

# 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 |
|---|----------------------------------|-------|--------|--------------|-----------------|
| 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%            |
| 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:

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



Other techniques:

Some useful sentence starters:

|                |                                       |  |
|----------------|---------------------------------------|--|
| Nouns          | The writer suggests . . .             | This (method) makes the reader question . . .                              |
| Verbs          | This word/ technique implies . . .    | The writer wants the reader to imagine . . .                               |
| Abstract nouns | This word/ technique symbolises . . . | The writer deliberately uses (method) to make the reader think/ feel . . . |
| Contrast       |                                       |  |

### 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;<br>Foreshadowing<br>Focus shift | Is there a shift in time?<br>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....

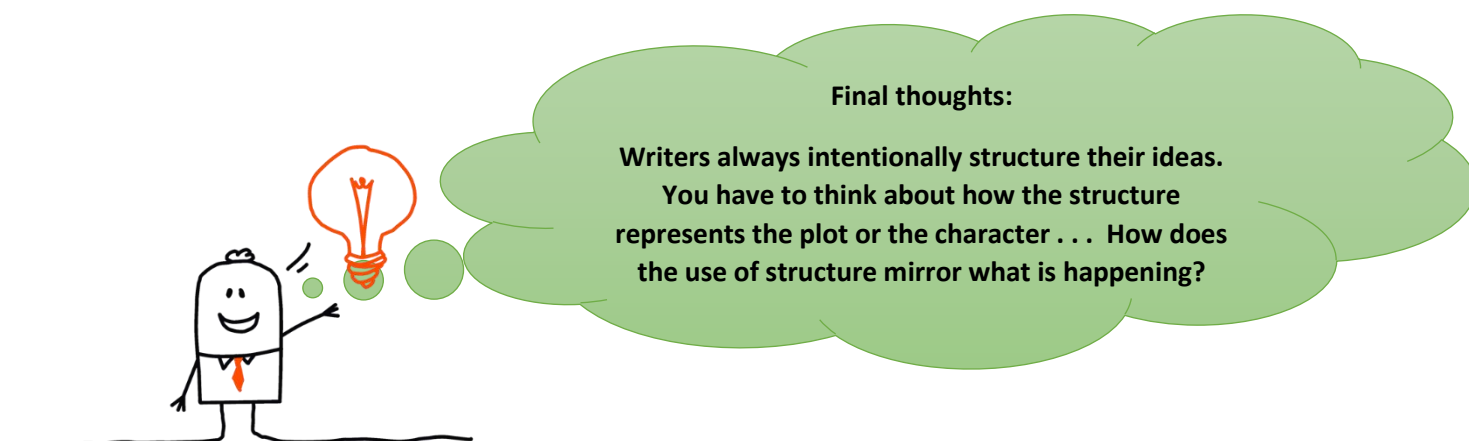
**Evidence** -> Give suitable evidence

**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 <b>(structural feature)</b> 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).



## ***Blood on Snow***

### **Practice Text 1:**

**By Jo Nesbo**

The snow was dancing like cotton wool in the light of the street lamps. Aimlessly, unable to decide whether it wanted to fall up or down, just letting itself be driven by the hellish, icecold wind that was sweeping in from the great darkness covering the Oslo fjord. Together they swirled, wind and snow, round and round in the darkness  
5 between the warehouses on the quayside that were all shut for the night. Until the wind got fed up and dumped its dance partner beside the wall. And there the dry, windswept snow was settling around the shoes of the man I had just shot in the chest and neck.

Blood was dripping down onto the snow from the bottom of his shirt. I don't actually  
10 know a lot about snow – or much else, for that matter – but I've read that snow crystals formed when it's really cold are completely different from wet snow, heavy flakes, or the crunchy stuff. That it's the shape of the crystals and the dryness of the snow that make the haemoglobin in the blood retain that deep red colour. Either way, the snow under him made me think of a king's robe, all purple and lined with  
15 ermine, like the drawings in the book of Norwegian folk tales my mother used to read to me. She liked fairy tales and kings. That's probably why she named me after a king.

The *Evening Post* had said that if the cold carried on like this until New Year, 1977 would be the coldest year since the war, and that we'd remember it as the start of  
20 the new ice age scientists had been predicting for a while. But what did I know? All I knew was that the man standing in front of me would soon be dead. There was no mistaking the way his body was shaking. He was one of the Fisherman's men. It was nothing personal. I told him as much before he collapsed, leaving a smear of blood  
25 down the wall. If I ever get shot, I'd rather it was personal. I didn't say it to stop his ghost coming after me – I don't believe in ghosts. I just couldn't think of anything else to say. Obviously I could have just kept my mouth shut. That's what I usually do, after all. So there must have been something that made me so talkative all of a sudden. Maybe it was because there were only a few days to go before Christmas.  
30 I've heard that people are supposed to feel closer to each other around Christmas. But what do I know?

I thought the blood would freeze on top of the snow and end up just lying there. But instead the snow sucked the blood up as it fell, drawing it in under the surface, hiding it, as if it had some sort of use for it. As I walked home I imagined a snowman  
35 rising up from the snowdrift, one with clearly visible veins of blood under its deathly pale skin of ice.

On the way back to my flat I called Daniel Hoffmann from a phone box to tell him the job was done.

**Paper 1, section A – Practice Questions**  
**'Blood on Snow':**

**Have a go!**

1. Read again the first part of the source from **lines 1 to 7**.  
List four things about the snow from this part of the source.

**(4 marks)**

A)

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B)

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C)

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D)

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2. Look in detail at this extract.

The snow was dancing like cotton wool in the light of the street lamps. Aimlessly, unable to decide whether it wanted to fall up or down, just letting itself be driven by the hellish, ice-cold wind that was sweeping in from the great darkness covering the Oslo fjord. Together they swirled, wind and snow, round and round in the darkness between the warehouses on the quayside that were all shut for the night. Until the wind got fed up and dumped its dance partner beside the wall. And there the dry, windswept snow was settling around the shoes of the man I had just shot in the chest and neck.

How does the writer use language here to describe the weather?

You could include the writer's choice of:

- Words and phrases
- Language features and techniques
- Sentence forms

**(8 marks)**

3. Consider the whole text.

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 focus as the source develops.
- Any other structural features that interest you.

**(8 marks)**

4. For this answer, you need to consider the whole text.

A reader of this extract said *“the murderer, Olav, feels no regret or remorse for the murder he’s committed”*

To what extent do you agree?

In your response, you could:

- Consider your own impressions of Olav.
- Evaluate how the writer shows that Olav feels no regret or remorse.
- Support your response with references to the text.

**(20 marks)**

This extract is taken from 'Lord of the Flies' by William Golding

The boys think a beast is coming to attack them and this is their response.

Jack leapt on to the sand.

"Do our dance! Come on! Dance!"

He ran stumbling through the thick sand to the open space of rock beyond the fire. Between the flashes of lightning the air was dark and terrible; and the boys followed him, clamorously. Roger became the pig, grunting and charging at Jack, who side-stepped. The hunters took their spears, the cooks took spits, and the rest clubs of firewood. A circling movement developed and a chant. While Roger mimed the terror of the pig, the littluns ran and jumped on the outside of the circle. Piggy and Ralph, under the threat of the sky, found themselves eager to take a place in this demented but partly secure society. They were glad to touch the brown backs of the fence that hemmed in the terror and made it governable.

"Kill the beast! Cut his throat! Spill his blood!"

The movement became regular while the chant lost its first superficial excitement and began to beat like a steady pulse. Roger ceased to be a pig and became a hunter, so that the centre of the ring yawned emptily. Some of the littluns started a ring on their own; and the complementary circles went round and round as though repetition would achieve safety of itself. There was the throb and stamp of a single organism.

The dark sky was shattered by a blue-white scar. An instant later the noise was on them like the blow of a gigantic whip. The chant rose a tone in agony.

"Kill the beast! Cut his throat! Spill his blood!"

Now out of the terror rose another desire, thick, urgent, blind.

"Kill the beast! Cut his throat! Spill his blood!"

Again the blue-white scar jagged above them and the sulphurous explosion beat down. The littluns screamed and blundered about, fleeing from the edge of the forest, and one of them broke the ring of biguns in his terror.

"Him! Him!"

The circle became a horseshoe. A thing was crawling out of the forest. It came darkly, uncertainly. The shrill screaming that rose before the beast was like a pain. The beast stumbled into the horseshoe.

"Kill the beast! Cut his throat! Spill his blood!"

The blue-white scar was constant, the noise unendurable. Simon was crying out something about a dead man on a hill.

"Kill the beast! Cut his throat! Spill his blood! Do him in!"

The sticks fell and the mouth of the new circle crunched and screamed. The beast was on its knees in the centre, its arms folded over its face. It was crying out against the abominable noise something about a body on the hill. The beast struggled forward, broke the ring and fell over the steep edge of the rock to the sand by the water. At once the crowd surged after it, poured down the rock, leapt on to the beast, screamed, struck, bit, tore. There were no words, and no movements but the tearing of teeth and claws.

Then the clouds opened and let down the rain like a waterfall. The water bounded from the mountain-top, tore leaves and branches from the trees, poured like a cold shower over the struggling heap on the sand. Presently the heap broke up and figures staggered away. Only the beast lay still, a few yards from the sea. Even in the rain they could see how small a beast it was; and already its blood was staining the sand.

**Paper 1, section A – Practice Questions**  
**'Lord of the Flies:'**

**1.** Re-read the first part of the extract, lines 1-10.

List four things from this part of the extract about the setting.

**[4 marks]**

A)

---

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B)

---

---

C)

---

---

D)

---

---

**2. Look in detail at the first part of the extract.**

How does the writer use language here to create tension?

- You could write about:
- Words and phrases.
- Language features and techniques.
- Sentence forms.

**[8 marks]**



**3.** You now need to think about the **whole** of the extract.  
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 extract develops.
- Any other structural features that interest you.

[8 marks]

**4.** For this answer, you need to consider the whole text.

A student, having read the extract commented: **“This extract really shows how cruel people can truly be.”**

To what extent do you agree?

In your response, you could:

- Consider your own impressions of how violence is represented.
- Evaluate how the writer describes the boys.
- Support your opinions with quotations from the text.

[20 marks]