

AQA · GCSE ENGLISH LANGUAGE 8700

Paper 1 — Explorations in Creative Reading and Writing

November 2023 exam series

MARK SCHEME

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GCSE ENGLISH LANGUAGE 8700/1

Paper 1 Explorations in creative reading and writing

Mark scheme

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Mark schemes are prepared by the Lead Assessment Writer and considered, together with the relevant questions, by a panel of subject teachers. This mark scheme includes any amendments made at the standardisation events which all associates participate in and is the scheme which was used by them in this examination. The standardisation process ensures that the mark scheme covers the students' responses to questions and that every associate understands and applies it in the same correct way. As preparation for standardisation each associate analyses a number of students' scripts. Alternative answers not already covered by the mark scheme are discussed and legislated for. If, after the standardisation process, associates encounter unusual answers which have not been raised they are required to refer these to the Lead Examiner.

It must be stressed that a mark scheme is a working document, in many cases further developed and expanded on the basis of students' reactions to a particular paper. Assumptions about future mark schemes on the basis of one year's document should be avoided; whilst the guiding principles of assessment remain constant, details will change, depending on the content of a particular examination paper.

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Introduction

The information provided for each question is intended to be a guide to the kind of answers anticipated and is neither exhaustive nor prescriptive. **All appropriate responses should be given credit.**

Level of response marking instructions

Level of response mark schemes for GCSE English Language are broken down into four levels (where appropriate). In the first column each level is identified with one or two key words that represent the differences in the skills then described. These key words show the progression from Level 1 to 4 and are:

Level 4	Perceptive, detailed
Level 3	Clear, relevant
Level 2	Some, attempts
Level 1	Simple, limited.

This is followed in the second column by a description of the different qualities required in the student's answer for that level. These are called the skills descriptors. In order to reach a given level, a student must fulfil one or more of the skills descriptors for that level.

The third column of the mark scheme is the Indicative Standard. This is an important feature of the mark scheme for GCSE English Language. It provides exemplification of the skills descriptors at each level and offers a small number of different comments at the required standard to give an indication of the quality of response that is typical for that level. It shows the progression from Level 1 to 4.

The Indicative Standard is not intended to be a model answer nor a complete response, and it does not exemplify required content. Students may reach a given level by making **one or more** comments of the quality demonstrated by the Indicative Standard and do not have to meet all the skill descriptors at that level.

The standardising scripts will further exemplify each of the levels. You must refer to the standardising material **throughout your marking**.

Step 1 Annotate the response

When marking a response you should first read through the student's answer and annotate each section using the comments from the statement bank to show the qualities that are being demonstrated, as instructed during standardising. You can then award a level and a mark.

Step 2 Determine a level

Start at the lowest level of the mark scheme and use it as a ladder to see whether the answer meets the descriptors for that level. The descriptors for the level indicate the different qualities that might be seen in the student's answer for that level. If it meets the lowest level then go to the next one and decide if it meets this level, and so on, until you have a match between the level descriptor and the answer. With practice and familiarity you will find that for better answers you will be able to quickly skip through the lower levels of the mark scheme.

The Indicative Standard column in the mark scheme will help you determine the correct level. Remember, students may reach a given level by making **one or more** comments of the quality demonstrated by the Indicative Standard and do **not** have to meet all the skill descriptors at that level. It is not the number of references, but the quality of the comments that will determine the level. The annotation you added to the script at Step 1 will help you determine the correct level.

Step 3 Determine a mark

Once you have assigned a level you need to decide on the mark. This requires you to fine tune within the level to see how well each of the skills descriptors for that level has been met. A student only has to meet a skills descriptor at a given level **once** to be awarded that level. Since responses rarely match a level in all respects, you need to balance out the range of skills achieved and allow strong performance in some aspects to compensate for other skills that may be only partially fulfilled. Again, the annotation added at Step 1 will help you determine the mark.

Reference to the standardising scripts throughout the marking period is essential. This will help you apply the level descriptors accurately and consistently. There will usually be an answer in the standardising materials which will correspond with each level of the mark scheme. This answer will have been awarded a mark by the Lead Examiner. You can compare the student's answer with the example to determine if it is the same standard, better or worse than the example. You can then use this to allocate a mark for the answer based on the Lead Examiner's mark on the example.

You may well need to read back through the answer as you apply the mark scheme to clarify points and assure yourself that the level and the mark are appropriate.

An answer which contains nothing of relevance to the question must be awarded no marks.

Advice

In fairness to students, all examiners must use the same marking methods. The following advice may seem obvious, but all examiners must follow it closely.

1. Refer constantly to the mark scheme and standardising scripts throughout the marking period.
2. Always credit accurate, relevant and appropriate responses that are not necessarily covered by the mark scheme or the standardising scripts.
3. Use the full range of marks. Do not hesitate to give full marks if the response merits it.
4. Remember the key to accurate and fair marking is consistency.
5. If you have any doubt about how to allocate marks to a response, consult your Team Leader.

SECTION A: READING – Assessment Objectives

AO1	• Identify and interpret explicit and implicit information and ideas. • Select and synthesise evidence from different texts.
AO2	• Explain, comment on and analyse how writers use language and structure to achieve effects and influence readers, using relevant subject terminology to support their views.
AO3	• Compare writers' ideas and perspectives, as well as how these are conveyed, across two or more texts.
AO4	• Evaluate texts critically and support this with appropriate textual references.

SECTION B: WRITING – Assessment Objectives

AO5	• Communicate clearly, effectively and imaginatively, selecting and adapting tone, style and register for different forms, purposes and audiences. • Organise information and ideas, using structural and grammatical features to support coherence and cohesion of texts.
AO6	• Candidates must use a range of vocabulary and sentence structures for clarity, purpose and effect, with accurate spelling and punctuation. (This requirement must constitute 20% of the marks for each specification as a whole).

Assessment Objective	Section A
AO1	✓
AO2	✓
AO3	N/A
AO4	✓
	Section B
AO5	✓
AO6	✓

0 1 Read again the first part of the source, from **lines 1 to 5**.

List **four** things about Roland from this part of the source.

[4 marks]

Give 1 mark for each point about Roland:

- responses must be drawn only from lines 1 to 5 of the text
- responses must show some evidence of selection
- responses can be quotations or paraphrases
- responses can be a single word; full sentences are not required.

Note: The indicative content must not be treated as exhaustive, and reference must be made to the selected section of the text.

AO1	• Identify and interpret explicit and implicit information and ideas • Select and synthesise evidence from different texts
This assesses bullet point 1: identify and interpret explicit and implicit information and ideas	
Indicative content Students may include: • he was in London [✓] • he was in the library [✓] • he was behind a pillar [✓] • he was sitting [✓] • he had a table [✓] • the London library was his favourite place [✓] • to his right was a window [✓] • he could see leaves [✓] • he was sitting [✓] at a table [✓] • he was in the library [✓] at 10am [✓] • he was in the London [✓] Library [✓] • he was behind a square [✓] pillar [✓] • he could see a clock [✓] over the fireplace [✓] • he could see the leaves [✓] of St James' Square [✓] • he could see leaves [✓] through the window [✓] • he could see the clock [✓] over the fireplace [✓] • he was sitting [✓] at a small [✓] table [✓] • he was sitting [✓] at a single [✓] table [✓] • to his right was a high [✓] sunny [✓] window [✓] • he was looking for old [✓] copies [✓] of Ash's poetry.[✓] • to his right was a high [✓] sunny [✓] window [✓] • there was a high [✓] sunny [✓] window [✓] to his right • he could see leaves [✓] through the high [✓] sunny [✓] window [✓] • he was sitting [✓] at a small [✓] single [✓] table [✓] • he was sitting [✓] at the table [✓] he liked [✓] best [✓] • he could see high [✓] green [✓] leaves [✓] of St James' Square [✓]	

- he was in the library [✓] in September [✓] 1986 [✓] at 10 [✓] in the morning [✓]

Or any other valid responses that you are able to verify by checking the source.

Reject:

- he went to the library at 10 in the morning
- he had a clock
- he had a window
- he had a pillar
- anything about the setting that doesn't include Roland.

Ask yourself the following questions:

- does it tell you something about Roland?
- is it from the correct section of the text?
- is it true/accurate?
- if you precede the response with 'Roland is...' or 'Roland was...' does it make sense?

0 2Look in detail at this extract, from **lines 6 to 14** of the source:

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

You could include the writer's choice of:

- words and phrases
- language features and techniques
- sentence forms.

[8 marks]**AO2**

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

This question assesses Language ie: Words/Phrases/Language Features/Language Techniques/Sentence Forms

Level	Skills Descriptors	Indicative Standard
		This indicative standard is not a model answer, nor a complete response. Nor does it seek to exemplify any particular content. Rather, it is an indication of the standard for the level.
Level 4 Perceptive, detailed analysis 7–8 marks	Shows perceptive and detailed understanding of language: • Analyses the effects of the writer's choices of language • Selects a range of judicious textual detail • Makes sophisticated and accurate use of subject terminology	The metaphor 'bandaged about and about' highlights to us the fragility of the book because it has clearly been mistreated and neglected, hence the need for it to be 'bandaged'. Alternatively, 'bandage' also has connotations of care, which could suggest that it was once a treasured item. The repetition of 'about and about' emphasises that someone has made a concerted effort to 'heal' this damaged book, taking pains to protect and preserve it.
Level 3 Clear, relevant explanation 5–6 marks	Shows clear understanding of language: • Explains clearly the effects of the writer's choices of language • Selects a range of relevant textual detail • Makes clear and accurate use of subject terminology	The writer uses the metaphor 'bandaged about and about', which illustrates the neglect and damage that this book has suffered over the years because 'bandaged' has connotations of injury. Furthermore, the repetition of 'about and about' suggests that the book has had to be thoroughly repaired because of significant harm.

Level 2 Some understanding and comment 3–4 marks	Shows some understanding of language: • Attempts to comment on the effect of language • Selects some appropriate textual detail • Makes some use of subject terminology, mainly appropriately	The writer says that the book 'was bandaged about and about', which is a metaphor because books can't really be injured. It shows that the book hasn't been looked after properly. The word 'bandaged' makes it seem like the book is injured.
Level 1 Simple, limited comment 1–2 marks	Shows simple awareness of language: • Offers simple comment on the effect of language • Selects simple references or textual details • Makes simple use of subject terminology, not always appropriately	The writer says that the book 'was bandaged about and about' which means that the book is wrapped up because there is something wrong with it.
Level 0 No marks	Nothing to reward	

Note: If a student writes only about language outside of the given lines, the response should be placed in either Level 1 or Level 2, according to the quality of what is written.

AO2 content may include the effect of language features such as:

- metaphor: 'It was bandaged about and about with dirty white tape', suggesting injury, damage or neglect over time
- repetition: 'dust', 'about and about' to emphasise its age, and 'leaf after leaf', suggesting an endless amount of contents escaping
- listing: 'The book was thick and black and covered with dust', illustrating its age and suggesting that it has been forgotten over time
- simile: 'The book sprang apart, like a box', implying that the contents had a desire or desperation to escape
- personification: 'it had been laid to rest', a phrase which is usually associated with death, suggesting a form of resurrection
- adjectives: 'bowed and creaking', 'a black, thick, tenacious Victorian dust', 'rusty writing', 'faded paper, blue, cream, grey', enhancing the idea of age and neglect, but also persistence ('tenacious').

0 3 You now need to think about the **whole** of the source.

This text is from the beginning of a novel.

How has the writer structured the text to interest you as a reader?

You could write about:

- what the writer focuses your attention on at the beginning of the source
- how and why the writer changes this focus as the source develops
- any other structural features that interest you.

[8 marks]

AO2

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

This question assesses how the writer has structured a text. Structural features can be: at a whole text level eg beginnings/endings/perspective shifts; at a paragraph level eg topic change/aspects of cohesion; and at a sentence level when judged to contribute to whole structure.

Level	Skills Descriptors	Indicative Standard
		This indicative standard is not a model answer, nor a complete response. Nor does it seek to exemplify any particular content. Rather, it is an indication of the standard for the level.
Level 4 Perceptive, detailed analysis 7–8 marks	Shows perceptive and detailed understanding of structural features: • Analyses the effects of the writer's choices of structural features • Selects a range of judicious examples • Makes sophisticated and accurate use of subject terminology	At first, the writer explores the peace and calm of the library. When the focus moves to discovering the book, there is an immediate sense of secrets being freed, as it was 'exhumed from the library safe' and then freed from the 'bindings.' After the pivotal moment when the introduction of the letter captures his attention, time accelerates until 'the clanging bell... signifying the end of study'. Here, the idea of mystery and covert messages are introduced. By the end, the secrets have been located but not read. The 'clanging bell' reminds Roland that his time has run out; his theft of the letters at the end reveals his determination and the possible importance of the secrets.
Level 3 Clear, relevant explanation 5–6 marks	Shows clear understanding of structural features: • Explains clearly the effects of the writer's choices of structural features • Selects a range of relevant examples • Makes clear and accurate use of subject terminology	At the beginning, the library was quiet and then the writer switches to the book itself that had been 'exhumed from the library safe,' suggesting that something important had been found. In the middle, the writer reminds the reader of the 'tireless' monotony of Roland's tasks. The pace and his interest suddenly quicken and intensify, when at the end, he finds the letter. His earlier hunger forgotten, time has run out so he steals the letters to explore his discovery.

Level 2 Some understanding and comment 3–4 marks	Shows some understanding of structural features: - Attempts to comment on the effect of structural features - Selects some appropriate examples - Makes some use of subject terminology, mainly appropriately	After Roland sits down with the book, it seems like time is going slowly as he counts it down from 'ten-thirty' to 'eleven' to 'eleven-fifteen'. This presents Roland's studying as taking longer than expected so he is watching the clock and hungry. Then he finds the mystery letter and gets excited, which makes us want to know what is in the letter. By the end, he leaves taking the letters with him.
Level 1 Simple, limited comment 1–2 marks	Shows simple awareness of structural features: - Offers simple comment on the effect of structure - Selects simple reference(s) or example(s) - Makes simple use of subject terminology, not always appropriately	At the beginning the story is about Roland, who is doing work in a library. He is reading a book and the time is being counted down from 'ten-thirty', 'eleven' then 'eleven-fifteen'. This shows that he's there for a long time. Then he finds a letter but we don't find out what is in it.
Level 0 No marks	Nothing to reward	

AO2 content may include the effect of structural features such as:

- linear structure: starting by making the book seem old and neglected, and building the sense of an exciting discovery
- character development: Roland begins as someone obedient who follows the rules and then becomes more rebellious
- narrative perspective: 3rd person but with access to Roland's inner thoughts (omniscient narrator) to reveal how his thoughts and feelings change after the discovery
- motif of time: starting with the clock at the beginning, the repetition throughout and then ending with the 'clanging bell', suggesting that the book is intriguing and exciting as it has held Roland's attention
- focus shifts: the external world of the quiet library and the internal world of Roland's growing excitement, enhancing the sense that this discovery is significant.

0 4Focus this part of your answer on the second part of the source, from **line 18 to the end**.

A student said, “It is clear that the letters Roland finds within the book must be something special. The writer shows us that it is not surprising that Roland steals them.”

To what extent do you agree?

In your response, you could:

- consider your own impressions of the letters
- evaluate how the writer describes Roland’s reactions to finding the letters
- support your response with references to the text.

[20 marks]

AO4 Evaluate texts critically and support this with appropriate textual references		
Level	Skills Descriptors	Indicative Standard
		This indicative standard is not a model answer, nor a complete response. Nor does it seek to exemplify any particular content. Rather, it is an indication of the standard for the level.
Level 4 Perceptive, detailed evaluation 16–20 marks	Shows perceptive and detailed evaluation: • Develops a convincing and critical response to the focus of the statement • Shows perceptive understanding of writer’s methods • Selects a range of judicious textual detail • Evaluates critically and in detail the effect(s) on the reader	I completely agree the letters are something special. By referring to the book as a ‘treasure-trove’, the writer conveys the book’s significant contents because ‘treasure’ has usually been hidden for a long time and is difficult to find. The writer places Roland in the metaphorical position of the treasure hunter who knows he has found something immensely valuable, even before he finds the precious letters. It is unsurprising, then, that he steals the letters because he clearly has a powerful connection to this discovery. Although the words ‘seized’ and ‘impulse’ imply that his urge to steal the letters is sudden and uncontrollable, the reader can see that this feeling has been building; he was ‘reluctant to tell’ Blackadder and he ‘enjoyed possessing’ the knowledge on his own. It therefore seems inevitable that he would keep the letters to himself.
Level 3 Clear, relevant evaluation 11–15 marks	Shows clear and relevant evaluation: • Makes a clear and relevant response to the focus of the statement • Shows clear understanding of writer’s methods • Selects a range of relevant textual references • Evaluates clearly the effect(s) on the reader	I agree the letters must be something special and Roland instantly understands this. The writer uses the metaphor ‘treasure-trove’ when referring to the book, suggesting that Roland knows that it will be of value to his work because it contains something precious. Despite the significance he attaches to the letters, it is still a surprise when he steals them after being ‘seized by a strange and uncharacteristic impulse’. The verb ‘seized’ suggests that Roland is not in control of his own actions, so stealing the letters is a surprise to us because this ‘impulse’ is not in his usual nature.

Level 2 Some, evaluation 6–10 marks	Shows some attempts at evaluation: • Makes some response to the focus of the statement • Shows some understanding of writer's methods • Selects some appropriate textual reference(s) • Makes some evaluative comment(s) on effect(s) on the reader	I agree that Roland knows the book is special because he calls it a 'treasure-trove', which shows there may be something valuable inside. When he is 'seized by a strange and uncharacteristic impulse', this suggests that this behaviour is unusual and unexpected so that it is a surprise when he steals the letters.
Level 1 Simple, limited comment 1–5 marks	Shows simple, limited evaluation: • Makes a simple, limited response to the focus of the statement • Shows limited understanding of writer's methods • Selects simple, limited textual reference(s) • Makes simple, limited evaluative comment(s) on effect(s) on reader	I agree because Roland calls it a 'treasure-trove' which tells us that it is really special. However, I was surprised when he stole the letters because it says 'seized by a strange and uncharacteristic impulse'. The word 'strange' shows he wouldn't normally steal something.
Level 0 No marks	Nothing to reward.	

Note: Reference to the writer's methods may be implicit without specific mention of the writer. Similarly, the evaluative 'I do/I don't agree' may be implicit. In both these cases credit should be given according to the quality of what is written.

AO4 content may include the evaluation of ideas and methods such as:

- 'dead leaves... enlivened' suggests the book is coming back to life and trying to gain Roland's attention
- personification of 'specks of dust danced' creates an anticipatory, excited atmosphere
- reference to the book as a 'treasure-trove' implies it is valuable
- the metaphor of the 'endless quest for knowledge' suggests Roland feels his job is special rather than the book/letters in particular
- short sentences and questions after the letters are discovered creates sense of excitement
- Roland as someone who follows the rules through the reported speech of him asking the librarian for permission to study the book
- Roland is 'reluctant' to tell Blackadder, foreshadowing his theft of the letters
- he was 'seized by a strange and uncharacteristic impulse', suggesting it was a surprising thing for him to do.

0 5

A magazine has asked for contributions for their creative writing section.

Either

Write a description of a library as suggested by this picture:



or

Write a story about discovering a hidden object.

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

AO5 Content and Organisation

Communicate clearly, effectively and imaginatively, selecting and adapting tone, style and register for different forms, purposes and audiences.

Organise information and ideas, using structural and grammatical features to support coherence and cohesion of texts.

Level		Skills descriptors
Level 4 19–24 marks Compelling, Convincing Communication	Upper Level 4 22–24 marks	Content • Communication is convincing and compelling • Tone, style and register are assuredly matched to purpose and audience • Extensive and ambitious vocabulary with sustained crafting of linguistic devices Organisation • Varied and inventive use of structural features • Writing is compelling, incorporating a range of convincing and complex ideas • Fluently linked paragraphs with seamlessly integrated discourse markers
	Lower Level 4 19–21 marks	Content • Communication is convincing • Tone, style and register are convincingly matched to purpose and audience • Extensive vocabulary with conscious crafting of linguistic devices Organisation • Varied and effective structural features • Writing is highly engaging with a range of developed complex ideas • Consistently coherent use of paragraphs with integrated discourse markers
Level 3 13–18 marks Consistent, Clear Communication	Upper Level 3 16–18 marks	Content • Communication is consistently clear • Tone, style and register are clearly and consistently matched to purpose and audience • Increasingly sophisticated vocabulary and phrasing, chosen for effect with a range of successful linguistic devices Organisation • Effective use of structural features • Writing is engaging, using a range of clear, connected ideas • Coherent paragraphs with integrated discourse markers

	Lower Level 3 13–15 marks	Content • Communication is generally clear • Tone, style and register are generally matched to purpose and audience • Vocabulary clearly chosen for effect and appropriate use of linguistic devices Organisation • Usually effective use of structural features • Writing is engaging, with a range of connected ideas • Usually coherent paragraphs with range of discourse markers
Level 2 7–12 marks Some successful Communication	Upper Level 2 10–12 marks	Content • Communicates with some sustained success • Some sustained attempt to match tone, style and register to purpose and audience • Conscious use of vocabulary with some use of linguistic devices Organisation • Some use of structural features • Increasing variety of linked and relevant ideas • Some use of paragraphs and some use of discourse markers
	Lower Level 2 7–9 marks	Content • Communicates with some success • Attempts to match tone, style and register to purpose and audience • Begins to vary vocabulary with some use of linguistic devices Organisation • Attempts to use structural features • Some linked and relevant ideas • Attempt to write in paragraphs with some discourse markers, not always appropriate

Level 1 1–6 marks Simple, Limited Communication	Upper Level 1 4–6 marks	Content - Communicates simply - Simple awareness of matching tone, style and register to purpose and audience - Simple vocabulary; simple linguistic devices Organisation - Evidence of simple structural features - One or two relevant ideas, simply linked - Random paragraph structure
	Lower Level 1 1–3 marks	Content - Limited communication - Occasional sense of matching tone, style and register to purpose and audience - Simple vocabulary Organisation - Limited or no evidence of structural features - One or two unlinked ideas - No paragraphs
Level 0 No marks	Students will not have offered any meaningful writing to assess. Nothing to reward.	

AO6 Technical Accuracy

Students must use a range of vocabulary and sentence structures for clarity, purpose and effect, with accurate spelling and punctuation. (This requirement must constitute 20% of the marks for each specification as a whole.)

Level	Skills descriptors
Level 4 13–16 marks	• Sentence demarcation is consistently secure and consistently accurate • Wide range of punctuation is used with a high level of accuracy • Uses a full range of appropriate sentence forms for effect • Uses Standard English consistently and appropriately with secure control of complex grammatical structures • High level of accuracy in spelling, including ambitious vocabulary • Extensive and ambitious use of vocabulary
Level 3 9–12 marks	• Sentence demarcation is mostly secure and mostly accurate • Range of punctuation is used, mostly with success • Uses a variety of sentence forms for effect • Mostly uses Standard English appropriately with mostly controlled grammatical structures • Generally accurate spelling, including complex and irregular words • Increasingly sophisticated use of vocabulary
Level 2 5–8 marks	• Sentence demarcation is mostly secure and sometimes accurate • Some control of a range of punctuation • Attempts a variety of sentence forms • Some use of Standard English with some control of agreement • Some accurate spelling of more complex words • Varied use of vocabulary
Level 1 1–4 marks	• Occasional use of sentence demarcation • Some evidence of conscious punctuation • Simple range of sentence forms • Occasional use of Standard English with limited control of agreement • Accurate basic spelling • Simple use of vocabulary
Level 0 No marks	Students' spelling, punctuation etc is sufficiently poor to prevent understanding or meaning.