

# GCSE English Language – Paper 1



In paper 1, you will be given ONE text – this is usually in the format of a story or an extract from a novel.

This exam is split into two sections:

Section A will assess your reading skills

Section B will assess your writing skills

**Section A: the examiner will want to know if you can:**

- Locate information in a text
- Identify and analyse the writer's use of language
- Identify and analyse the writer's use of structure
- Critically evaluate a text against a statement made about the text

**Section B: the examiner will want to know if you can:**

- Create interesting stories or descriptive texts
- Organise ideas into sentences
- Organise ideas into paragraphs
  - Use impressive vocabulary
- Use a range of descriptive techniques to engage
- Use a range of punctuation and

No.	Question	Marks	Timing	% of Paper 1	% of whole GCSE
<b>Reading time is essential – make sure you take the time to read the text and the questions thoroughly</b>					
1	Locate information	4	5 mins	5%	2.5%
2	Analyse language	8	10-12	10%	5%
3	Analyse Structure	8	10-12	10%	5%
4	Critical evaluation	20	25	25%	12.5%
5	Descriptive or narrative writing	40	45	50%	25%

**Look at the marks awarded for the different questions. Make sure you leave enough time to fully answer each question – especially questions 4 and 5.**



## Paper 1 – Section A – Reading

### Question 1:

No.	Question	Marks	Timing	% of Paper 1	% of whole GCSE
Reading time is essential – make sure you take the time to read the text and the questions thoroughly					
1	Locate information	4	5 mins	5%	2.5%

Q1 - What the examiner is looking for:

- ✓ Identify specific information and ideas
- ✓ Select information from different parts of the text

### Q1 TOP TIPS:

- List your answers
- Include "quotation marks" around what you copy from the text
- Make sure you have four different points
- Only take answers from the section of the text mentioned in the question
- Answer in full sentences

#### Final thoughts:

Check the accuracy of your answers. Make sure you check your answers against what the question is asking.

#### Final thoughts:

Do your ideas specifically answer the question asked AND is taken from the correct part of the text . . .

## Question 2:

No.	Question	Marks	Timing	% of Paper 1	% of whole GCSE
2	Analyse language	8	10-12	10%	5%

Q2 - What the examiner is looking for:

- ✓ A clear understanding of language
- ✓ Analyses the effects of the writer's choices of language
- ✓ Selects judicious quotations
- ✓ Accurate use of subject terminology

## Q2 TOP TIPS:

- Revise all of the language methods
- Aim to write at least two PEE paragraphs
- Identify one of the writer's methods in your point
- Make sure you have used subject terminology
- Choose 'juicy' quotations that contains more than one language feature
- Explain what the quotation means
- Zoom in on key words/ methods to explore in more detail
- Explain why the writer has used this language
- how does he want the reader to respond?

You will need to know the following language devices:

A	Alliteration	M	Metaphor
F	Fact	A	Adjective; adverb; alliteration
O	Opinion	S	Simile; sibilance
R	Rhetorical Question; repetition	S	Sensory language
E	Emotive Language	I	Imagery (simile, metaphor, personification, onomatopoeia)
S	Statistic; second person	V	Vocabulary
T	Three Trick	E	Emotive language



Other techniques:

Nouns
Verbs
Abstract nouns
Contrast

Some useful sentence starters:

The writer suggests . . .	This (method) makes the reader question . . .
This word/ technique implies . . .	The writer wants the reader to imagine . . .
This word/ technique symbolises . . .	The writer deliberately uses (method) to make the reader think/ feel . . .

### Question 3:

No.	Question	Marks	Timing	% of Paper 1	% of whole GCSE
3	Analyse Structure	8	10-12	10%	5%

**Q3 - What the examiner is looking for:**

- ✓ A clear understanding of structural features
- ✓ Analyses the effects of the writer's structural choices
- ✓ Selects judicious examples
- ✓ Accurate use of subject terminology

### Q3 TOP TIPS:

- Revise all of the structural features
- Aim to write at least two/ three PEE paragraphs
- Identify one of the writer's structural methods in your point
- Make sure you have used subject terminology
- Choose interesting examples from the text
- Explain how the overall structure reflects the character's thoughts or what is happening in the story.
- Explain why the writer has used this structural feature - how does he want the reader to respond?

You will need to know the following structural features:

<b>S</b>	Sequence of events	Beginning, middle, end
<b>E</b>	Ending	How does it end? Does this link to the opening?
<b>N</b>	Narrative voice	Who is telling the story (1 <sup>st</sup> person – I, me, we, us; 2 <sup>nd</sup> person – you; 3 <sup>rd</sup> person – he, she, it, they, named person)
<b>D</b>	Description V Dialogue	Is the text written in descriptive paragraphs or does it contain dialogue (speech)?
<b>F</b>	Flash forward/ backwards; Foreshadowing Focus shift	Is there a shift in time? Are there clues/hints in the text about something that happens later on? Does he move on to write about something else?
<b>O</b>	Opening	How does it begin?
<b>R</b>	Repetition	If words, phrases or images are used more than once
<b>J</b>	Juxtaposition	The placing of contrasting ideas next to each other
<b>C</b>	Cyclical structure	When a text begins and ends with a similar idea/ place/ sentence.
<b>Z</b>	Zoom in detail	When the action zooms in on something – e.g. a character's thoughts/ feelings



## How to answer question 3 . . .

### Structure your ideas into a PEE paragraph:

**Point** -> Identify the structural feature(s) used....

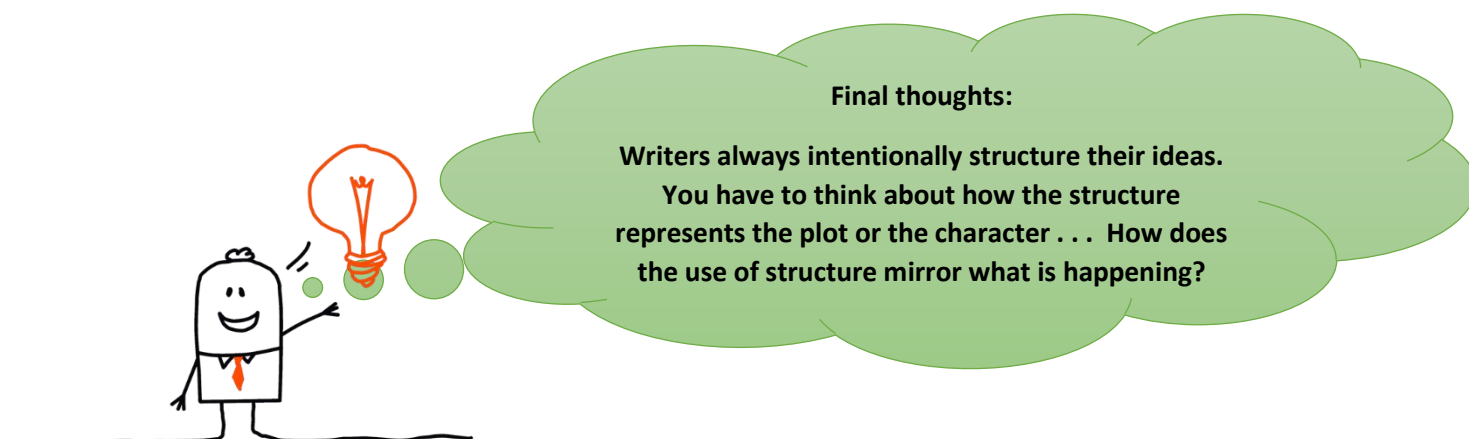
**Evidence** -> Give suitable evidence

**Explanation** -> How has that structural device been used? What is interesting about it? Does the structure mirror the content in any way?

**Engagement** -> Why does that structural technique engage the reader?

### Useful sentence starters:

The writer deliberately <b>starts</b> the extract by focusing the readers' attention on . . .	The writer <b>purposefully</b> changes <b>focus</b> in the <b>middle</b> of the extract to draw the readers' attention to . . .
The writer cleverly <b>foreshadows</b> what happens at the <b>end</b> by <b>starting</b> the extract with . . .	The writer <b>juxtaposes</b> two contrasting ideas at the <b>beginning</b> to show . . .
The writer has used a <b>cyclical structure</b> to reflect . . .	In the <b>middle of the extract</b> , the writer deliberately <b>changes from descriptive paragraphs to dialogue</b> to highlight . . .
The (structural feature) would make the <b>reader question</b> . . .	The <b>opening/ ending/ shift of focus</b> would make the <b>reader think/ feel/ imagine</b> . . .





#### Question 4:

No.	Question	Marks	Timing	% of Paper 1	% of whole GCSE
4	Critical evaluation	20	25	25%	12.5%

*Q4 - What the examiner is looking for:*

- ✓ Clear evaluation of effects on the reader
- ✓ Clear understanding of writer's methods (language and structure)
- ✓ Selects judicious examples/quotations
- ✓ Clear explanation that links to the statement

#### Q4 TOP TIPS:

- Revise all of the language and structural features
- Aim to write four PEE paragraphs
- Make sure you agree or partially agree with the statement
- Identify one of the writer's methods in your point
- Make sure you have used subject terminology
- Choose interesting examples from the text
- Try to explain what the writer was trying to do - how does he want the reader to respond?
- Make clear links back to the statement by using words from the statement in your answer

## How to answer question 4 . . .

Structure your ideas into a PEE paragraph:

**Point** -> Agree/ partially agree with the statement and identify a method used by the writer . . .

**Evidence** -> Give suitable evidence

**Explanation** -> what is your personal interpretation of the quotation – do you have more than one? What do you think the writer is trying to do or say? How does the writer's methods convey this to the reader? Zoom in on key words. How does this link to the statement?

**Engagement** -> How would the reader respond? Think/ feel/ imagine?

# How to expand your ideas for a more detailed analysis and a higher score

The writer has used alliteration to attract the reader's attention to the mountain,

**"murderous mountain"**

The writer deliberately uses alliteration to show that people have died on the mountain. The adjective **"murderous"** suggests that people have died because of the mountain. **A reader might feel shocked here.**

This answer seems to have included everything it needs to:

- **Method identified**
- **Relevant quotation**
- Use of subject terminology
- **Some discussion of effect**

But this would only be graded as a level 2 answer at best as the analysis is just on the surface. In order to get a grade 4/5 you need to be hitting the level 3 criteria with a deeper analysis with different interpretations.

Let's look at our quotation in more detail:

**"murderous mountain"**

Murderous suggests people have died there

Suggests that the mountain is dangerous

Hints that the mountain may be a sinister place best avoided

Suggests that the mountain is evil – murder suggests it is intentional



We need to get all the 'juice' out of each quotation in order to move to a level 3 answer

*So let's add these ideas to our answer:*

The writer has purposefully used alliteration to attract the reader's attention to the mountain,

**"murderous mountain"**

The writer deliberately uses alliteration to show that **people have died on the mountain**. The adjective **"murderous"** suggests that the mountain might be a **dangerous place** and those who go there could die. However, the idea of murder also suggests **something more sinister** and almost gives the impression that **the mountain is intentionally murdering people there**. The writer deliberately **creates an image of an evil and dangerous place** to make the **reader wary and suspicious of this place**. A reader might feel some empathy towards those that died on the mountain but would also begin to feel that the mountain is a place to be avoided. The reader might worry about any other character who considers climbing the mountain as they would suspect that this character may die.

This answer has included the previous elements:

- **Method identified**
- **Relevant quotation**
- Use of subject terminology
- **Some discussion of effect**

But we have now added in some **different interpretations and explanations of meaning**. Can you see how this answer is much more developed now; we have delved much deeper with our analysis and have added more detail to our discussion of effect



Before you answer your question 2, 3 or 4 – make sure you are choosing the BEST and JUICIEST quotations. You must be able to give different interpretations about the quotation or about individual parts of the quotations. **CHOOSE YOUR QUOTATIONS WISELY**. You must **JUDGE** which quotations are the best to use (this is what 'judicious' means).



## Source A

### Practice Text 1:

This extract is from a novel by Yann Martel. In this section the central character, Pi, is on a sinking ship. The ship is carrying the animals belonging to Pi's father, who owns a zoo.

Inside the ship, there were noises. Deep structural groans. I stumbled and fell. No harm done. I got up. With the help of the handrails I went down the stairwell four steps at a time. I had gone down just one level when I saw water. Lots of water. It was blocking my way. It was surging from below like a riotous crowd, raging, frothing and boiling. Stairs vanished into watery darkness. I couldn't believe my eyes. What was this water doing here? Where had it come from? I stood nailed to the spot, frightened and incredulous and ignorant of what I should do next. Down there was where my family was.

I ran up the stairs. I got to the main deck. The weather wasn't entertaining any more. I was very afraid. Now it was plain and obvious: the ship was listing badly. And it wasn't level the other way either. There was a noticeable incline going from bow to stern. I looked overboard. The water didn't look to be eighty feet away. The ship was sinking. My mind could hardly conceive it. It was as unbelievable as the moon catching fire.

Where were the officers and the crew? What were they doing? Towards the bow I saw some men running in the gloom. I thought I saw some animals too, but I dismissed the sight as illusion crafted by rain and shadow. We had the hatch covers over their bay pulled open when the weather was good, but at all times the animals were kept confined to their cages. These were dangerous wild animals we were transporting, not farm livestock. Above me, on the bridge, I thought I heard some men shouting.

The ship shook and there was that sound, the monstrous metallic burp. What was it? Was it the collective scream of humans and animals protesting their oncoming death? Was it the ship itself giving up the ghost? I fell over. I got to my feet. I looked overboard again. The sea was rising. The waves were getting closer. We were sinking fast.

I clearly heard monkeys shrieking. Something was shaking the deck, a gaur - an Indian wild ox - exploded out of the rain and thundered by me, terrified, out of control, berserk. I looked at it, dumbstruck and amazed. Who in God's name had let it out?

I ran for the stairs to the bridge. Up there was where the officers were, the only people on the ship who spoke English, the masters of our destiny here, the ones who would right this wrong. They would explain everything. They would take care of my family and me. I climbed to the middle bridge. There was no one on the starboard side. I ran to the port side. I saw three men, crew members. I fell. I got up. They were looking overboard. I shouted. They turned. They looked at me and at each other. They spoke a few words. They came towards me quickly. I felt gratitude and relief welling up in me. I said, "Thank God I've found you. What is happening? I am very scared. There is water at the bottom of the ship. I am worried about my family. I can't get to the level where our cabins are. Is this normal? Do you think?"

One of the men interrupted me by thrusting a life jacket into my arms and shouting something in Chinese. I noticed an orange whistle dangling from the life jacket. The men were nodding vigorously at me. When they took hold of me and lifted me in their strong arms, I thought nothing of it. I thought they were helping me. I was so full of trust in them that I felt grateful as they carried me in the air. Only when they threw me overboard did I begin to have doubts.

## Section A: Reading

**Have a go!**

Answer **all** questions in this section.

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

**Q1.** Read again the first part of the Source from **lines 1 to 10**.

List **four** things from this part of the text about the ship.

**[4 marks]**

**Q2.** Look in detail at this extract from **lines 11 to 21** of the Source:

Where were the officers and the crew? What were they doing? Towards the bow I saw some men running in the gloom. I thought I saw some animals too, but I dismissed the sight as illusion crafted by rain and shadow. We had the hatch covers over their bay pulled open when the weather was good, but at all times the animals were kept confined to their cages. These were dangerous wild animals we were transporting, not farm livestock. Above me, on the bridge, I thought I heard some men shouting.

The ship shook and there was that sound, the monstrous metallic burp. What was it? Was it the collective scream of humans and animals protesting their oncoming death? Was it the ship itself giving up the ghost? I fell over. I got to my feet. I looked overboard again. The sea was rising. The waves were getting closer. We were sinking fast.

I clearly heard monkeys shrieking. Something was shaking the deck, A gaur-an Indian wild ox-exploded out of the rain and thundered by me, terrified, out of control, berserk. I looked at it, dumbstruck and amazed. Who in God's name had let it out?

How does the writer use language here to describe the narrator's fright and confusion?

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.

**Have a go!**

This extract comes at the end of a chapter.

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 to the end**.

A student, having read this section of the text, said: 'The writer makes the reader feel sympathetic for the narrator.'

To what extent do you agree?

In your response, you could:

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

**[20 marks]**