

**ENGLISH**

**(9-1)**

**AKIF TASEEN**

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# 1. SETTING

The setting of a text includes the location and time when events take place. Setting can play a crucial part in establishing atmosphere and reflecting themes and character within a text.

## Understanding Setting

The setting of a text is the place and time used within the text. This may be:

- \*in the past, present day or the future
- \*a time of day
- \*a particular time of year
- \*a specific geographical location – such as a named city or \*country
- \*a type of place or event – like a school or a wedding

Setting is an important part of how a text achieves its effect. It can echo the themes of the narrative. For example, the dark streets of Victorian London echo the theme of immorality in Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde.

The time of day or year when a text is set also adds to its effect. For example, a school at night is a very different place to a school during the day. A ghost story would probably work better at night as it would add a sense of uncertainty and fear and create more tension for the reader.

The writer may use specific techniques to create a particular effect. For example, the writer could use pathetic fallacy to give emphasis to a character's emotions – “The memory of that afternoon lay heavy upon her. All around the snow smothered the landscape.” In this description, the character's negative emotional state is reflected by the weather.

## How setting is used

**In this extract from Charles Dickens's *Great Expectations*, the description of the weather creates a negative atmosphere.**

Day after day, a vast heavy veil had been driving over London from the East, and it drove still, as if in the East there were an Eternity of cloud and wind. So furious had been the gusts, that high buildings in town had had the lead stripped off their roofs; and in the country, trees had been torn up, and sails of windmills carried away; and gloomy accounts had come in from the coast, of shipwreck and death. Violent blasts of rain had accompanied these rages of wind, and the day just closed as I sat down to read had been the worst of all.

## Example Analysis

- The use of the **metaphor**, "...a vast heavy veil..." makes the weather seem oppressive.
- The use of the **adjective** "vast" creates a subtle **alliteration** with the **noun** "veil", highlighting the contrast of a delicate item with the word "heavy".
- The long, **multi-clause sentence** at the start of the extract underlines the relentless feel of the "...cloud and wind."
- The writer also uses **personification** - "So furious had been the gusts...rages of wind..."
- The words 'furious' and 'rages' establish a feeling of gloom, as if the weather's emotions are mirroring the accounts of "...shipwreck and death."
- The **noun phrase** "...violent blasts of rain" also creates a negative atmosphere, the word 'blasts' creates a harsh, physical impression on the reader.
- This is reinforced by a general **semantic field** of violence - "...stripped...torn...blasts...rages."
- The structure of the paragraph also establishes the grim, relentless mood. For example, it starts with the phrase "Day after day..." and includes the frequent repetition of the connective 'and'.
- The final phrase "...worst of all" leaves the reader with a lasting, negative impression of the setting.

## **2. THEMES**

Themes are the main ideas or meaning that run through a text and may be shown directly or indirectly.

One of the easiest ways to spot themes is through motifs. A motif is a repeated image or idea in a text that helps develop a theme. It helps to know that the word 'motif' comes from the French word for pattern. For example, in the novella *Of Mice and Men*, there is a focus on the images of hands throughout the text. The image of hands could develop various themes, including violence and identity.

An interesting theme involves a clash of opposites. Love as a theme is more interesting when there is conflict. If two people meet, fall in love and there are no problems, then it is not a very interesting story. Without something trying to stop love, the story has nowhere to go.

Writing about themes could give your analysis of an extract a deeper response and show that you are thinking about the ideas the writer is presenting.

**When you are analysing an extract, think about the following:**

- How does the language choice suggest a theme?
- Are there any patterns in the language that give emphasis to a theme?
- Do particular images suggest a theme?
- How does the description of the setting suggest the theme?
- Which events help to develop the themes in the extract?
- How do the characters in the extract represent the theme?
- Are there any language choices that suggest a clash, opposites or conflict of themes?

### **3. Characterisation and Narrative Voice**

This extract from Charles Dickens's *Hard Times* introduces Mr Gradgrind, the headmaster of a school.

What do we learn about this character from the writer's choice of language?

“Now, what I want is, Facts. Teach these boys and girls nothing but Facts. Facts alone are wanted in life. Plant nothing else, and root out everything else. You can only form the minds of reasoning animals upon Facts: nothing else will ever be of any service to them. This is the principle on which I bring up my own children, and this is the principle on which I bring up these children. Stick to Facts, sir!”

The scene was a plain, bare, monotonous vault of a school-room, and the speaker's square forefinger emphasised his observations by underscoring every sentence with a line on the schoolmaster's sleeve. The emphasis was helped by the speaker's square wall of a forehead, which had his eyebrows for its base, while his eyes found commodious cellars in two dark caves, overshadowed by the wall. The emphasis was helped by the speaker's mouth, which was wide, thin, and hard set. The emphasis was helped by the speaker's voice, which was inflexible, dry, and dictatorial. The emphasis was helped by the speaker's hair, which bristled on the skirts of his bald head, a plantation of firs to keep the wind from its shining surface, all covered with knobs, like the crust of a plum pie, as if the head had scarcely warehouse-room for the hard facts stored inside.

## Analysis

- The writer chooses to use **dialogue** to give an immediate impression of Gradgrind's character.
- He uses a lot of commands in his speech, "Stick to Facts, sir!" This suggests that he's used to being in charge. He emphasises 'Facts' by using the capital letter 'F'. This suggests he has a narrow view of education.
- Although the narrator seems to be describing the character in quite a factual way - suggesting he's neutral, the reader can see that the narrator does not approve of Gradgrind.
- The negative impression of the Mr. Gradgrind is also strengthened by the description of the surroundings, the school-room is "...plain, bare, monotonous..."
- This **triplet** of negative words established a pattern in the extract. For example, later the writer includes the triplet "...wide, thin, and hard..." and then "...inflexible, dry, and dictatorial..."
- These groups of adjectives emphasise an undesirable view of the character for the reader.
- The writer uses the **extended metaphor** of a building to describe Gradgrind's appearance. For example, his "square wall of a forehead" and his eyes are "...commodious cellarage in two dark caves..." This metaphor is also picked up in the final line in the reference to the "...warehouse room..." of his head. The effect of these images is quite comical and perhaps also hints at his severe and hard character.

## What is the effect of the narrative voice in this extract?

As the weeks went by, my interest in him and my curiosity as to his aims in life, gradually deepened and increased. His very person and appearance were such as to strike the attention of the most casual observer. In height he was rather over six feet, and so excessively lean that he seemed to be considerably taller. His eyes were sharp and piercing, save during those intervals of torpor to which I have alluded; and his thin, hawk-like nose gave his whole expression an air of alertness and decision. His chin, too, had the prominence and squareness which mark the man of determination. His hands were invariably blotted with ink and stained with chemicals, yet he was possessed of extraordinary delicacy of touch, as I frequently had occasion to observe when I watched him manipulating his fragile philosophical instruments. The reader may set me down as a hopeless busybody, when I confess how much this man stimulated my curiosity, and how often I endeavoured to break through the reticence which he showed on all that concerned himself. Before pronouncing judgment, however, be it remembered, how objectless was my life, and how little there was to engage my attention. My health forbade me from venturing out unless the weather was exceptionally genial, and I had no friends who would call upon me and break the monotony of my daily existence. Under these circumstances, I eagerly hailed the little mystery which hung around my companion, and spent much of my time in endeavouring to unravel it.

### **Analysis**

- The character of Sherlock Holmes is presented to the reader through the eyes of Dr. Watson and our impression of his character is controlled by his judgement.
- The choice of vocabulary shows Dr. Watson's admiration of Holmes. His eyes are "sharp and piercing..." and he is a "...man of determination..."



- The choice of a bird **simile** to describe Holmes' appearance, "his thin, hawk-like nose gave his whole expression an air of alertness and decision...", shows that the narrative voice is keen to focus on the character's intelligence.
- The first person narrator, Dr. Watson, addresses us directly - "The reader may set me down as a hopeless busybody..." This makes the reader feel more involved in the story and feel a warmth for the honesty of the narrator.
- Our affection for the narrator is further developed by his confession of having "...no friends who would call upon me..." We, as the readers, feel as if we are being invited into this world, sharing the thoughts and feelings of the narrator.
- We share his interest in the mystery of Holmes's character - "...I eagerly hailed the little mystery which hung around my companion..." The use of the **adverb** 'eagerly' gives Dr. Watson an enthusiasm that endears him to the reader.
- The narrative voice of Dr. Watson establishes the reader's fascination in the character of Sherlock Holmes - "...my interest in him and my curiosity..." The use of the personal pronouns here deepens our connection with Watson, the reader also feels a sense of curiosity. This effect would not have been achieved with the use of the third person perspective.

### **Omniscient narrator-**

This narrator is not a character, but a voice that knows the thoughts and feelings of all the characters in the story.

## 4. Language and Structure

Device	Definition	Example	Effect
Metaphor	A comparison made without using 'like' or 'as'.	"His home was his castle."	His home is presented as a secure and safe place to be.
Simile	A comparison made using 'like' or 'as' to create a vivid image.	"She had a smile like the sunrise."	Her smile seems bright and full of hope.
Personification	A type of imagery in which non-human objects, animals or ideas are given human characteristics.	"The wind screamed through the trees."	The wind is given the human characteristic of "screaming." This creates an uneasy atmosphere.
Motif	Any repeated idea, theme or image that has a symbolic significance in the text.	"rotten apple...feverish heat... plague of flies...sickened trees..."	The repeated references to illness could symbolise the moral sickness within the narrative.
Repetition	Words, phrases or ideas are repeated for effect.	"Stephen tried and tried and tried to get the ball in the net."	The repetition emphasises the effort exerted and Stephen's desperation at his failed attempts.
Listing	A number of connected items written one after the other.	"Phoebe saw that the garden was over-flowing with foxgloves, lupins, daisies, sun-flowers and pretty weeds of all shapes and heights."	The listing gives a vivid sense of the garden's abundance and beauty.

Alliteration	The repetition of the same sounds (mainly consonants) usually at the beginning of words.	"The suffocating steam filled the room."	The repetition of the 's' sound adds to the discomfort of the room.
Onomatopoeia	The sounds of words to express or underline their meaning.	"Howling, the cat ran through the house."	We get a sense of the cat's terror from the sound of the word "howling."

## Example-

Out of the gravel there are peonies growing. They come up through the loose grey pebbles, their buds testing the air like snails' eyes, then swelling and opening, huge dark-red flowers all shining and glossy like satin. Then they burst and fall to the ground.

In the one instant before they come apart they are like the peonies in the front garden at Mr. Kinnear's, that first day, only those were white. Nancy is cutting them. She wore a pale dress with pink rosebuds and a triple-flounced skirt, and a straw bonnet that hid her face. She carried a flat basket, to put the flower in; she bent from the hips like a lady, holding her waist straight. When she heard us and turned to look, she put her hand up to her throat as if startled.

## Analysis

- The writer's choice of language to describe the flowers gives the setting a dream-like appearance.
- The strange **simile** "...testing the air like snails' eyes..." adds to the dream-like feel.

- The **motif** of the peonies seems particularly important and the writer gives them a symbolic significance. For example, the peonies at the start are "dark-red", but in the next paragraph "...those were white."
- The white peonies, perhaps symbolising innocence, are linked to the character of Nancy. This image of innocence is reinforced by the "pale dress with pink rosebuds."
- The character of Nancy has her clothes described in detail: "...triple-flounced skirt, and a straw bonnet..." This links to the simile "...like a lady..." and suggests that the character of Nancy is elegant and well-dressed.
- The flowers are linked to the feminine here, but there is also a sinister mood linked to the red peonies. This sinister mood is reinforced by the phrase "...as if startled."
- The calm image of a woman cutting flowers is contrasted with the disturbing image of the red peonies. The effect may unsettle the reader.

## **Structure of fiction texts**

Structure can refer to the order of words and ideas within:

- a sentence
- a paragraph
- an extract
- a whole text

Think about the effect the structure creates; remember to focus on how the reader responds to the structure of the text. Consider how the writer is using structure to manipulate the reader's response.

### **Questions to consider**

Where does this extract fit into the longer text – is it an opening or ending?

Why are the paragraphs ordered in the way they are?

How does the focus of each paragraph change?

Is it important for the reader to know certain bits of information before they get to the next part of the text?

Are there any links between the beginning and the end of the text?

Are there any repeated images?

Is there a significant change in an attitude, character or setting?

Is there a change of perspective?

### **Some structural devices within prose fiction**

**Repetition** – of words, phrases or whole sentences.

**Connectives** – eg meanwhile, finally, although. These could be used to shift the reader's focus.

**Sentence types** – eg multi-clause or single clause. For example, a multi-clause sentence could be used to build up layers of description to create a vivid setting.

**Sentence length** – eg short to show tension.

**Paragraph length** – eg single line paragraphs to focus the reader.

**Change of tense** – eg from present to past.

## **Narrative structure**

Fictional narratives may also follow an overall structure, which may fit broadly into typical stages.

**Exposition** – the setting of the scene for the reader, this could be a description of setting or the backstory of a character.

**Crisis point or climax** – an exciting or tense part of the text.

**Resolution** – the conclusion of the narrative, where conflicts are resolved or meaning is revealed.

In a short extract, only one or two of these of these stages might be evident. For example, if the extract is from the opening of a short story there may only be an exposition stage.

These stages are not always in this order; a writer may choose to begin with a climax or crisis point.

## **Example**

This extract is taken from the end of a short story called The Tell Tale Heart by Edgar Allan Poe. In this section the narrator is convinced he can hear the beating heart of his murdered victim under the floor boards.

## How has the writer structured this text to increase the sense of tension?

No doubt I now grew very pale; but I talked more fluently, and with a heightened voice. Yet the sound increased -- and what could I do? It was a low, dull, quick sound -- much such a sound as a watch makes when enveloped in cotton. I gasped for breath -- and yet the officers heard it not. I talked more quickly -- more vehemently; but the noise steadily increased. I arose and argued about trifles, in a high key and with violent gesticulations; but the noise steadily increased. Why would they not be gone? I paced the floor to and fro with heavy strides, as if excited to fury by the observations of the men -- but the noise steadily increased. Oh God! what could I do? I foamed -- I raved -- I swore! I swung the chair upon which I had been sitting, and grated it upon the boards, but the noise arose over all and continually increased. It grew louder -- louder -- louder! And still the men chatted pleasantly, and smiled. Was it possible they heard not? Almighty God! -- no, no! They heard! -- they suspected! -- they knew! -- they were making a mockery of my horror! -- this I thought, and this I think. But anything was better than this agony! Anything was more tolerable than this derision! I could bear those hypocritical smiles no longer! I felt that I must scream or die! and now -- again! -- hark! louder! louder! louder! louder!

"Villains!" I shrieked, "dissemble no more! I admit the deed! -- tear up the planks! here, here! -- It is the beating of his hideous heart!"

The Tell Tale Heart, Edgar Allan Poe

### **Analysis**

- The structure of the text allows the reader to share the narrator's increased agitation.
- In the first long paragraph the writer builds the tension, as the narrator's emotions become more extreme.

- The whole first paragraph has the structure of a fragmented thought process to show the narrator's disturbed mind. The multi-clause sentences further enhance the impression of this frantic mind. The frequent use of dashes also adds to the feeling of broken and jumping thoughts, "I gasped for breath -- and yet the officers heard it not. I talked more quickly -- more vehemently..."
- The calm, simple sentence "And still the men chatted pleasantly and smiled..." shows the reader that this frantic energy is confined to the mind of the narrator.
- This is linked to later in the paragraph the narrator mentions their "...hypocritical smiles...", further emphasising the paranoia of the character.
- The repetition of the personal pronouns 'I' and 'they' at the start of sentences shows the narrator's focus and intensity.
- The writer uses punctuation to structure the narrator's changing emotional state, at first question marks are used frequently, "What could I do?" is repeated to show his desperation.
- The abundance of exclamation marks later in the paragraph show his extreme emotion, as he loses the little control he had - "no, no! They heard! -- they suspected! --they knew! --they were making a mockery of my horror!"
- The dramatic repetition of "...louder! louder! louder! louder!..." gives a manic impression of the narrative voice and increases the tension for the reader.
- The resolution in the text is reached in the final paragraph, when the narrator manically confesses his crime, "I admit the deed!"
- The use of dialogue here breaks the tension of the narrator's thoughts and leads to a final climax of emotion.
- The alliterative "...hideous heart." makes a gruesome, dramatic final impression on the reader.



## **5. Responding to a Fiction Text**

In an analytical response, you should show how language and structure create meaning. You could also explore the effect on the reader. An analytical response uses evidence from the text to make clear points.

Whatever the focus of the task, aim to focus on **HOW** the writer has used specific techniques or choices to create meaning, rather than **WHAT** the text is saying or **WHO** it is about.

The key to giving a relevant response is to focus on the question.

An exam question might focus on:

- characters
- narrative voice
- themes and ideas
- language
- structure
- the effect on the reader

### **Structuring a Paragraph**

a few connectives could help link your ideas:

- Firstly...
- On the one hand...
- On the other hand...
- Similarly...
- In contrast...
- However...
- Alternatively...
- Finally...

**PEE** - point/evidence/explain

**PEEL** - point/evidence/explain/link to point

**PEA** - point/evidence/analysis

**SEAL** - state your point/evidence/analyse/link

**WET** - words/effect/techniques

**RATS** - reader's response/author's intention/theme/structure

## **Using quotations and close analysis**

Put the quotation inside your own sentence, rather than putting it in the middle of a page and then commenting on it. This is called embedding a quotation.

Three jigsaw pieces attached together displaying part of a sentence: flying 'like a butterfly' to convey...

So rather than:

"He flew like a butterfly." This is an example of a simile, which shows that he was light and graceful.

Or:

The author uses similes, eg "he flew like a butterfly."

You would write:

The author uses the simile of the boy flying "like a butterfly" to convey the impression that he is light and graceful.

The author uses the simile of the boy flying "like a butterfly" to convey the impression that he is light and graceful.

## **Making the most of quotations**

A close analysis of the language in the quotation can be used to support your point. There are several ways you can do this:

Focus on a word from the quotation and write about why it was chosen by the writer.

Write about the connotations of the word, eg the word 'snake' could have connotations of evil and might be used by the writer to create an ominous atmosphere. The word 'home' has the dictionary meaning of 'a place where someone lives', but the word also has positive connotations of warmth and family.

The context of a word will also be important when you are analysing its effect. How the word is used in the sentence and paragraph may affect the connotations of that word.

The quotation may contain a metaphor, simile, or other language technique – what is the effect of the technique?

Make sure you name the literary technique as part of your analysis. Remember that you don't need to give a definition of the technique – just focus on the effect.

Do the language choices in the quotation link to other parts of the extract? Can you see a pattern in the way the writer is using language?

What is the reader's response to the language in the quotation?

## **Sample exam question and answer**

### **Extract**

The studio was filled with the rich odour of roses, and when the light summer wind stirred amidst the trees of the garden, there came through the open door the heavy scent of the lilac, or the more delicate perfume of the pink-flowering thorn.

From the corner of the divan of Persian saddle-bags on which he was lying, smoking, as was his custom, innumerable cigarettes, Lord Henry Wotton could just catch the gleam of the honey-sweet and honey-coloured blossoms of a laburnum, whose tremulous branches seemed hardly able to bear the burden of a beauty so flamelike as theirs; and now and then the fantastic shadows of birds in flight flitted across the long tussore-silk curtains that were stretched in front of the huge window, producing a kind of momentary Japanese effect, and making him think of those pallid, jade-faced painters of Tokyo who, through the medium of an art that is necessarily immobile, seek to convey the sense of swiftness and motion. The sullen murmur of the bees shouldering their way through the long unmown grass, or circling with monotonous insistence round the dusty gilt horns of the straggling woodbine, seemed to make the stillness more oppressive. The dim roar of London was like the bourdon note of a distant organ.

The Picture of Dorian Gray, Oscar Wilde

## Analysis

**How does the writer use language to create interest for the reader in this opening to *The Picture of Dorian Gray*? (10 marks)**

Wilde's language choices create an intoxicating sense of luxury and decadence, especially those words in the opening sentences which engage the reader's senses: "rich odour...heavy scent...delicate perfume...". The repetition of 'honey' in the compound adjectives "honey-sweet and honey-coloured..." introduce a multi-sensory description that immerses the reader in the setting. The subtle use of alliteration adds to the sensual feel of the setting: "...fantastic shadows of birds in flight flitted across...". The verb 'flitted' has connotations of being insubstantial, as does the word 'tremulous': the reader is presented with the impression of shallow beauty. The alliteration of "bear the burden of a beauty..." seems to further develop this sense of a beauty that seems weary.

The reader is intrigued by this aristocratic reclining figure; we are given no details about his appearance, it is as if the writer wants the setting to reveal his character. The verb choices like 'shouldering' and 'circling' reinforce a sense of restlessness, but there is also a more negative undercurrent that interests the reader: "...sullen...monotonous... straggling...oppressive...". These word choices create an unsettled atmosphere, despite the richness and luxury of the setting. The final short sentence seems to deflate the mood further, contrasting the multi-clause sentence describing the studio and garden with the "dim roar" of the city. The language choices imply that this

character is restless, despite the beauty and richness of his surroundings.

## **Feedback - even better**

- Each point is supported by an embedded quotation and developed with reference to other details.
- It uses technical vocabulary like "alliteration", "multi-clause sentence", "compound adjectives" and "connotations" to explain how effects are created, and it weaves these terms into the argument, rather than stating "this is a simile".
- The effect on the reader is explored implicitly, signalled by words like "intrigued" and "deflate the mood".
- The points are not based around the techniques, but around the effects, which creates a more sophisticated analysis.

## **6. Non-fiction texts**

Non-fiction texts include:

- advertisements
- reviews
- letters
- diaries
- newspaper articles
- information leaflets
- magazine articles

### **Literary non-fiction**

Literary non-fiction is a type of writing which uses similar techniques as fiction to create an interesting piece of writing about real events. Techniques such as withholding information, vivid imagery and rhetorical devices can all be used.

These techniques help to create non-fiction which is enjoyable and exciting to read. Some travel writing, autobiographies, or essays that consider a particular viewpoint are key examples of literary non-fiction. Their main purpose is to entertain whilst they inform about factual events or information.

Literary non-fiction texts include:

- feature articles
- essays
- travel writing
- accounts of famous events
- sketches (normally a fact file profile that gives key information about a person, place or event)
- autobiographies

## Example(Biography)

14 January 1840, London. An inquest is being held at Marylebone Workhouse, a muddled complex of buildings spread over a large area between the Marylebone Road and Paddington Street. The Beadle, a parish officer responsible for persuading householders to do their duty as jurors at such inquests, has assembled twelve men. Most of them are middle-aged local tradesmen, but one stands out among them as different. He is young and slight, smartly dressed and good-looking, neither tall nor short at five foot nine inches, with dark hair falling in curls over his forehead and collar. He is a new resident who has just moved into a fine airy house with a large garden, close to Regent's Park at York Gate: it is No. 1 Devonshire Terrace, from which the Beadle has made haste to summon him to his duty.

Charles Dickens, Claire Tomalin

## Analysis

How does Tomalin, the writer of this extract, introduce us to Charles Dickens?

- The extract begins by raising questions for the reader – why is there an inquest? How will Dickens be involved?
- The focus then shifts to the jury where “one stands out”, suggesting that he doesn't fit in – and is more significant than the others. The writer creates suspense, as we don't know whether this man is Dickens yet.
- Due to the close focus on this character, the reader may make the connection to him being Charles Dickens.
- The writer lists details, eg “smartly dressed” and “fine airy house”. The adjectives “smartly” and “fine” imply that he is quite wealthy.
- Descriptive language, eg “good-looking” with “dark hair falling in curls over his forehead” present Dickens in a romantic way, like the main character in a story.



If it is in a tabloid it will have shorter sentences and paragraphs and use more basic vocabulary – reports are sensationalised using emotive language and they may focus more on celebrities and gossip, eg The Sun and The Daily Mirror.

If it is in a broadsheet the sentences will be longer and more complicated, and the vocabulary will be more advanced. The tone is more formal and serious as they focus on important national and international issues, eg The Telegraph.

### **Example(Article)**

#### **Why Singapore's kids are so good at maths**

The city-state regularly tops global league tables. What's the secret of its achievement?

Sie Yu Chuah smiles when asked how his parents would react to a low test score. "My parents are not that strict but they have high expectations of me," he says. "I have to do well. Excel at my studies. That's what they expect from me." The cheerful, slightly built 13-year-old is a pupil at Admiralty, a government secondary school in the northern suburbs of Singapore that opened in 2002.

At meetings of the world's education ministers, when it is Singapore's turn to speak, "everyone listens very closely", says Andreas Schleicher, head of the OECD's education assessment programme.

But what is it about Singapore's system that enables its children to outperform their international peers? And how easy will it be for other countries to import its success?

A densely populated speck of land in Southeast Asia, Singapore is bordered by Malaysia to the north and the leviathan archipelago of Indonesia to the south. The former British trading post gained self-rule in 1959 and was briefly part of a Malaysian federation before becoming fully independent in 1965. A sense of being dwarfed by vast neighbours runs deep in the national psyche, inspiring both fear and pride. In a speech to trade union

activists on May Day last year, prime minister Lee Hsien Loong told citizens: “To survive, you have to be exceptional.” The alternative, he warned, was being “pushed around, shoved about, trampled upon; that’s the end of Singapore and the end of us”.

The Financial Times, Jeevan Vasagar

## **Analysis**

This article:

- uses the headline to make a direct statement, “Why Singapore’s kids are so good at maths” – the purpose of the report is to explain why
- the language “global” league tables highlights the international success – followed by a rhetorical question, “What’s the secret of its achievement?” to interest the reader
- the conversational tone avoids being too formal, eg “kids” and “what’s the secret” – the audience might be parents as well as educational experts
- more rhetorical questions prepare the reader for “answers” provided by the report
- a metaphor “speck of land” makes Singapore sound tiny – the reader is even more amazed at its huge success – and its tiny size is reinforced by the description that it is “dwarfed” by its neighbours
- imperative language from its Prime Minister explains the efforts behind the brilliant maths results, “You have to be exceptional”
- the extract ends with a rule of three, “pushed around, shoved about, trampled upon” – the aggressive verbs imply the struggle Singapore students face if they do not achieve highly at school

## **Travel writing**

Travel writing tells the reader about visiting different places.

A tourist guide - or a more personal account of a journey - will:

- describe places
- inform about cultures
- explain how to do things

They might also:

- persuade the reader to visit
- advise the reader what to do
- entertain the reader with a creative style of writing

Guides are usually written in the third person whereas personal accounts tend to be first person.

Travel writing can take many forms, such as newspaper articles, essays, journals, blogs and autobiography. It can also be written as a book, telling a longer narrative about a journey or place. Many types of travel writing contain the features of literary non-fiction.

### **Example**

Bill Bryson is a famous travel writer. This extract is the opening paragraph from his book *The Lost Continent* (1989).

I come from Des Moines. Somebody had to.

When you come from Des Moines you either accept the fact without question and settle down with a local girl named Bobbi and get a job at the Firestone factory and live there forever and ever, or you spend your adolescence moaning at length about what a dump it is and how you can't wait to get out, and then you settle down with a local girl named Bobbi and get a job at the Firestone factory and live there forever and ever.

*The Lost Continent*, Bill Bryson

## Analysis

### **In this extract:**

- Bryson begins with humour, "Somebody had to." This amuses the reader and creates a chatty tone. It raises the question 'Why does he sound negative?' - intriguing the reader.
- Using the first person forms an immediate connection between Bryson and his reader. He builds on this by opening with an anecdote to entertain them.
- A rule of three summarises "your" future, "settle down with a local girl", "get a job at the Firestone factory" and "live there forever and ever". This makes life in Des Moines sound predictable and limited.
- The contrasting options "accept the fact without question" or "spend your adolescence moaning at length" are both awful!
- Describing Des Moines as a "dump" makes the reader imagine a rubbish dump or an ugly place.
- Bryson ends the extract with a repetition of your first "option" - to "settle, get a job and live there forever and ever" - this implies that you have no choice really and cannot escape Des Moines.
- This extract is likely to entertain the reader but unlikely to persuade them to visit Des Moines!

## **7. Purpose and Audience**

- **T-text type**
- **A-audience**
- **P-purpose**

A text can have many purposes. Some examples are to:

- entertain – to amuse the reader or make them enjoy reading the text
- persuade – to influence the viewpoint of the reader – these texts may be biased
- advise – to help people decide what to do – these texts may give ideas and options
- analyse – to break down something to help people to understand it better
- argue – to make the case for something – these texts may be one-sided
- describe – to give precise details about a person, place, object or experience
- explain – to make clear ‘how’ and ‘why’ something works or happens in a certain way
- inform – to tell a reader about something they don’t know, or add to their knowledge
- instruct – to tell a reader how to do something, ordered step-by-step

### **Extract 1:**

Extract 1 is from *Such, Such Were the Joys*, an autobiographical essay by George Orwell, published in 1952. Here, Orwell writes about his experience of school dinners at St Cyprian's.

The food was not only bad, it was also insufficient. Never before or since have I seen butter or jam scraped on bread so thinly. I do not think I can be imagining the fact that we were underfed, when I remember the lengths we would go in order to steal food. On a number of occasions I remember creeping down at two or three o'clock in the morning through what seemed like miles of pitch-dark stairways and passages — barefooted, stopping to listen after each step, paralysed with about equal fear of Sambo, ghosts and burglars — to steal stale bread from the pantry. The assistant masters had their meals with us, but they had somewhat better food, and if one got half a chance it was usual to steal left-over scraps of bacon rind or fried potato when their plates were removed.

As usual, I did not see the sound commercial reason for this underfeeding. On the whole I accepted Sambo's view that a boy's appetite is a sort of morbid growth which should be kept in check as much as possible. A maxim often repeated to us at St Cyprian's was that it is healthy to get up from a meal feeling as hungry as when you sat down.  
*Such, Such Were the Joys*, George Orwell

### **Extract 2:**

How schools can join Food Revolution Day 2015 by [JamieOliver.com](http://JamieOliver.com) May 2015.

Food Revolution Day is kicking off on Friday 15 May to get children everywhere excited about good, fresh, real food. It's a global day of action to celebrate the importance of cooking from scratch, and to raise awareness of how it impacts our health and happiness.

Greenvale School in Lewisham, London, is a community special school for children and young people between the ages of 11 and 19 who have severe and profound learning difficulties. On Food Revolution Day 2014 all of the students in the school took part in Jamie's live lesson in some way: even if

they were not able to practically get involved in the cooking due to because of their physical disability, they were still able to smell and feel the ingredients with support from staff.

Some of the children focussed on shaking up the salad dressing, and others were given tasks of chopping, grating, picking herbs, and wrapping, based on ability. Each class had set up their tables in front of the screen and students were excited and well prepared!

## Analysis

Extract 1 – 1952	Extract 2 - 2015
They sound unhealthy – ‘insufficient’ ‘underfed’	They sound healthy – ‘good, fresh, real food’, ‘raises awareness of how it impacts our health’
Children - steal extra food ‘it was usual to steal left-over scraps’	Children - are involved in preparing the food ‘all of the students took part’
Appetites - were ‘kept in check’	Appetites - are encouraged ‘students were excited’ to be working with the food

## SYNTHESISE – compare the differences:

In Extract 1, school dinners sound unhealthy as Orwell complains that they are "insufficient" and the boys are "underfed". There was not enough food for the children to feel satisfied. In Extract 2, school dinners sound healthy as the food is "good, fresh, real food". This extract states directly that the Revolution Day "raises awareness of how it impacts our health".

The children resort to stealing extra food in Extract 1, as they are still hungry after school dinners: "it was usual to steal left-over scraps". Whereas in Extract 2 the children are more involved as "all of the students took part" - the food is not kept away from them.



In Extract 2, the children are encouraged to enjoy working with the food: "students were excited and well prepared". This suggests that they will look forward to eating it too. Jamie Oliver's day intends to "celebrate the importance of cooking from scratch". However, Orwell's extract implies a negative attitude towards eating, since appetites "should be kept in check as much as possible" and you leave a meal "feeling as hungry as when you sat down".

## **Audience**

Writers tailor their writing to an audience by adapting:

- **Language** – simple vocabulary and sentences structures are suitable for younger children whereas specialist terms are often attached to a specific topic.
- **Style** – a chatty, informal style appeals to young adults, as well as older readers if the text is light-hearted whereas a formal style suits serious or academic topics.
- **Layout and organisation** – layout will focus the audience's attention on important parts of the text, gradually guiding them through the ideas, eg a charity leaflet may begin with a focus on the problems and why the reader should donate – and then end with how to donate.



## 8. Language and Structure

The purpose of Martin Luther King's rhetorical speech was to end racism in America and persuade the audience that everyone should have equal rights.

King uses similes "until justice rolls down like waters" and "righteousness like a mighty stream" to make the reader visualise "justice" and "righteousness" as rushing water – implying that they need to be forceful and unstoppable.

### Literary language features

Terminology	Definition	Examples
simile	A comparison using 'like' or 'as' to create a vivid image.	'As big as a whale', 'float like a butterfly, sting like a bee'
metaphor	A comparison made without using 'like' or 'as'.	'Sea of troubles' and 'drowning in debt'
personification	A type of imagery in which non-human objects, animals or ideas are given human characteristics.	'The jaws of the cave', 'the leaves danced in the breeze'
pathetic fallacy	The environment (usually the weather) reflects the mood of the character or scene.	'The fog crept evilly through the streets as he stalked his victim.'
onomatopoeia	The sounds of words to express or underline their meaning, sensory imagery.	'Crunch', 'pop', 'screech'
alliteration	The repetition of the same sounds usually at the beginning of words.	'Reuse, renew, recycle'
assonance	The repetition of vowel sounds in a series of words.	'Harsh bark', 'moonlit pool'

rule of three	Repetition in a group of three to strengthen an idea or argument.	'Freedom, equality, and justice'
connotations	Implied meanings suggested by a word rather than its literal meanings.	'Red' is a colour but can imply 'danger', 'anger' or 'stop'.
hyperbole	Over-the-top exaggeration for effect.	'I have ten tonnes of homework to do.'
repetition	Words, phrases or ideas that are repeated for effect.	'This is serious. Incredibly serious.'
rhetorical questions	A question asked for effect with no answer expected.	'Do you think that I'm made of money?'
emotive language	Words chosen to bring an emotional response.	'Defenceless', 'hard-hearted'

## **Structure**

The structure of a text is how it is organised and how its parts fit together. Writers structure their texts deliberately to have an effect on the reader.

### **Structural features**

Feature	Purpose	Effect on the reader
openings	The start of a text must interest the reader.	Comment on how the writer introduces ideas and raises questions.
focus	This is what the writer focuses on as the text develops.	Analyse what is implied, eg a gloomy landscape implies an unhappy situation - what is causing that unhappiness? What will happen next?
shifts	Changes in ideas and perspectives, eg outside to inside.	Comment on how this change is effective, eg creates contrast.

contrast	The differences between two things.	Comment on the effect a drastic difference produces.
repetition or patterns	When words, phrases or ideas are repeated for effect.	Repetitive features can highlight key meanings, indicate a development or show a lack of change.
pace	The feeling of speed in the writing – are events and ideas revealed to the reader slowly or quickly?	Ask what effect is created by altering the pace, eg a slow pace builds tension or suggests boredom, a quicker pace may suit a piece about things happening at speed.
temporal references	References to time.	Comment on how time is used to speed up or slow down the pace of the text.
order of events	This could be chronological or writers might choose to start at the end, in the middle, or with flashbacks / flash forwards.	Comment on how the order of events introduces and prioritises key ideas – and how this engages the reader.
endings	The conclusion of a text may be neat or leave us with questions.	Think about how the reader feels at the end. Have their feelings changed since the opening?
withholding information	Clues and hints are given without revealing everything at once.	Analyse what is implied by hints – how does this build the reader's expectations?
dialogue	Conversations and speech.	How does dialogue move the text forward?
headings, subheadings and questions	Divides the content of texts into topics and sub topics, can signal the start of new points.	How do they guide readers through a text?
bullets	Bullets can summarise and simplify a range of ideas.	Why does the writer summarise certain points?
sentence structures	Varied types of sentences, eg simple, compound and complex.	Comment on how sentence structures affect the fluency of the text, eg a sudden short sentence could reveal shocking information.

paragraph lengths	These vary like sentences eg, to highlight significant points or to provide a detailed account.	Comment on how paragraph lengths affect the development of the text, eg a final paragraph might summarise key points in an argument.
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## **Structure of a non-fiction text**

The structure of a non-fiction piece could be:

- chronological – in date or time order
- prioritised – the most important facts first (like a news article)
- separated into blocks by subheadings – eg in a feature article
- question and answer – eg in information leaflets
- problem and solution – eg in agony aunt columns, or self-help guides
- letter structure – a salutation (Dear...) and an appropriate ending (Yours sincerely...)
- starting in the middle of an event, then providing further information to give several possible viewpoints

## **Example**

This extract describes the events leading up to the 1666 'Great Fire of London'.

How does the writer structure the text to interest the reader?

September 2, 1666

It was a small mistake, but with great consequences. On September 2, 1666, Thomas Farrinor, baker to King Charles II of England, failed, in effect, to turn off his oven. He thought the fire was out, but apparently the smouldering embers ignited some nearby firewood and by one o'clock in the morning, three hours after Farrinor went to bed, his house in Pudding Lane was in flames. Farrinor, along with his wife and daughter, and one servant, escaped from the burning building through an upstairs window, but the baker's maid was not so fortunate, becoming the Great Fire's first victim. Did these cakes set fire to London?

The fire then leapt across Fish Street Hill and engulfed the Star Inn. The London of 1666 was a city of half-timbered, pitch-covered medieval buildings and sheds that ignited at the touch of a spark--and a strong wind on that September morning ensured that sparks flew everywhere. From the Inn, the fire spread into Thames Street, where riverfront warehouses were bursting with oil, tallow, and other combustible goods. By now the fire had grown too fierce to combat with the crude firefighting methods of the day, which consisted of little more than bucket brigades armed with wooden pails of water. The usual solution during a fire of such size was to demolish every building in the path of the flames in order to deprive the fire of fuel, but the city's mayor hesitated, fearing the high cost of rebuilding. Meanwhile, the fire spread out of control, doing far more damage than anyone could possibly have managed.

## **Analysis**

### **The writer:**

- opens with a contrast "small mistake" and "great consequences", raising the question of how something small grew so big
- the focus then shifts to Thomas Farrinor, a baker, thinking his "fire was out" - this

detail foreshadows the start of the Great Fire, building tension

- a temporal reference "three hours after Farrinor went to bed" implies how control was lost in a short space of time as by then his house "was in flames" and there is the "first victim" - implying there will be many more victims
- the question "Did these cakes set fire to London?" suggest that the idea is hard for the reader to believe - and intrigues them to discover how this was possible
- the focus then shifts to the growing fire "leapt" and "engulfed", the wooden structure of London and the "strong wind" - together these elements suggest the fire will take over quickly, creating a quicker pace
- contrast is used to show how useless the "bucket brigades armed with wooden pails" are as "the fire spread out of control"
- the extract ends leaving the reader thinking about the vast "damage" the fire caused, and that no one "could possibly have managed" it

## **9. Responding to a non-fiction text**

### **Example questions**

#### **Example question one**

Analyse how the writer uses language and structure to interest and engage readers.  
Support your views with detailed reference to the text.

This is a very general question, which asks you to look at the technical aspects of the text – language and structure – to see how the writer has used them to appeal to their audience. Here you need to identify features and then explain how these features will interest and engage readers. You need to think about who the audience is, and what the purpose of the text is. As always, you will need to use quotations and examples from the text to support every point you make.

#### **Example question two**

Read the letter from Henry to his father.

How does Henry use language to try to influence his father?

This question also looks at language use in relation to its effect on the reader, except that here the relationship between the writer and the reader is a specific one. Knowing that relationship means that you can infer more things from what the text says – can you tell what kind of a father he is? The word “influence” suggests that the purpose of the text is also key – Henry is trying to achieve something.

#### **Example question three**

How does the writer use language and structure to make his description of the lesson entertaining?

This question is asking you to focus on a specific part of the text – a description. You need to consider the technical aspects of what writers do – language and structure – to see how the writer achieves his purpose. The question highlights that there are two purposes – to describe and to entertain.

### **Example question four**

“In these texts school is presented as a challenging place for the pupils.”  
How far do you agree with this statement?

This question is of a different type – it makes a statement about the extracts, which has an interpretation in it. This statement is the focus of the question. You might agree or disagree with it, but must present examples from the text to support either opinion. When planning your answer, you will keep to the idea of “challenging place for pupils”. The word presented is important too – it signals that you need to think about all the methods the writers are using to show their ideas. You will need to look at language, structure, tone, and all the other things a writer can use.

### **If the question is:**

How successful is Charlie Brooker at persuading us to his point of view on the television show 'MasterChef'?

### **The conclusion could be:**

Brooker uses a style of writing that encourages the reader to agree with his viewpoint towards the television show 'Masterchef.' He successfully achieves this through his use of persuasive language and an anecdotal, informal tone to convey his views. The writer appears to have written the extract not only to share his opinion of the television programme, but to cause the reader, even if they are a fan of the show, to question the overbearing presence of shows such as 'Masterchef'. “Dictating the climate” causes the reader to consider whether the television programme is being forced upon the viewer rather than being provided in response to viewer demand. Brooker is clearly writing to evoke a strong reaction in his reader by highlighting the possibility that they themselves could be being manipulated. He concludes with a statement, leaving the readers in no doubt that 'MasterChef' is not 'the best television show in broadcasting history'.



## **Sample exam question and answer**

**\*extracts in pg-28\***

**Compare how the writers of Text 1 and Text 2 present their ideas and perspectives on food. Support your answer with detailed references to the texts.**

Text 1, Orwell's 'Such, Such are the Joys' is autobiographical with a first person perspective to share his memories with detail and clarity. He is aware that his account of school dinners might seem exaggerated but assures the reader that "I do not think I can be imagining" the experience. His title "such are the joys" takes on an ironic twist when the reader learns that there was little joy in his school dining hall. Text 2 is an informative feature article, persuading readers to support Jamie Oliver's 'Food Revolution Day'. The headline is inviting and signals an instruction to readers "how schools can join". The word "revolution" connotes a change for the better, implying that the experience of school dinners will improve through this campaign.

Orwell opens with blunt adjectives that focus on the poor quality of the food – it was "bad" and "insufficient". He reinforces this opinion with an anecdote presenting their desperation for more food, going to "lengths" to steal it. The vivid description from a child's perspective exaggerates the "miles of pitch-dark stairways" and the threat of "Sambo, ghosts and burglars" to show the extent of the risk they were taking. The metaphor "paralysed" creates an image of boys frozen in terror. The reader feels sorry for them as even stolen food is only "stale bread" and "left-over scraps" which implies it is old and unappetising.

Unlike Text 1, the Oliver article opens with an enthusiastic tone, "kicking off" connotes a lively start, which is appealing to children – and the adults who want them to enjoy school dinners. Like Orwell, the text opens with a focus on food but this time in a positive way. A rule of three describes it as "good, fresh, real", creating an image of healthy, natural food. The first paragraph ends with alliteration "health and happiness" which highlights the key benefits of improving children's eating habits.

Orwell presents a perspective that the experience of school dinners was different for staff (assistant masters) as they had "somewhat better food". He uses a metaphor to describe the headmaster's view that a boy's appetite is a "sort of morbid growth" implying it is unhealthy

and should be "kept in check". The repeated "maxim" suggests that they taught boys to believe that leaving a meal "as hungry as when you sat down" was normal. On the other hand, the Oliver article presents the idea that staff and children worked together – all "took part" in some way. Listing is used to show the range of activities experienced – the verbs "chopping, grating, picking" highlight the action and productivity of the day. The "prep work" involved "reading, sequencing, designing, measuring" and "finding out" – bringing attention to the educational advantages. Unlike in Orwell's time, the children learn to enjoy the experience of school meals.

In conclusion, both texts present very different perspectives on school dinners. Orwell's extract closes with details that would raise sympathy in his reader. "Literally" not having enough to eat highlights the hunger boys might face. The adjective 'solid' in "no solid meal" implies that after mid-day the boys received insubstantial food. Afternoon tea is described as "miserable" which connotes the boys' unhappiness as well as the meagre portions they were given. The final image of "bread and cheese, with water" is plain and basic, leaving the reader in no doubt as to how unexciting school food was for him. In contrast, the Jamie Oliver extract celebrates the idea of eating well at school. It ends with positive language choices "enthusiastic", "fun" and "success" so that the reader can share in the excitement of the ideas. This could persuade readers to get involved in the next Food Revolution Day or to think about how they can improve meals for children.

### **Feedback – even better**

This answer:

- has an introduction and a conclusion, both of which refer back to the question
- uses details from the text, embedded into sentences, to support the points it makes
- uses connectives throughout to show clear comparison between the texts
- selects the most striking words/phrases and explores their connotations
- identifies methods, eg choice of adjectives and metaphors
- analyses both language and structure and considers form and purpose comparing how each text might affect the reader and leaves them feeling or thinking
- demonstrates perceptive inference when exploring ideas and perspectives, eg "miserable" has connotations of unhappiness and implies meagre portions
- makes a number of comparative points throughout the answer – always bringing the focus on ideas and perspectives into their analysis

## **10. Comparing texts**

### **How to compare texts**

#### **Extracts**

##### **Experience: I fell out of the Sky**

I pulled the brake lines to increase the angle of the wing for extra life. But I forgot that I had tightened them before take-off and made them far more sensitive. I pulled too hard. That, combined with the eddies swirling from the trees and building ahead, caused a break in the airflow under the canopy. Instantly, it began to deflate.

I had just enough time to look up and see the thin material of my wing falling towards me like an enormous bunch of useless laundry. I was dropping like a stone.

Tumbling through the air with no way to stop is a sensation of utter helplessness: a truly stomach churning moment where you know you're not going forwards or upwards; you're just falling. There is no time to think. One second became two, two became three. I closed my eyes. Wallop.

Magazine article, The Guardian Weekend, 2014

##### **Skydiver survives 14,000 foot fall after his parachute and backup BOTH fail**

A thrillseeker survived a 14,000 foot fall when both his parachute and the emergency backup failed to deploy during a skydive in Melbourne, Australia. Brad Guy was doing a tandem skydive, strapped to an instructor, when he plummeted towards the ground as his family watched helpless in a nearby field. After making

the jump, which was a gift for his 21st birthday, Brad felt the main parachute deploy as they passed 4000 feet, but shortly after he heard his instructor begin to swear.

The parachute had torn as it opened, causing the pair to spin wildly as they fell.

Recognising something was wrong, Brad asked his instructor: "Are we going to die?" The only response his instructor, a veteran of 2000 tandem jumps, could give was "I don't know."

The backup parachute deployed at about 500 feet, but tangled with the remains of the main parachute as they continued to spiral downward.

Guy told local newspaper the Herald Sun: "Survival wasn't in my head at all. I was thinking, 'This ground's going to hit me and when it does, I'll be gone. I've brought my family here to watch me die.'"

Brad's mum Julie, dad Brian, boyfriend Artie and his three sisters and their families all watched in horror as the nightmare unfolded.

News report, The Mirror, Mikey Smith

### **Similarities**

- Purpose - both are informing and entertaining the reader.
- They are both about a similar topic, an airborne accident.
- Both use a specialist semantic field - The Guardian article refers to "brake lines...take-off...canopy..." The Mirror report uses "deploy" and "tandem skydive".
- Both use dramatic, emotive language to excite the reader. The Mirror report uses dramatic choices like "thrillseeker... plummeted... horror... nightmare" whilst The Guardian article uses phrases like "utter helplessness" and "stomach churning."

- Both structure the last paragraph in the extract with a dramatic phrase. In the news report “... as the nightmare unfolded” and in the article ‘Wallop’.
- Both texts are written in the past tense and the readers know from both headlines that the men survived.

## Differences

- Different form - extract 1 is a magazine article and extract 2 is an online news report.
- The Mirror report is describing details of the accident after the event, so the reader is presented with the emotions of the onlookers: “...his family watched helpless...all watched in horror.” This emphasis on the man’s family watching makes the incident more dramatic for the reader.
- The paramotoring article is written from the perspective of the man involved in the accident, so the reader is presented with his emotions. The focus is on his experience of this dramatic event.
- The multi-clause sentences in The Mirror report build a sense of anticipation, as the details of the dramatic event unfold.
- In the paramotoring article, lots of single clause, short sentences build the tension. The informality of the word “Wallop” in the paramotoring article is shocking and also perhaps creates an amusing tone for the reader.
- The humour is also suggested by the simile, “like an enormous bunch of useless laundry...” The contrast of this humour with the serious subject matter makes the text very effective.
- The tone in The Mirror report is more factual: “...14,000 foot fall...2000 tandem jumps...” The use of lots of statistics gives the report a more informative feel.
- The paramotoring article is more descriptive and uses simple, effective images: “I was dropping like a stone.” This simile gives a vivid, dramatic sense of the man’s experience.
- The Mirror report uses first person interviews, “Survival wasn’t in my head at all...”, to make the story more dramatic.

## **Sample exam question and answer**

Compare how the writers of Text 1 and Text 2 present their perspective and ideas about life as a writer.

Support your answer with detailed reference to the texts. (14 marks)

### **Text 1**

Here is an extract from the diaries of John Steinbeck.

Lincoln's Birthday. My first day of work in my new room. It is a very pleasant room and I have a drafting table to work on which I have always wanted – also a comfortable chair given me by Elaine [his wife]. In fact I have never had it so good and so comfortable. I have known such things to happen – the perfect pointed pencil – the paper persuasive – the fantastic chair and a good light and no writing. Surely a man is a most treacherous animal full of his treasured contradictions. He may not admit it but he loves his paradoxes.

Now that I have everything, we shall see whether I have anything. It is exactly that simple. Mark Twain used to write in bed – so did our greatest poet. But I wonder how often they wrote in bed – or whether they did it twice and the story took hold. Such things happen. Also I would like to know what things they wrote in bed and what things they wrote sitting up. All of this has to do with comfort in writing and what its value is. I should think that a comfortable body would let the mind go freely to its gathering. But such is the human that he might react in an opposite way. Remember my father's story about the man who did not dare be comfortable because he went to sleep. That might be true of me too. Now I am perfectly comfortable in body. I think my house is in order. Elaine, my beloved, is taking care of all the outside details to allow me the amount of free untroubled time every day to do my work. I can't think of anything else necessary to a writer except a story and the ability to tell it.

John Steinbeck

## Text 2

Here is an extract from Stephen King's advice book and memoir, *On Writing*. He is talking about his writing desk.

The last thing I want to tell you in this part is about my desk. For years I dreamed of having the sort of massive oak slab that would dominate a room - no more child's desk in a trailer laundry-closet, no more cramped knee-hole in a rented house. In 1981 I got the one I wanted and placed it in the middle of a spacious, skylighted study (it's a converted stable loft at the rear of the house). For six years I sat behind that desk either drunk or wrecked out of my mind, like a ship's captain in charge of a voyage to nowhere.

A year or two after I sobered up, I got rid of that monstrosity and put in a living-room suite where it had been, picking out the pieces and a nice Turkish rug with my wife's help. In the early nineties, before they moved on to their own lives, my kids sometimes came up in the evening to watch a basketball game or a movie and eat pizza. They usually left a boxful of crusts behind when they moved on, but I didn't care. They came, they seemed to enjoy being with me, and I know I enjoyed being with them. I got another desk - it's handmade, beautiful, and half the size of the T. Rex desk. I put it at the far west end of the office, in a corner under the eave. That eave is very like the one I slept under in Durham, but there are no rats in the walls and no senile grandmother downstairs yelling for someone to feed the horse. I'm sitting under it now, a fifty-three-year-old man with bad eyes, a gimp leg, and no hangover. I'm doing what I know how to do, and as well as I know how to do it. I came through all the stuff I told you about (and plenty more that I didn't), and now I'm going to tell you as much as I can about the job. As promised, it won't take long.

It starts with this: put your desk in the corner, and every time you sit down there to write, remind yourself why it isn't in the middle of the room. Life isn't a support-system for art. It's the other way around.'

On Writing, Stephen King



**Compare how the writers of Text 1 and Text 2 present their perspective and ideas about life as a writer.**

**Support your answer with detailed reference to the texts. (14 marks)**

Both texts are from a first-person perspective, but while Steinbeck's text is in the form of a diary, King's text combines memoir and advice, so also has a direct address to the 'you' of the reader.

The structure of Steinbeck's text is more fragmented, the writer moves around his memories and thoughts, almost like the writing is following a stream of consciousness. This is reflected by the use of single-clause sentences and dashes to link ideas. In contrast King uses time connectives to structure his text: "For years...In 1981...A year or two after..." This underlines the purpose of the text, to show the changes in his approach to writing.

The desk is a common element in both texts, but in King's it is much more important. He talks about the 'massive oak slab' he 'dreamed of' for years; the use of the hyperbolic adjective 'massive' reflects the physical dominance of the desk and its dominance in King's idea of a writer's life. This physical dominance is emphasised by the later metaphor of the 'T.Rex desk' – the image of the predatory dinosaur has connotations both of ridiculousness, but also of danger. In contrast, the extract from Steinbeck's diary has a simple 'drafting table', and the chair seems to be more important – the 'fantastic chair'. The use of the verb 'drafting' puts a focus on the physical act of writing.

Steinbeck notes the paradox of having everything you need to write (with the alliteration of the 'perfect pointed pencil') but 'no writing'. A similar contrast arises in Text 2, when King mentions having the perfect desk, yet being on 'a voyage to nowhere'. This



journey metaphor emphasises the lack of focused writing at this point in his career.

The comfort which Steinbeck enjoys is down to the care of his wife, who takes care of the 'outside details'. King does not want to be detached from life, instead on insisting that his desk must be 'in the corner', not 'in the middle of the room': he prefers to have his family around him.

He sums this up in the final metaphor of the extract from his memoir: that art is the 'support-system' for life, not the other way around. Steinbeck, however, seems to require his 'beloved' to be a support-system for his writing. The contrast may also be reflected in the tone of the two texts: Text 1 is quite elevated in its tone and vocabulary ('a most treacherous animal full of his treasured contradictions') but King writes in a deliberately down to earth way of the 'job' of writing.

## **Feedback**

- **This answer:**
- **moves smoothly from one text to another throughout**
- **considers the attitudes of the writers, the language and the structure**
- **shows both the similarities and the differences of the text, and links them together**
- **uses plenty of quotations, which are embedded into sentences**
- **includes points about the text that are developed and linked to other points**

# **11. Writing Fiction**

## **Story arc**

Most fictional (and non-fictional) stories follow a recognisable pattern. One pattern that is familiar to readers is the five-stage story arc. This structure is also used in films and television shows.

A five-stage story arc takes the reader through the following stages:

- **exposition** - an opening that hooks the reader and sets the scene
- **rising action** - builds tension
- **climax, or turning point** - the most dramatic part of the story
- **falling action** - realises the effects of the climax
- **resolution** - the story is concluded

A five-stage story arc showing exposition, rising action, climax, falling action and resolution.

For example, Cinderella

Exposition - Cinderella's mother has died and the stepmother moves in with her two daughters.

Rising action - the 'ugly sisters' make Cinderella do the housework and don't invite her to the ball.

Climax - with a little help from her fairy godmother, Cinderella makes it to the palace ball and dances with the prince.

Falling action - the prince finds Cinderella's glass slipper and travels the country to find her.

Resolution – despite the efforts of the ugly sisters, the prince finds Cinderella. They get married and live happily ever after.

### **A convincing close**

Aim to finish your story in a convincing way, tying up all the loose ends. Aim to resolve the story and leave your reader feeling satisfied with the way the story ends.

Note that cliffhangers can work well as chapter endings in novels, but they can be less satisfying at the end of a short story!

### **Vocabulary**

Aim to match your language to the mood of your piece.

For example, if you are writing about a topic that is sad or sinister,

'the clouds gathered conspiringly overhead, the rumbles of thunder like whispers between them' **would be more convincing than** 'the clouds above me floated by, each as fluffy as a marshmallow.'

I walked through the forest, crunching the leaves underfoot. The tall trees oozed a smell of summer – fresh and sweet. The branches, covered in moss, were soft and green.

Instead of telling your readers everything about a character or place, try to show them instead.

For example:

**Telling** - The woman walked into the room looking intimidating and angry.

**Showing** - The woman stormed into the room, her black coat flying behind her. Her scowl was fierce as she scanned the room. Her piercing eyes settled on Sarah.

**Telling** - It was midnight and she walked out to the garden.

**Showing** - The sky was cloudless and the stars filled every inch of it. The moon glowed on the roses, turning them silvery white as she tiptoed out into the dark.

### **Varying sentence openings**

**Vary the way that you start sentences to keep your writing interesting and lively. For example:**

Start your sentence with a...	Example
verb – an action word	<b>Running for her life</b> , Sarah shouted at the bus to stop.
simile - comparing something to something else	<b>As quiet as a whisper</b> , he turned to me.
preposition – indicates the position of someone or something	<b>Beyond</b> the gate, the road stretched far away.
adverb – modifies or describes a verb, adjective or another adverb	<b>Cautiously</b> , he moved away from the lion.
connective – joining word	<b>Despite</b> the sunshine, Mr Tucker was wearing a heavy coat.

**Here's a piece of writing that lacks variety:**

I woke up. The sun was beaming through the window and warmed my face.  
I turned towards it, closing my eyes to enjoy the moment. I stayed  
there for a moment and then got out of bed. I padded across  
to the  
window. I opened it to hear the birds outside. It looked like it  
was  
going to be a good day.

**Although this is well written, notice that most sentences start in the same way. The writer has mostly used simple sentences throughout.**

**Here is a second draft of this paragraph. Notice how the variety of sentences changes the feel of the piece:**

I opened my eyes to the warmth of the sun that was beaming through the window. Turning towards it, I closed my eyes. Moments later I got out of bed and padded across to the window. I opened it and heard the birds outside. I knew it was going to be a good day.

### **Sample Question**

**Write about a time when you, or someone you know, were surprised.**

The wind howled like a banshee turning the rain into a salvo of bullets. Was this a November day in Oxford? It was more like the monsoon season in Delhi! The roads were covered in puddles the size of small lakes. Walking along and seemingly unaware of it all was a schoolboy. Whistling as he strolled along, hands in his pockets, he was

casually making his way home from school. To say he was in a bit of a dream was an understatement. He'd been let out early because of the bad weather and, although he didn't much like either wind or rain he was in his new parka and, best of all, he was thrilled to the core at being let out of school early. That was why he was whistling. To him it was a summer's day!

That was when it happened.

A car came out of nowhere and drove right through a puddle that was doing a very good impression of a miniature lake. The water leapt up from the road with a life of its own and drenched the day-dreaming boy. He was jolted out of his reverie and stood there dazed and drenched. He didn't know what to do, but he knew he'd be in for it when he got home. His brand new parka had turned from green to a kind of dirty khaki-brown. This wasn't going to be fun. The parka had been a very expensive present from mum and dad.

## **Feedback**

- The story is absorbing and convincing.
- It maintains a consistent viewpoint.
- The tone, style and voice all match purpose, form and audience to create an engaging narrative.
- The sentences are varied in length and type to create a lively style.
- Punctuation is accurate throughout and sophisticated in places.
- Spelling is accurate and vocabulary choices are ambitious (eg 'banshee', 'understatement', 'reverie' and 'khaki-brown').
- The description is impressive with some good uses of figurative language eg 'like a banshee', 'thrilled to the core', 'leapt up' and 'dazed and drenched').

## **12. Non-fiction and transactional writing**

### **Writing a speech**

#### **Structure**

A speech often follows a three part structure:

1. a highly engaging and motivational **opening**
2. a well-structured **argument** with several main points that include objection handling
3. a dynamic and memorable **conclusion**

#### **Language**

A speech should be clear, coherent and should maintain a consistent point of view. The language you use will vary depending on your audience. In a speech to a professional audience, such as a business pitch or a talk to headteachers, formal language is more appropriate.

The purpose of a speech is often to convince listeners of a particular point of view. Language is typically persuasive.

Here are some persuasive devices you could include to make your speech more dynamic and memorable:

NB Examples are all from a speech **against** school uniforms.

Persuasive device	Definition	Example
<b>Rhetorical question</b>	A question posed to an audience, to which the speaker predicts the answer and gains support from the audience by asking.	<i>Wouldn't you feel happier if you could wear what you wanted to school?</i>
<b>Rule of three</b>	Grouping words or ideas in threes makes them memorable and persuasive.	<i>School uniforms are uncomfortable, itchy and worst of all, bland.</i>

<b>Emotive language</b>	Language that appeals to the emotions.	<i>Many students are forced to suffer the indignity of wearing clothes that do not match their personal style for the duration of their school careers.</i>
<b>Handling objections</b>	Consider what your opposition might say and deal with it before they do.	<i>Some people might say that uniforms save time, however...</i>
<b>Hyperbole</b>	Using exaggeration for effect.	<i>Millions of school children every year...</i>
<b>Anecdote</b>	Using real life examples to support your argument.	<i>One girl in a school in Dartford claims...</i>
<b>Personal pronouns</b>	Using 'we', 'I', 'you' to make your audience feel included.	<i>We all know how unimaginative school uniforms are...</i>

## Example

Here's a passage from a speech by Barack Obama about climate change. Notice how he shapes his language to match his audience and purpose:

We, the people, still believe that our obligations as Americans are not just to ourselves but to all prosperity. **We** will respond to the **threat** of climate change, knowing **that the failure to do so will betray our children** and future generations.

Some may still deny the overwhelming judgement of science, but none can avoid the **devastating impact of raging fires, crippling drought or powerful storms**. A path towards sustainable energy sources will be long and sometimes difficult, but America cannot resist this transition.

We **must** lead it! **We cannot concede** to other nations the technology that will power new jobs and new industries; **we must claim its promise**. That's how we will maintain our economic vitality and our national treasure. **You and I as citizens** have the power to set this country's course. **You and I as citizens** have the obligation to shape the debates of our time not only with the votes we cast but **with the voices we lift in defence** of our most ancient values and enduring ideas. **Will you join us?**

- the **audience** is American citizens
- the **purpose** is to convince people to take responsibility for acting on climate change
- note the repeated use of the **personal pronoun 'we'** within the opening paragraph to engage the listeners
- he deals with **objections** using the phrase 'Some may still deny' suggesting that the opposition are in a



minority 'some' and that their position is unsteady 'may'

- in the second paragraph, Obama uses the highly emotive language 'devastating', 'crippling' and 'powerful' to influence his listeners and to highlight the negative impact that climate change has had on America
- Obama then ends on a powerful message, using 'we' and 'our' to suggest to the audience that they are all together and he is working with them
- he uses forceful language and imperatives in the repeated 'We must'
- he finishes with a rhetorical question, calling the audience to take action

## Writing a letter

### Structure

A formal letter has a conventional structure. The sender's postal address goes in the top right hand corner. The recipient's postal address is written to the left and slightly below this with the date underneath.

A letter then opens with the greeting 'Dear...' If you do not know the name of the person you are writing to (for example if you were emailing a company about a product, rather than a particular person that works there), the convention is to start your letter with: 'Dear Sir/Madam'.

The initial paragraph usually outlines the overall aim of the letter, and the conclusion summarises the main points.

Conventionally, there are different ways to end a letter, depending on the addressee.

If you have named the recipient at the start, (eg Dear Mr Banks/Dear Freya) your letter ends with 'Yours sincerely'.

If you haven't named the recipient at the start (eg Dear Sir/Madam) your letter ends with 'Yours faithfully'.

## **Language**

In a formal letter, the convention is to use Standard English. The tone of your letter will vary depending on your purpose.

## **Example**

Here is an example of a job application letter (minus the sender's postal address and recipient's address). The writer's overall purpose is to **persuade** the reader of their suitability for the role.

20th July 2016

Dear Mr Hopkins,

I am writing in response to the recent advertisement for the position of sales assistant that has become available in your shop. I would like to be considered for the position.

I am currently working in a local coffee shop, where I am responsible for the service and distribution of food and drink to customers. I am a key holder for the premises, and my daily duties include taking orders, dealing with customer queries and managing the till takings at the end of the working day. I work as part of a small team to ensure that the needs of the customers are met.

Before working in the coffee shop, I spent several years working as a sales assistant in a bookshop. In this role, I gained extensive experience of organisation, stocktaking and meeting specific requests for customer orders. In this full-time role, I developed interpersonal skills and confidence within customer service.

In addition to this I can offer competent skills with Microsoft Office software and I am currently completing an evening course in accounting. I have included details of my GCSE qualifications in my attached CV.

Thank for you taking the time to read my application; I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely,

Marisa Ahmed

The opening paragraph outlines the purpose of the letter to the recipient. The writer then explains their previous experience in sales and refers to their qualifications to show that they are suitable. The closing paragraph refers back to the overall purpose, and assumes that the writer expects to hear from the recipient - this shows confidence.

Formal language is used and the writer ends her letter with 'Yours sincerely' because she has used her recipient's name at the start.

## Writing an article

### Structure

The basic structure of an article for a newspaper, magazine or website, is usually in three parts:

1. **opening** – engaging the reader, or outlining the main point of the article
2. **middle** – a series of paragraphs that go into more detail
3. **end** – a concluding paragraph that draws the points together

Within this structure you could also create a circular structure in which the conclusion connects back to the opening idea.

For example, an article about Kerala in India **opens** with the writer describing the view from a train. The **middle** section describes Alappuzha, the place the writer is travelling away from and goes into details about a boat trip they took there. In the

**concluding paragraph**, the writer brings us back to the train and muses on the highlights of his trip.

## **Language**

The language of an article depends upon the **purpose** and **audience**. The language of the article will fit the content and the intended readers. For example, an article about a recent film release would include language that deals with actors, scripts and performance and is likely to include the writer's opinions of the film.

Articles usually have a catchy, memorable **headline**. This helps to grab the reader's attention and entice them to read the whole article.

Articles are usually written in Standard English, but colloquial sayings or phrases might be used to emphasise a point. **Literary techniques** such as metaphor and simile make your writing more interesting and engaging. **Persuasive devices**, such as rule of three, rhetorical questions and hyperbole can encourage the reader to agree with your point of view.

## **Example**

### **Eat Right: Live Longer**

It has been scientifically proven that the less junk food a person consumes, the longer they are likely to live. So why isn't everyone dumping the junk? Jordan McIntyre investigates.

#### **Fast food equals fat**

A staple part of twenty-first century British home-life is the weekly takeaway treat: finger-licking burgers, sticky ribs and crispy chicken wings are, for many, the normal Friday night feast. The average national calorie count in the UK is a whopping 4500 a day, a key factor in the obesity cases that are soaring. Fast food is packed with fat and obesity contributes to a range of health issues - most significantly heart disease and depression. So why aren't we changing our lifestyles?

## Short on time

Families these days are spending less and less time at home during the working week. School commitments, work meetings and extra curricular activities mean that time is short and fewer people are prepared to put in the effort to prepare fresh, healthy meals.

And when time is tight, it seems we are even more willing to compromise our waistlines for a little bit of what we fancy – fast fatty food.

## Eat yourself healthy

However, Georgia Thomas of the University of Food says, 'I am convinced that it is possible to live a busy lifestyle AND prepare healthy, satisfying meals. It seems that people have simply got out of the habit of cooking. We are busy people; how do we reward ourselves? You guessed it - food.' Britain clearly needs to shift the stodge, and fast.

The headline grabs the reader's interest and introduces the article. The writer uses parallelism by using two imperative or command phrases 'Eat well' followed by 'live longer'. **Alliteration** is also used with the repetition of 'l'.

The **rhetorical question** in the opening paragraph encourages the reader to engage with the topic. The **subheadings** direct the reader through the text, and act as mini headlines. The writer uses colloquial sayings such as 'a little bit of what we fancy' and 'shift the stodge' to create a lively, conversational tone.

The final paragraph uses quotations from an expert to add credibility to the argument. You would expect the article to go on to explore how we can eat healthily and to conclude with an explanation of how easy it is to do this.

# Task

Write an article for a magazine in which you argue for or against public libraries.

In your article you could include:

- how libraries are used
- how libraries compare to the internet
- the positives and negatives of using public libraries

## Bring on the Books!

It seems that more and more people are glued to their screens these days. You see them walking through the streets, phones in hand, barely even noticing the world around them. They're like zombies, not really present in the real world at all. And their brains are rotting away because rather than relying on books for information and memory, they outsource their minds to the Internet.

This is a potentially dangerous habit. In fact, for many people, their dependency on the Internet is bordering on serious addiction.

What they need is bibliotherapy – and the library is just the place to get it!

Libraries are storehouses of books. And books are more reliable than websites. They have been through a process of checking and editing that doesn't always happen online. Our libraries are valuable resources. Rather than trading them in for social spaces, we should find ways to make more of them.

In fact, destroying libraries in favour of social spaces would be criminal. There are already plenty of places where people can go to socialise: coffee shops, leisure centres and parks, to name a few. The beauty of the library is that it is a sanctuary. It is a place of peaceful focus and learning.

Let's make use of our libraries...and our brains!

## Feedback – even better

- A convincing and lively argument.
- Appropriate language used throughout.
- Some sophisticated vocabulary choices: 'dependency', 'sanctuary', 'bibliotherapy'.
- A memorable headline using alliteration and imperative to engage the reader.
- Emotive language used persuasively: 'destroying libraries...would be criminal'.
- Uses a simile: 'like zombies'.

## 13. Using language effectively

### Literary techniques

There are a number of literary techniques that can make descriptions more vivid and creative. Here are some examples:

Technique	Examples
<b>Simile</b> - compares one thing with another using 'as' or 'like'.	The trees stood <b>as tall as</b> towers.
<b>Metaphor</b> - uses an image or idea to represent something else.	The <b>circus was a magnet</b> for the children. <i>(ie The children were pulled towards the circus).</i>
<b>Personification</b> - a use of obvious exaggeration for rhetorical effect.	The sun <b>scorched</b> through the day.
<b>Onomatopoeia</b> - words sound like the noise they represent.	The autumn leaves and twigs <b>cracked and crunched</b> underfoot.
<b>Alliteration</b> - repetition of a consonant sound in a series of words.	The <b>seahorse spiralled</b> , seeking <b>safety</b> and <b>solace</b> .
<b>Assonance</b> - repetition of a vowel sounds in a series of words.	He <b>sneezed</b> and <b>wheezed</b> , could hardly breathe.
<b>Oxymoron</b> - a phrase combining two or more contradictory terms.	There was a <b>deafening silence</b>
<b>Antithesis</b> - putting two opposite ideas together to highlight contrasts.	'That's one <b>small step</b> for man, <b>one giant leap</b> for mankind.' (Neil Armstrong)
<b>Parenthesis</b> - a phrase that adds extra detail.	Jess, <b>who was fifteen</b> , loved her English lessons.

### Example

The ground crumbled **like icing sugar** under my feet as I heaved towards the summit. The trees below were dots to my squinting eyes. The sun was relentless and beat down on my back as I wiped drips of salty sweat from my neckline. The **deafening silence** of the chasm below filled me with dread. Suddenly, eagles came into view, breaking the silence, screeching in hunger.

## **Rhetorical devices**

Here are some types of rhetorical techniques and examples of how they can be used:

<b>Technique</b>	<b>Examples</b>
<b>Flattery - complimenting your audience.</b>	<b>A person of your intelligence deserves much better than this.</b>
<b>Hyperbole - exaggerated language used for effect.</b>	<b>It is simply out of this world – stunning!</b>
<b>Personal pronouns - ‘I’, ‘you’ and ‘we’.</b>	<b>You are the key to this entire idea succeeding - we will be with you all the way. I can’t thank you enough!</b>
<b>Imperatives - instructional language.</b>	<b>Get on board and join us!</b>
<b>Triples - grouping language in threes.</b>	<b>Safer streets means comfort, reassurance and peace of mind for you, your family and your friends.</b>
<b>Emotive language - language that appeals to the emotions.</b>	<b>There are thousands of animals at the mercy of our selfishness.</b>
<b>Statistics and figures - factual data used in a persuasive way.</b>	<b>80% of people agreed that this would change their community for the better.</b>
<b>Rhetorical question - a question which implies its own answer.</b>	<b>Who doesn’t want success?</b>



# 14. Vocabulary

- **Good** - superb, fantastic, excellent, brilliant, outstanding, spectacular.
- **Nice** - marvellous, enjoyable, pleasant, wonderful, glorious.
- **Very** - extremely, highly, deeply, terribly, hugely, massively.
- **Happy** - ecstatic, cheerful, pleased, overjoyed, elated, thrilled.
- **Big** - huge, gigantic, ginormous, enormous, colossal, immense.
- **Hate** - despise, detest, repulsed, loathe, condemn, dislike.
- **Said** - shouted, bellowed, whispered, sniggered, mumbled, grunted, sang, exclaimed.
- **Walked** - strutted, bounded, sprinted, ambled, trudged, wandered, trundled.