

GCSE ENGLISH LANGUAGE

Virtual communities

Resource booklet

Published: Spring 2022



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Activity one

Writing mark schemes

Paper 1 and Paper 2

What are the strengths and drawbacks of a generic writing mark scheme?

AO5 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 Compelling, Convincing Communication	Upper Level 4 22–24 marks	Content <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Communication is convincing and compelling• Tone, style and register are assuredly matched to purpose and audience• Extensive and ambitious vocabulary with sustained crafting of linguistic devices Organisation <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Varied and inventive use of structural features• Writing is compelling, incorporating a range of convincing and complex ideas• Fluently linked paragraphs with seamlessly integrated discourse markers
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

	<p>Lower Level 3</p> <p>13–15 marks</p>	<p>Content</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication is generally clear • Tone, style and register are generally matched to purpose and audience • Vocabulary clearly chosen for effect and appropriate use of linguistic devices <p>Organisation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Usually effective use of structural features • Writing is engaging, with a range of connected ideas • Usually coherent paragraphs with range of discourse markers
<p>Level 2</p> <p>7–12 marks</p> <p>Some successful Communication</p>	<p>Upper Level 2</p> <p>10–12 marks</p>	<p>Content</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communicates with some sustained success • Some sustained attempt to match tone, style and register to purpose and audience • Conscious use of vocabulary with some use of linguistic devices <p>Organisation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some use of structural features • Increasing variety of linked and relevant ideas • Some use of paragraphs and some use of discourse markers
	<p>Lower Level 2</p> <p>7–9 marks</p>	<p>Content</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communicates with some success • Attempts to match tone, style and register to purpose and audience • Begins to vary vocabulary with some use of linguistic devices <p>Organisation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attempts to use structural features • Some linked and relevant ideas • Attempt to write in paragraphs with some discourse markers, not always appropriate

<p>Level 1</p> <p>1–6 marks</p> <p>Simple, Limited Communication</p>	<p>Upper Level 1</p> <p>4–6 marks</p>	<p>Content</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communicates simply • Simple awareness of matching tone, style and register to purpose and audience • Simple vocabulary; simple linguistic devices <p>Organisation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evidence of simple structural features • One or two relevant ideas, simply linked • Random paragraph structure
	<p>Lower Level 1</p> <p>1–3 marks</p>	<p>Content</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited communication • Occasional sense of matching tone, style and register to purpose and audience • Simple vocabulary <p>Organisation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited or no evidence of structural features • One or two unlinked ideas • No paragraphs
<p>Level 0</p> <p>No marks</p>	<p>Students will not have offered any meaningful writing to assess. Nothing to reward.</p>	

AO6 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">• Sentence demarcation is consistently secure and consistently accurate• Wide range of punctuation is used with a high level of accuracy• Uses a full range of appropriate sentence forms for effect• Uses Standard English consistently and appropriately with secure control of complex grammatical structures• High level of accuracy in spelling, including ambitious vocabulary• Extensive and ambitious use of vocabulary
Level 3 9–12 marks	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Sentence demarcation is mostly secure and mostly accurate• Range of punctuation is used, mostly with success• Uses a variety of sentence forms for effect• Mostly uses Standard English appropriately with mostly controlled grammatical structures• Generally accurate spelling, including complex and irregular words• Increasingly sophisticated use of vocabulary
Level 2 5–8 marks	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Sentence demarcation is mostly secure and sometimes accurate• Some control of a range of punctuation• Attempts a variety of sentence forms• Some use of Standard English with some control of agreement• Some accurate spelling of more complex words• Varied use of vocabulary
Level 1 1–4 marks	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Occasional use of sentence demarcation• Some evidence of conscious punctuation• Simple range of sentence forms• Occasional use of Standard English with limited control of agreement• Accurate basic spelling• Simple use of vocabulary
Level 0 No marks	Students' spelling, punctuation etc is sufficiently poor to prevent understanding or meaning.

Activity two

Look at the typical features grids for Paper 1 below.

How might these grids help with:

- diagnosing students' writing skills
- curriculum development?

Paper 1 Question 5: Typical features grids

	Narrative writing	Descriptive writing
Level 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Distinctive narrative voice • Convincing character(s) • Detailed setting • Judicious control of pace • Temporal/spatial shifts used for imaginative effect • Subtle shifts in mood • Imaginative sequence of events • Dialogue enhances characterisation • Convincing conclusion 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Original imagery • Highly evocative description • Impressive vocabulary and phrasing • Broad, conceptualised ideas • Subtle detail • Fluid sequence of images/ideas • Creates compelling atmosphere • Crafted style
Level 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clear narrative voice • Develops character(s) • Establishes setting • Controls pace of narrative • Creates specific mood • Uses temporal and spatial shifts • Plausible dialogue • Effective ending 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Effective imagery • Credible description • Vocabulary used precisely • Range of elements described • Develops concrete/abstract ideas • Shaped sequence of images/ideas • Creates specific atmosphere • Controlled style

	Narrative writing	Descriptive writing
Level 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emerging narrative voice • One dimensional character(s) • Occasional sense of place • Some implausible events • Some narrative control • Mainly chronological structure • Some use of dialogue • Contrived or abrupt ending 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contrived imagery • Description implausible in places • Ambitious vocabulary used imprecisely • Mostly concrete ideas (+5 senses) • Some clumsy linguistic devices • Some sequence of images/ideas • Emerging sense of atmosphere • Overly narrative or informative • Formulaic or literal style
Level 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Simple narrative voice • Basic character(s) • Limited awareness of setting • Simple series of events • Basic plotline • Few narrative features eg dialogue • Limited scope/control 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clichéd imagery • Generic descriptions • Limited focus on describing • Limited scope/ideas • Occasional use of adjectives • Loose sequence of ideas • Unrelated details • Lacks atmosphere • Limited awareness of style

Activity three: Narrative writing

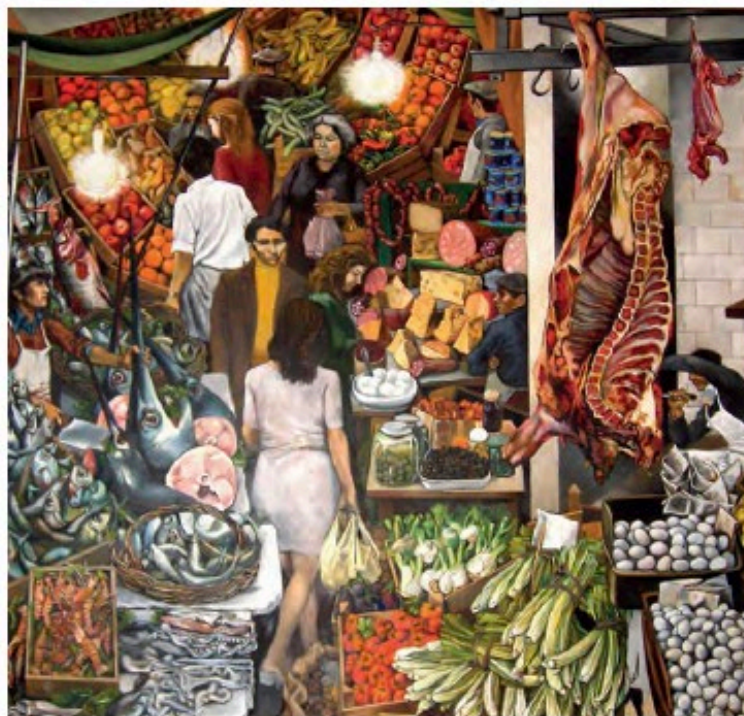
Q5, Paper 1, June 2019

0 5

Your school or college is asking students to contribute some creative writing for its website.

Either

Describe a market place as suggested by this picture:



Gianni Muratore/Alamy Stock Photo

or

Write a story with the title 'Abandoned'.

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

Activity

- Where would you place this response on the typical features table?
- Using descriptors from the table, what advice would you give to this student to improve their work?

Student A

Abandoned

One cold, lonely night, me and my friends were strolling through a silent town on a winters day. We was laughing, playing and running around. There was not a single soul apart from us three around. We all decided to go and get food. On our way to the food shop, a dark mysterious shadow appears fadedly behind us. We begin to walk faster, but as we did we could hear loud footsteps becoming increasingly faster and closer.

As we are all running, my friends took a different turn to me. This was it. I had no idea where to go or what to do. I ran and ran and ran, until my whole body began to ache and tremble with fear. I came to a realisation that I had been abandoned. Suddenly, the figure became clear and it was a large, tall man, covered in black clothes. He was carrying a silver bat.

I knew it was all over for me!

Luckily, as I was running, I found a small open container in the distance. Viciously, I plunged myself into this compacted container and desperately tried to fit into it.

“I know you’re there!” shouted the blood-thirsty man.

Silence then filled the air.

Furiously he said, “You won’t see another sunny day young lady.”

I tightly grapped my mouth hoping that I do not make a single sound. After an hour had passed by, I was almost certain that the barbarous man was gone.

I knew I had to take this chance. Quickly, I thundered out of the small container and raced as fast as I could to my apartment. Thankfully, my key opened my door quicker than a second.

I paused and a sigh of relief filled my body as I was so amazed to have made it back home safely.

Activity four: Descriptive writing

Q5, Paper 1, June 2019

0 5

Your school or college is asking students to contribute some creative writing for its website.

Either

Describe a market place as suggested by this picture:



Gianni Muratore/Alamy Stock Photo

or

Write a story with the title 'Abandoned'.

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

Activity

- Look again at the 'typical features' table.
- Rank order responses B and C using the descriptors in the table.

Student B

Wow, what a variety of fresh, savery, sweet produce to choose from this look mesmerising. With the array of colours beeming from large hand crafted wovern baskets, what is the dream. The spaces between sections to rome freely at your own pace. What more could you want specially when its in a exotic country.

As I enter this world wind store allocated on a little back street my mouth begins to water like the ocean coming up the beach. The taste is fabulous before its even entered my mouth must be a dream. The aroma around this place is yet fruity with a hint of salt, just like walking down Brighton pier. I don't know what to touch it all looks so good from the smallest grape to the largest joint of meat hanging down on a rusty peg although not a fly in sight, the meat was sat there like the animal had just been killed.

As I continue to walk around the market to decide what to get all I can here food chat the words lovely, exotic, wow being spoken by everyone. I walk around the corner and you'd never seen something so special, field after field where you can pick your own produce with small trees set out in organised rows of every type of berry you will ever need.

But not to decide what to get however everything just looks so perfect like it was a painting not a foot out of place. I eventually decided after walking round for a long time I went for a slice of the fresh cooked ham and some overly sweet oranges and a very hairy bright kiwi fruit that I just wanted to eat.

Overall a very successful day this market is so good and with a huge varity of products why not. Even the location was nice their was not a horrible person in site and every item in the market was vibrant and perfectly shaped.

Student C

The rainbow of fruit and vegetables sat at one side of the market accompanied by dull grey table of strongly smelling fish that peered up blindly at the customers, staring at you with lifeless eyes accompanied by red shrimp and grey sardines either side. The soft breeze of the wind caused the fruity smell to drift around the market, fighting with the smell of oranges and apples and pears and old cheeses. The slight chitter chatter of people waiting for the red meat they had bought to be sliced so they could take it away for their Sunday roast.

A yellow and red table filled to the brim with various cheeses from all over the country. A silent man waiting for his next customer. The clang of a cash register followed by the clink of a knife slicing through a juicy piece of pork and hitting the wooden chopping board.

Now a lady in white weaves her way through the tables packed with fish, fruit, eggs as if she was moving through a maze, with the rustling of the green plastic bag by her side. Filled with all sorts of varieties of groceries. The sounds of passers by filled the air and was joined by a conversation between two shoppers asking each other which apple was the ripest and which was not. Red meat hanging in rows waiting to be bought. The woman in white stops and points at the meat and asks the old man behind the counter how much. He smiles and hands her the joint of meat, she hands him some money. He watches her as she walks away, leaving the noises and smells of the market behind for another day.

Activity five: Descriptive writing

Using pace

Activity

- Consider how this response from Student D uses pace to create atmosphere.
- Refer to the 'typical features' grid and comment on the effectiveness of the response using the relevant descriptors.

Student D

Amongst narrow streets nestled between ancient stone walls, the market place sprawled outward from the city centre, the hordes of people rising and swelling rhythmically like the blood through a choked artery. Indeed, this was the beating heart of the city, grown fat from many years of sloth and glut.

The chatter of thousands wafted through the heavy air, which rose like a rich vapour around the lights that sprawled across many stalls. Side alleys stood in shadow, with generations of men huddled at their corners speaking on low tongues. Their own shadows cast long, wavering figures across the earthen ground, dancing between the flickering lights and treading softly across the wide plains of ripe harvest.

Small children squatted dirtily amongst the carts and scaffolding, spindly balls of thin limbs indulged with whoops and cries and open laughs and quick hands.

Storekeepers watched on, warily.

For this was their harvest; their toil. One stood distraught, crowing loudly down his long nose as these mongrel hordes of plagued children galloped across the scorched earth, fording glowing rivers of honey and wine, under forests of mangoes and bananas and oranges hanging from branches of timber in small bags.

"Stay away from my stall!" he cried. "Go and play somewhere else! Dis costs money, yoo know!" How much money? That was the question on everyone's lips. Buyers and sellers alike wrestled and cooed and bartered and teased in a strange dance, twisting and twirling each other's words until they landed begrudgingly on the underwhelming middle ground. Neither side ever won, yet each vowed to next time across playful smiles and warm handshakes.

Yet one man came with no money at all. He sat on an upturned crate in a dead end on a side street, gazing distantly with a wry smile at what unfolded before him.

The rich aromas of home-cooked sweets, the sizzle of the oil as street vendors fried away over cast iron pans. The gentle swing of the soft silk sheets that hung from ceilings of rough canvas patchwork. The young boy stood on a table, shouting prices to the crowd: "Hey uncle! Hey auntie! Have I got a price for yoo!" Below, his even younger brother went about his work, with nimble fingers and swift hands that plucked ripe fruit from their baskets with frightening speed and money from outstretched hands at a terrifying pace.

In the corner, butchers carved hunks of meat from hung up carcasses, as their blood dripped into the soil below.

For that was the magic of the market; the warm blood mingling with the rough, cold earth, as the chatter rose and night fell on a cold street in India.

Activity six

Look at the typical features grid for Paper 2 below.

How might this grid help with:

- diagnosing students' writing skills
- curriculum development?

Paper 2 Question 5: Typical features grid

Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4
Simple communication	Some successful communication	Clear/consistent communication	Convincing/compelling communication
<p>No obvious structure</p> <p>Simple sequence, or random use of ideas without any sense of development</p>	<p>Central argument difficult to identify</p> <p>Erratic sequence of ideas linked to task</p> <p>Fragmented or contradictory approach</p> <p>Difficult to follow; tangential; muddled logic; unsupported assertions; undeveloped lists</p>	<p>Structured effectively to counter-act opposing views</p> <p>Identifiable argument; counterarguments do not detract from whole</p>	<p>Deliberate crafting of structure to achieve effect</p> <p>Coherent and convincing argument; counterarguments are absorbed and enhance the whole</p>
<p>Simple assertions</p> <p>Incorrect focus</p> <p>Lacks a point of view</p> <p>Limited scope of ideas offered</p>	<p>Engages in parts</p> <p>Statistics and facts are shoe-horned in or appear incongruous</p> <p>Series of soundbites</p> <p>Implausible ideas or unrealistic</p>	<p>Developed and clear sequence of ideas; logical; engages interest</p> <p>'Big ideas' are referenced but not integrated into the argument</p>	<p>Conceptualises ideas or uses abstraction</p> <p>Detailed complex ideas and highly plausible argument; integrates 'big ideas'</p>

Basic vocabulary	Some tier 2 vocabulary; mainly clichéd rhetoric; some ambitious vocabulary used imprecisely	Tier 2 vocabulary used mainly with precision; mainly effective use of rhetorical features	Confident use of tier 2 vocabulary; confident use of rhetorical features
Overly colloquial or ill-judged tone	Erratic/uneven tone Over-reliance on rhetorical questions and/or anecdotes	Sustains an even tone Appropriately formal Controlled pace	Confident and varied tone Subtle variations of pace and style
Paragraphs are absent or random	Paragraphs are often cosmetic and mechanical; sentences within paragraphs not always connected; lacks security with reflexive pronouns	Mainly logical sequence to enhance meaning; cohesive devices such as reflexive pronouns help coherence	Integrated paragraphs that enhance meaning; cohesive devices help secure fluency of ideas and expression

Activity seven: Writing an argument

Q5, Paper 2, November 2020

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'People have become obsessed with travelling ever further and faster. However, travel is expensive, dangerous, damaging and a foolish waste of time!'

Write an article for a news website in which you argue your point of view on this statement.

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

[40 marks]

Activity

- Look again at the 'typical features' table.
- Rank order responses E and F using the descriptors in the table.

Student E

Have you ever thought about travelling! If the answer is yes I encourage you to read on for I will be explaining the beautiful wonders of travelling.

Lets be honest wouldn't you rather travel internationally than stay in the same country so I am here to explain why travelling is important and everything I will talk about is 100% scientifically proven.

I firmly believe travelling is needed for everyone especially a hard-working person like your self according to the university of oxford says travelling relieves around 80% of stress. You might be thinking well Im not stressed but let me tell you something everyone is. I am. You are even my own mother. Stress can make you do things you'd never do such as outburst of anger and hot flushes at night.

Let's be honest fellow parent as much as we love those little monkeys we need a little break from them. So why not travel hit the open road for a day or two and if you cant bring yourself to leave them with someone then why not bring them with you as they say the more the merrier.

Alot of the people procrastinate an say I'll travel when I'm thirty they aint. Don't be that person start saving and travel and let the stress walk out of you.

Last month I travelled to hawaii and trust me Ive been a new person I come home one day my children couldnt recognise me with the stress on my back so let me ask you one last question.

Will you travel? Will you relieve that stress? Or will you procrastinate like 48% of people.

Student F

The idea that travelling is 'a foolish waste of time' is an idea born out of deep ignorance and fear. The thought that exploring different areas, cultures, religions and people is a waste of money or even having an opinion on what other people can spend their money on is the foolish thing.

In this article we are going to explore this statement further and help you get the knowledge to make the decision to travel for yourself.

Birds migrate each year. They follow the warmth and the sun, they change their environment depending on their needs just like humans do. We move house as our families grow, we move around the country so we can be closer to work, school, loved one. It's one of the most natural changes in the world.

So why should it be limited to the place where you were born or the city where you grew up, it's simple it shouldn't.

Travelling is an escape, having a holiday by the sea in a city, near the woods can relieve so much stress and getting out of unstable environments is a proven factor in improving mental and physical health.

But what about the money? Save! Budget! There are always options, always choices, always discount train and plane tickets and cheap hotels and campsites. Just because your income isn't able to take you on a getaway to New York doesn't mean you won't enjoy swimming in the sea that's only a train ride away.

But what if it's dangerous? There are so many safe ways to travel whether that's with someone or on your own. Do your research on where you're staying, never keep all your money and passport on you when you're out and about.

There are so many helpful guide books and videos to ensure you can enjoy yourself.

At the end of the day, this is your choice and you need to do what suits you!

Happy travels!

Notes

Contact us

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