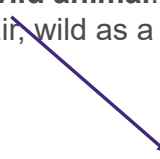
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- Students need to first get an 'idea' – then search for the right quotation.
- Question: How does the writer use language to present Bertha in this extract?
  - 'Wild'
  - Animal-like
  - Uncontrolled
  - Dangerous
  - Inhuman

## Specific selection of words

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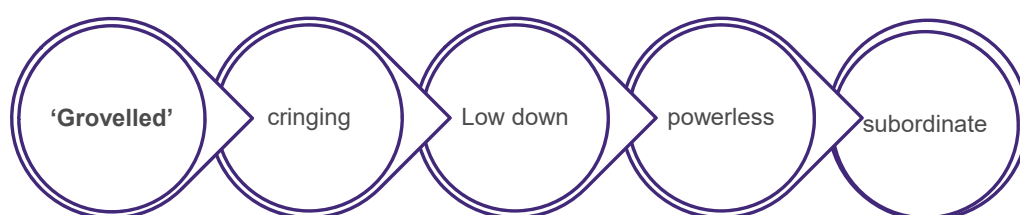
‘In the deep shade, at the farther end of the room, a figure ran backwards and forwards. What it was, whether beast or human being, one could not, at first sight, tell: **grovelled** seemingly, on all fours; it snatched and growled like **some strange wild animal**: but it was covered with clothing, and a quantity of dark, grizzled hair, wild as a mane, hid its head and face.’



This would be an obvious choice for many students.

- It's a simile.
- It clearly compares to an 'animal', a 'wild animal' more specifically.
- There are some connotations to be made about being 'wild'.
- But what else?

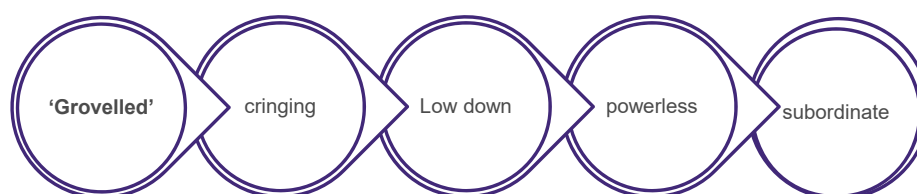
## Connotation chains



Once students have selected a word, create a connotation chain.

The first link is a connotation of the word 'grovelled' taken from the text; the second link is a connotation of the word 'cringing' – a connotation of 'grovelled' – the chain then continues in this way, building on the word originally selected.

## Connotation chains – writing it up



The narrator describes how Bertha 'grovelled' in an animal-like position. The writer's use of 'grovelled' suggests a **cringing**, cowering movement, as if she is in fear of those around her. Furthermore, 'grovelled' creates the impression that she is **low down** in comparison to the others in the room, literally and metaphorically. She is therefore depicted as **powerless** and **subordinate** to Rochester and the others, perhaps vulnerable here, creating empathy for her character because of her position in life is lesser than or in fear of those around her.

## Connotation chains – writing it up

**Level 2:** The narrator describes how Bertha ‘grovelled’ in an animal-like position. The writer’s use of ‘grovelled’ suggests a cringing movement.

**Level 3:** The narrator describes how Bertha ‘grovelled’ in an animal-like position. The writer’s use of ‘grovelled’ suggests a cringing movement, as if she is in fear of those around her. Furthermore, ‘grovelled’ creates the impression that she is low down in comparison to the others in the room, literally and metaphorically.

**Level 4:** The narrator describes how Bertha ‘grovelled’ in an animal-like position. The writer’s use of ‘grovelled’ suggests a **cringing**, cowering movement, as if she is in fear of those around her. Furthermore, ‘grovelled’ creates the impression that she is **low down** in comparison to the others in the room, literally and metaphorically. She is therefore depicted as **powerless** and **subordinate** to Rochester and the others, perhaps vulnerable here, creating empathy for her character because of her position in life is lesser than or in fear of those around her.

## 5. Cumulative effect

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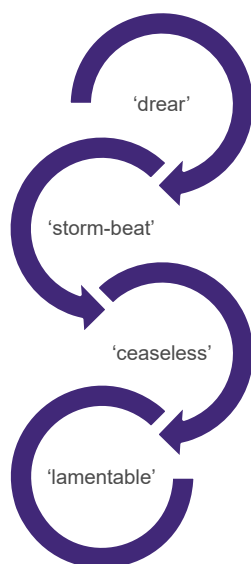
## 5. Cumulative Effect

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Folds of scarlet drapery shut in my view to the right hand; to the left were the clear panes of glass, protecting, but not separating me from the **drear** November day. At intervals, while turning over the leaves of my book, I studied the aspect of that winter afternoon. Afar, it offered a **pale** blank of mist and cloud; near a scene of wet lawn and **storm-beat** shrub, with **ceaseless** rain sweeping away wildly before a long and **lamentable** blast.



## Cumulative Effect



- Consider the build up or cumulative effect of selection of words – in this case adjectives.
- Do they increase in intensity – why? What is the impact?
- Encourage students to discuss as a group, and then focus on one.
- Use transitional phrase: 'Specifically, the use of ...'

## Summary

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- Students often select textual detail that comes very early in the source. However, these might not always be the most profitable so encourage students to think about the whole of the section identified for the language question.
- Inference v analysis: remember, it is the 'why' and the 'how' that are important. Avoid textual detail that leads to synonymizing or inferential comment.
- There is no 'hierarchy'. Select words that have wider connotations, are richer in meaning and can be connected to the significance of the text.
- Encourage the selection of textual detail that conveys a powerful image or a particular mood. Words used figuratively offer more opportunities for analysis.

## And finally ...

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There is no such thing as level 1, 2, 3, 4 textual detail ...

... but some textual detail is more equal than others!

Any questions?

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## Resources

Take advantage of our extra resources on the subject page.

## GCSE English Language

8700

Find all the information, support and resources you need to deliver our specification.

**Teaching from:** September 2015

**Exams from:** June 2017

**QAN code:** 601/4292/3



### Specification

### Planning resources

### Teaching resources

### Assessment resources

### Key dates

## Event materials

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The content of this training course contains no references to future exam content as far as we know at the time of production.

The electronic materials from this event will be available to download shortly. If you aren't able to download them at this time, they will be made available to you in the customer portal of our online booking system.

Once we receive notification that you have attended the course, you will be sent a certificate of attendance email. When you receive the email, please log in to your account and the materials will be available on the 'my resources' tab on the welcome screen.

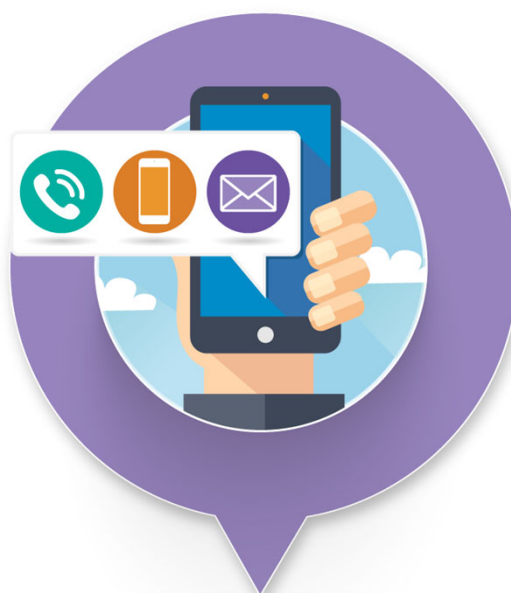
## Get in touch

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Our friendly team will be happy to support you between 8am and 5pm, Monday to Friday.

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# Thank you

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