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AQA · GCSE ENGLISH LANGUAGE 8700

Paper 1 — Explorations in Creative Reading and Writing

November 2024 exam series

MARK SCHEME

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GCSE
ENGLISH LANGUAGE
8700/1

Paper 1 Explorations in creative reading and writing

Mark scheme

November 2024

Version: 1.0 Final

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.

No student should be disadvantaged on the basis of their gender identity and/or how they refer to the gender identity of others in their exam responses.

A consistent use of 'they/them' as a singular and pronouns beyond 'she/her' or 'he/him' will be credited in exam responses in line with existing mark scheme criteria.

Further copies of this mark scheme are available from aqa.org.uk

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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.

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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.

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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 4**.

List **four** things Rita thinks or does from this part of the source.

[4 marks]

Give 1 mark for each point about what Rita thinks or does:

- responses must be drawn only from lines 1–4
- responses must relate to what Rita thinks or does
- responses must show some evidence of selection
- responses can be quotations or paraphrase
- 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:

One mark:
- she is driving
- she is frightened by/afraid of/ disturbed by the forest
- she thinks that the forest light is/has gone a 'weird green'
- she wonders if the turning is around the next corner
- she takes a bend too fast
- she slams her foot on the brake

Two marks
- she thinks the forest looks like it will eat them [✓] alive [✓]
- she tightens her grip [✓] on the steering wheel [✓]
- she wonders if she's missed the turning [✓] to the house [✓]

Reject:

- she is eaten by the forest
- branches are thrashing the windows
- she wanders
- the lane narrows further
- thinks she has made a wrong turn
- she missed the turning
- anything about the surroundings that isn't linked to what Rita thinks or does.

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

Ask yourself the following questions:

- does it tell you something that Rita thinks or does?
- is it from the correct section of the text?

- is it true/accurate?
- if you precede the response with 'Rita...' does it make sense?

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0 2 Look in detail at this extract, from **lines 8 to 14** of the source:

How does the writer use language here to describe Foxcote Manor?

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 writer develops the image of a rundown and neglected house by focusing on a key part of its structure, the roof. By personifying this using the simile 'sags in the middle, like a snapped spine', it suggests that the fundamental backbone of the house is drastically weakened, causing instability and a loss of control all around it. The writer also uses the verb 'sags', which not only has connotations of drooping or sinking, as the roof is, but also suggests decline, further emphasising that the house as a whole is deteriorating.
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 presents Foxcote Manor as having a serious problem with its structure. The simile 'sags in the middle, like a snapped spine' personifies the roof as a badly injured person. A spine keeps a skeleton upright, so the roof's central part being 'snapped' implies that the roof cannot support the chimneys and its strength is gone. The verb 'sags' suggests that the broken roof pulls down everything around it.

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 describes Foxcote Manor as badly damaged. There is a simile to describe the roof when it says 'sags in the middle, like a snapped spine'. By comparing the house to a part of the body the writer is suggesting that the house is broken and damaged because it has not been looked after very well. The word 'sags' suggests it could be about to fall down.
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 describes Foxcote Manor in a bad way. It says that the roof 'sags in the middle, like a snapped spine'. This shows that the roof is not very good and you wouldn't want to live somewhere like that.
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:

- verbs: 'erupts', 'lifted', to introduce the intimidating presence of the house
- juxtaposition: 'wrecked beauty', to suggest the house's decline
- personification: 'windows blink drunkenly', suggesting a lack of balance
- natural imagery: 'colossal trees', 'ivy suckers up', creating a feeling of neglect as nature takes control
- simile: 'sags in the middle, like a snapped spine' to describe the extent of the damage to the roof
- listing/tripling: 'dense, bristling, alive' to emphasise how nature has taken over
- contrast: 'elegant' contrasted with 'wrecked', emphasising the difference between the London townhouse and Foxcote Manor.

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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	Having established Rita's anxiety at being in the forest, the writer uses a pivotal point to suddenly shift our focus. By saying 'It was meant to be a London nannying job', it moves us from the present to the past and begins to explain why Rita has already seemed so reluctant to be there. By using this flashback, the writer juxtaposes the high anxiety of the present with the much more hopeful past, establishing an uncomfortable contrast. This means that when the focus returns to the present with a 'lingering whiff of smoke' and the anxiety and vulnerability of Jeannie after the fire, it creates a feeling of foreboding.
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	In the middle of the extract, the writer shifts focus by suddenly moving away from the present and revealing some, but not all, of Rita's past. When it says 'It was meant to be a London nannying job', this flashback introduces a feeling of disappointment at having to leave London. The change in mood from previous excitement 'dreamed of it longingly' creates a tension that builds towards the end when the writer takes us back to the forest and Rita's nervousness.

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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	In the middle of the extract the writer takes us into Rita's past when it says 'It was meant to be a London nannying job'. This flashback takes us away from the present scene in the forest and gives us background on what has happened previously so that we know how they have ended up there. By the end of the extract we can understand why Rita is so unhappy to be in the forest.
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	In the middle of the extract the writer changes from describing the house and the forest to writing about London. It says 'It was meant to be a London nannying job'. This shows that the writer is telling us about another part of the story that is in London and not the forest where the story started.
Level 0 No marks	Nothing to reward	

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

- narrative hook: the immediate reference to the forest as threatening
- description: detailed focus on Foxcote Manor as an important setting
- exposition of character: background information about Rita
- focus shifts: movements back and forward in time to explain the situation they are in
- perspective: use of third person omniscient narrator to reveal thoughts and feelings
- cliffhanger: final line creates suspense as we share Rita's ominous feelings.

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

A student said, "Being a nanny in London was obviously Rita's dream, but the writer makes it clear that her experience is becoming a total nightmare."

To what extent do you agree?

In your response you could:

- consider your impressions of Rita's feelings about being a nanny in London
- evaluate how the writer describes the change in Rita's experience
- 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	Although Rita's job is presented as a dream, the reader can see that it is idealised to the point where it probably couldn't be realistic. When we are taken back to her interview, the writer indicates Rita's feelings as she 'gazed up at the house's sugar-white walls'. While the verb 'gazed' implies she is entranced by the appearance of the house, the reference to the 'sugar-white walls' makes it sound almost like a fairy tale, and therefore not believable. This clue that things aren't quite as they seem becomes a reality when the fire is mentioned and by the end of the extract Rita is far away from the supposed perfection of her London life and is 'peering up at Foxcote Manor'. The writer subtly changes her 'gaze' of admiration to an intimidated 'peer' and the reader can therefore see that she has lost control of the situation, perhaps foreshadowing the extent of the nightmare to come.

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	The writer uses contrast throughout the second half of the extract to emphasise how Rita's job has changed from a dream to a nightmare. When she goes for her interview, the writer describes how she 'gazed up at the house's sugar-white walls'. The use of the verb 'gazed' suggests a sense of wonder and the 'sugar-white walls' seem to reflect the sense of perfection she hopes to find there. However, this sense of optimism turns to a nightmare due to the fire and the writer ends the extract by moving back to the present where Rita is 'peering up at Foxcote Manor'. This image suggests Rita is too nervous to look at the house directly and implies that she is out of her depth, making the reader even more concerned that things could get worse as her nightmare experience continues.
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	Rita's job definitely seems like a dream because of how she felt when she went for her interview. The writer describes how Rita 'gazed up at the house's sugar-white walls' to show how impressed she was with the house as 'sugar-white' suggests it is clean and smart. We can tell that Rita is excited to be there but the fire then changes everything. It says that 'she hates forests' and then she is 'peering up at Foxcote Manor.' This suggests more scary things could still happen and will turn her job into a nightmare.'
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	Working in London was a dream for Rita. It says she 'gazed up at the house's sugar-white walls'. These positive words show that when she went for her interview she really liked the house. It all seemed good but because of the fire it all went wrong. At the end, she is 'peering up at Foxcote Manor' so we think it isn't a dream anymore but a nightmare.
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.

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

- description of Rita's initial perfect vision of being a nanny, emphasised by the simile 'like the Darlings in Peter Pan'
- contrast between working for the idealised 'perfect' mother figure and the real 'fragile' Jeannie
- contrast between the idealised 'sugar-white walls' of the London house with the previous description of the rundown Foxcote Manor
- flashback to the excitement of her interview, emphasised by the simile 'like the first fizz of pins and needles'
- references to the unexplained fire, with the violent verb 'tore' suggesting total destruction of the house
- use of contrast throughout the second half of the extract, for example through Rita's clothing
- final line with Rita 'peering up at Foxcote Manor', perhaps indicating ominous future events.

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0 5 A magazine is asking for entries for a creative writing competition.

Either

Write a story about a journey as suggested by this picture:

or

Write a description of a forest.

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

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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

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<table>
<tr><td rowspan="2">Level 1

1–6 marks

Simple, Limited Communication</td><td>Upper Level 1

4–6 marks</td><td>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</td></tr>
<tr><td>Lower Level 1

1–3 marks</td><td>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</td></tr>
<tr><td>Level 0
No marks</td><td colspan="2">Students will not have offered any meaningful writing to assess.
Nothing to reward.</td></tr>
</table>

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.

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