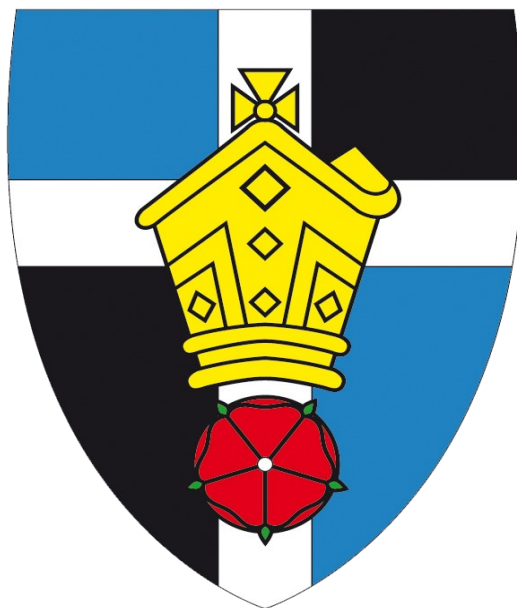


Ripley English Department



**Year 11 English Language and
Literature Assessment Fortnight**

16th - 30th November 2020

Assessment fortnight: 16th - 30th November 2020

English Literature

- Post-1914 play or prose (*An Inspector Calls*, *Blood Brothers* or *Lord of the Flies*), 45 minutes
- 19th Century Prose (*Jekyll and Hyde*), 45 minutes

English Language

- 20th Century Fiction Reading (Component 1A), 1 hour
- Transactional Writing (Component 2B), 1 hour

Contents

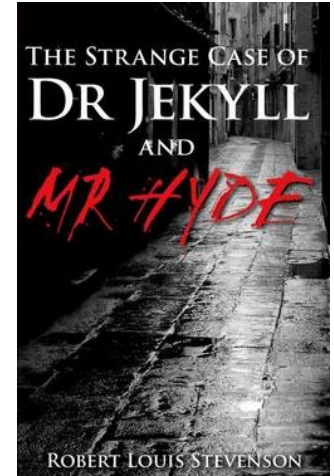
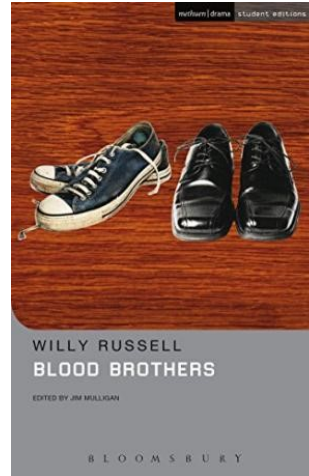
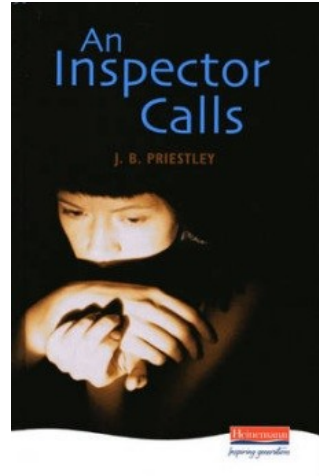
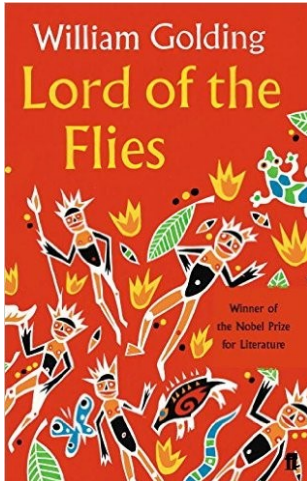
Literature

3	How to revise
4-6	Post-1914 guide, revision checklist and quiz
7-9	19th century guide, revision checklist and quiz
10-11	Revision tasks and sample questions

Language

12	How to revise
13-18	20th century fiction reading guide, revision checklist and quiz
19-22	Practice paper for revision
23-40	Transactional writing guide, text examples, revision checklist and quiz
41	Revision guidance and tasks
42-46	Spelling, punctuation and grammar essentials

How can I revise for Literature?



Post-1914 prose or play: *Lord of the Flies*, *An Inspector Calls* or *Blood Brothers*

19th century prose: *Jekyll and Hyde*

- Make sure you know the whole plot (including the letters at the end of *Jekyll and Hyde*)
- Know a few less obvious plot details.
- Make a note of 8 key moments from the plot from beginning, middle and end. Re-read and learn details of what happens in each as well as a few key quotations, which can be single words.
- For each key character, learn what they are like when we first and last see them then learn key moments in which they change. Consider why they change.
- Make a note of key themes which occur throughout and when they are important.
- For 19th century prose only: learn some contextual factors which help us to understand the plot and characters.
- Make sure you test your notes and knowledge using a range of questions from lessons and assessments. They follow a pattern so are easy to make up!
- Plan essays on key characters, relationships and themes. There are only a limited number you can be asked so you can be prepared.
- Read through your essays and work from Years 9-11 to see which targets you have been set and which you still need to work on.
- Use Firefly to read additional guides and notes.
- Test yourself on plot basics using Seneca.

Try creating:

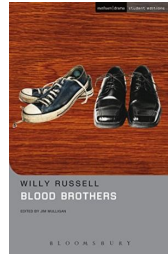
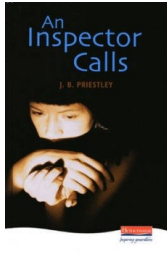
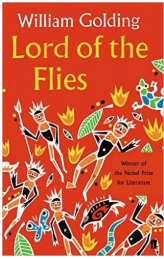
Storyboards

Mindmaps

Character and key moment flashcards

Quote post-its

Ripley English Department Exam Guide



Essay with extract —Post-1914 Prose/Drama

What: a 45 minute essay with an extract to use as a springboard

Where: English Literature Component 2, section A

Time management

First 5 minutes: create a bullet-point plan of around 5 key points you will make, for example 5 ways a character is presented. Include the extract in one of these, as it appears chronologically.

Remaining 40 minutes: write a detailed paragraph for each point. Use PEA and ensure you include words from the question. Include close references at all times and quotations where you can. Zoom in on key words in your quotations.



SPaG alert!

There are 5 marks available so be careful!

AO1—read, understand, respond

AO2—analyse language , structure and form

AO4—SPaG

Question types

- Presentation of character
- Presentation of relationship between characters
 - Importance of character
- Presentation/importance of theme (e.g. family, friendship, fear)
 - Tension or drama

Presentation of character

Begin with first impressions and end with how they are last seen. Middle points should cover how they change.

Presentation of relationship

As with characters, begin with how it first comes across and end with the last time we see the characters' relationship. Middle points should cover how it changes and why. Remember not to talk about 'the relationship' but a character's relationship to another. For example, Ralph's relationship towards Piggy and Piggy's to Ralph. It won't be the same from each point of view!

Importance of a character

This is different as the character might have an influence on something when they're not present. Start with the first time they have an impact and end with the last time. Middle points should cover how their importance becomes greater or lessens.

Opening and ending:

Start with a single sentence answer.

End with a single sentence explanation of what changed and why (or why not).

Presentation or importance of theme

Begin with where the theme first emerges and end with its climax. Middle points should cover how the theme develops. For importance, you also need to explore the way the theme influences characters and plot.

Tension or drama

Tension or drama should build to the climax. Begin with the first tense or dramatic event and end with the story's conclusion. Middle points should cover the way tension or drama builds to the climax.




Top Tips

A 'close reference' is a specific detail - ask yourself whether you could find that moment in the story. If not, you're being vague.

You cannot achieve AO2 unless you analyse some quotations. The extract will help but you must have some more. The shorter, the better.

Every single thing you say must directly answer the question.

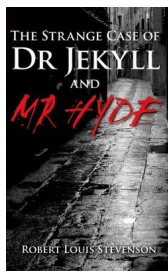
Checklist

Post-1914 play or prose				Next steps needed (Check component guides on the next pages? Read notes and practice tasks? Re-read the book? Ask for help?)	New rating after completing next steps:
I know how long to spend on the essay					
I know how to use the extract in my response without over relying on it					
I can summarise the whole plot					
I can describe 6-8 key moments in detail					
I can remember a range of quotes and references for each moment					
I know how to put quotes into context when using them					
I know how to analyse the effect of quotes in detail					
I can comment on language, structure and tone					
I know which characters I could be asked about					
I know which relationships I could be asked about					
I know which themes I could be asked about					
I know how to begin my essay					
I know how to evaluate					

Quiz—Post-1914 play or prose

How long should you spend on the essay?	
How do you use the extract in your response without over relying on it?	
Summarise the plot of the text	
Name 6-8 key moments you could describe in detail	
Can you remember 3 -4 quotes or close references for each of those moments?	
What do you need to say about a quote to put it into context?	
What can you say about a quote when analysing?	
How do you comment on language, structure or tone?	
Which characters could you be asked about?	
Which relationships could you be asked about?	
Which themes could you be asked about?	
How do you effectively begin your essay?	
How do you evaluate? Give some critical ideas about this text:	

Ripley English Department Exam Guide



Essay with extract —19th century prose

What: a 45 minute essay with an extract to use as a springboard

Where: English Literature Component 2, section B

Time management

First 5 minutes: create a bullet-point plan of around 5 key points you will make, for example 5 ways a character is presented. Include the extract in one of these, as it appears chronologically.

Remaining 40 minutes: write a detailed paragraph for each point. Use PEA and ensure you include words from the question. Include close references at all times and quotations where you can. Zoom in on key words in your quotations.

Context

Only bring in context where understanding a difference in 19th and 21st century audiences actually matters to the question!

Presentation of character

Begin with first impressions and end with how they are last seen. Middle points should cover how they change.

Presentation of relationship

As with characters, begin with how it first comes across and end with the last time we see the characters' relationship. Middle points should cover how it changes and why. Remember not to talk about 'the relationship' but a character's relationship to another. For example, Ralph's relationship towards Piggy and Piggy's to Ralph. It won't be the same from each point of view!

Importance of a character

This is different as the character might have an influence on something when they're not present. Start with the first time they have an impact and end with the last time. Middle points should cover how their importance becomes greater or lessens.

Opening and ending:

Start with a single sentence answer.

End with a single sentence explanation of what changed and why (or why not).

AO1—read, understand, respond

AO2—analyse language, structure and form

AO3—importance of context

Question types

- Presentation of character
- Presentation of relationship between characters
 - Importance of character
- Presentation/importance of theme (e.g. family, friendship, fear)
 - Tension or drama

Presentation or importance of theme

Begin with where the theme first emerges and end with its climax. Middle points should cover how the theme develops. For importance, you also need to explore the way the theme influences characters and plot.

Tension or drama

Tension or drama should build to the climax. Begin with the first tense or dramatic event and end with the story's conclusion. Middle points should cover the way tension or drama builds to the climax.




Top Tips

A 'close reference' is a specific detail - ask yourself whether you could find that moment in the story. If not, you're being vague.

You cannot achieve AO2 unless you analyse some quotations. The extract will help but you must have some more. The shorter, the better.

Every single thing you say must directly answer the question.

Checklist

Jekyll and Hyde				Next steps needed (Check component guides on the next pages? Read notes and practice tasks? Re-read the book? Ask for help?)	New rating after completing next steps:
I know how long to spend on the essay					
I know how to use the extract in my response without over relying on it					
I can summarise the whole plot					
I can describe 6-8 key moments in detail					
I can remember a range of quotes and references for each moment					
I know how to put quotes into context when using them					
I know how to analyse the effect of quotes in detail					
I can name a range of relevant contextual factors					
I know which characters I could be asked about					
I know which relationships I could be asked about					
I know which themes I could be asked about					
I know how to begin my essay					
I know how to evaluate					

Quiz—Jekyll and Hyde

How long should you spend on the essay?	
How do you use the extract in your response without over relying on it?	
Summarise the plot of the text	
Name 6-8 key moments you could describe in detail	
Can you remember 3-4 quotes or close references for each of those moments?	
What do you need to say about a quote to put it into context?	
What can you say about a quote when analysing?	
Name a range of relevant contextual factors:	
Which characters could you be asked about?	
Which relationships could you be asked about?	
Which themes could you be asked about?	
How do you effectively begin your essay?	
How do you evaluate? Give some critical ideas about this text:	

Revision Tasks

Once you know the text really well and have re-read sections, work through some of the tasks below to help you to prepare for the essay. Remember, revising Literature isn't just about reading the books!

Planning essays is really valuable. It will get you thinking about the kinds of tasks you could be given and also speed up your planning so you have longer to write when you come to the exam. If you plan for the ones below, it means you should have an idea of what to write no matter what comes up in summer.

Write about _____ and how they are presented at different points in the novel or play.

If you can think of five points to make about a character, you can plan an essay. Choose a few main characters and plan essays by choosing five different ways they are presented. Make sure you have a range of references from across the text. Now write your bullet point plan, including details of key moments you would mention and quotes you can remember. If you need to, re-read a few of the key moments to select quotes—this will help you to remember them for later.

Try this with a few of the main characters. You won't be asked to write about any who are hardly in the story so ignore people like Sammy and Simon.

Possible characters

Blood Brothers: Mickey, Eddie, Mrs Johnstone, Mrs Lyons, The Narrator

An Inspector Calls: Mr Birling, Mrs Birling, Sheila, Eric, The Inspector

Lord of the Flies: Ralph, Jack, Piggy

Write about _____ and how important they are to the novel or play as a whole

For this one, you'll need to think of the characters who really move things on in terms of the plot. Remember that they can be important even if they're not there. As above, plan a few essays for the main characters you could be asked on.

Write about the relationship between _____ and _____ and how they are presented at different points in the novel or play.

Take each side of the relationship separately, remembering that each character may not feel the same way about each other. Plan essays for some of the suggestions in the box and consider how and why these relationships change. Make sure your plan shows the change from beginning to end. If it doesn't change, consider why—change in character and relationship is expected across a text.

Possible relationships

Blood Brothers: Mickey and Eddie; Mrs Johnstone and Mrs Lyons; Mickey and Linda; Eddie and Linda; Mrs Johnstone and Mickey; Mrs Johnstone and Eddie

An Inspector Calls: Gerald and Sheila; Mr and Mrs Birling; Mr or Mrs Birling and Sheila or Eric

Lord of the Flies: Ralph and Jack; Ralph and Piggy

Write about the theme of _____ and how it is presented at different points in the novel or play.

Plan in the same way, but focus on how a theme emerges, changes and influences characters. Plan points relating to what the theme does: social class determines chances in life; the generation gap causes younger and older characters to view the situation differently; fear causes the boys to become savage. Remember there is crossover between themes and you should still focus on how characters behave because of them.

Possible themes

Blood Brothers: social class; violence; importance of mothers; superstition

An Inspector Calls: class; gender; morality; power; generation gap

Lord of the Flies: fear; savagery; civilisation; power; friendship; growing up

Revision Tasks

You should now have a plan for all possible essays –well done! A good idea is to review your plans after you have created them. Ask yourself:

- ◇ Have I included a range of points from across the text?
- ◇ Do I have at least two specific references for each point?
- ◇ Do I know at least two analysable quotes for each point?
- ◇ Have I included absolutely essential plot points? (See below)
- ◇ Have I included some more subtle plot points? (See below)

If you have, then have a go at writing up some points. You could give yourself ten minutes for one point or do a full timed essay depending on the time you have.

Unmissable plot points:

Blood Brothers: when the twins are separated; Mrs Johnstone revealing she is superstitious with the shoes on the table; when both twins die; Mickey going to prison; Mrs Lyons manipulating Mrs Johnstone to give her a twin.

An Inspector Calls: what each character does to Eva Smith; the relationship between the parents and children; the inspector being the moral backbone; the end where Sheila and Gerald are socialist characters but the others have reverted back to their old ways.

Lord of the Flies: the vote for chief; the ship going past; Samneric describing the parachutist; Jack splits the tribe; Simon's death; Piggy's death; the naval officer's reaction.

More subtle plot points to challenge yourself with (just some examples—there are lots):

Blood Brothers: the difference in education between the twins; Eddie and Mickey's first meeting and the differences between them; Eddie and Mickey's relationship when Eddie returns from university.

An Inspector Calls: the tension that is created at the curtain fall between acts 2 and 3. The concept of the inspector being part of the characters' conscience.

Lord of the Flies: Jack painting his face; Simon's understanding of 'the beast' being shown in the way the Lords of the Flies talks to him; Simon making himself an outsider; Roger's change from suggesting a vote to threatening littluns to 'the hangman'; the deterioration of names and loss of identity (look at Percival!).

Top tip for learning and using quotations

Don't sit and learn a list of quotations in isolation. When you include them in an essay, you need to put them into context by saying what they're about and when they occur in the plot. Make a note of this if you're making flashcards or something similar. When you work through your plans, look up quotes as you go as this will help you to remember them and to recall as many as possible. You won't have the book in the exam, but at this stage it's useful to use it.

How can I revise for Language?

One of the absolute best things you can do is read widely. Good readers are good analysers and good writers. Try to get into the habit of reading both modern fiction and nonfiction (great places to look are reputable online news sites or professional blogs on topics that interest you).

If you're not a regular reader then start now! The only way to become a better reader is, as with anything, to practice. Recent research has shown that using subtitles when watching TV programs and films helps to improve spelling, vocabulary and grammar without even trying. Most streaming services offer subtitles and you'll find you read without really thinking about it.

Reading

- Make sure you are familiar with each of the AOs and the order these will be tested in.
- Read some unfamiliar prose and nonfiction texts so you are used to their features.
- Read through past paper texts you have completed in years 9-11 so you are familiar with the kinds of texts which are used.

Practise by:

Using the sample paper pack on Firefly.

Timing yourself and editing answers to make sure you are as concise as is needed.

Transactional Writing

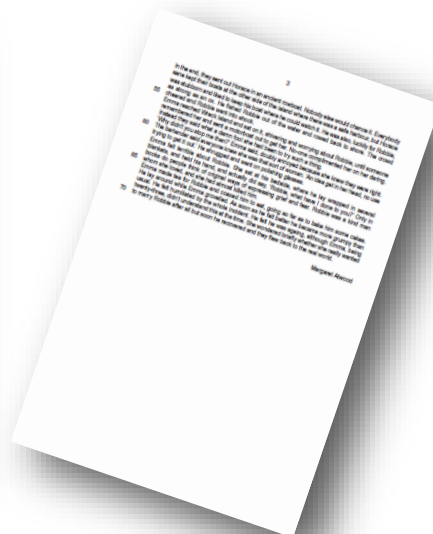
- Make sure you know the format conventions for all text types.
- Learn methods for making writing more or less formal.
- Read a range of examples of the text types.
- Learn key ambitious vocabulary.
- Learn and practise SPaG rules. Know which words or punctuation types you struggle with so you can work on them or, if needed, avoid using them in the exam.
- Print out nonfiction texts and annotate to see how they meet the success criteria in the transactional writing guide. You're trying to write realistic texts so focus on real texts!

Practise by:

Using the tasks in the sample paper pack on Firefly.

Timing yourself to make sure you can write enough in 30 minutes.

Language 1A—20th Century Fiction Reading



Extract from modern unseen fiction

- You have one hour to answer two 5-mark and three 10-mark questions.
- Each question is based on an extract and you're given line numbers—rule off these line numbers before you do anything else. You get no marks for anything outside the lines.
- Timing is crucial: 5 minutes for A1; 10 for A2 then 15 for each of A3, 4 and 5.
- Read the question and highlight key question words before reading the extract.
- Read the extract and highlight evidence as you go.
- Remember to focus on what is happening in the text—don't just hunt devices!
- Cover the entire extract and track chronologically.
- Aim to make up to 5 points for A2
- Aim to make up to 10 points for A3-5
- For all but A1, quotations are always needed.

Question A1—find and retrieve

This question will ask you to list five things. For example: 'List **five** things we learn about Bobby in these lines.'

You should bullet point your answer.

It's easier to use your own words to show understanding and to avoid copying out lots.

Split up big chunks of information into single facts.

This should be five easy marks if you read carefully.

A1

- Bobby is fifteen
- He lives with his dad
- He Loves mountain biking
- He has entered a competition
- He is training every day

5-10 mark questions

- There is no difference in the way you answer A2 (worth 5 marks) and A3-5 (worth 10 marks) - you simply make half as many points.
- Evidence is needed but you do not have time to analyse in detail. The exam board recommend that you do the following:
- **Say it, show it, move on**
- **Say it as it is** (don't waste time trying to give alternate interpretations or zooming in)
- Stick to what is obvious in your answer. What is happening will always be more important than how it is said.
- Do not spot devices and never try to write about 'short sentences' or anything 'making the reader want to read on'.
- Track through in order and use tracking language to show this: firstly; next; later; when x happens; at the end.

Impressions questions (could be A2, 3 or 4)

- These questions ask what kind of person a character is being presented as.
- You need to state the impression in your own words to show understanding—never just repeat what was in the quotation.
- Cover a range of impressions—you won't get marks for saying the same thing twice.
- If you're asked about two characters, make sure you cover both of them roughly equally.



What impressions does the writer create of Bobby's dad in these lines? [5]

At first, Bobby's dad seems quite short-tempered as he 'snapped' at Bobby for asking if he could go out. ✓ Next, I get the impression that he is tired because 'his eyelids drooped heavily' when listening to Bobby. ✓ When Bobby storms out, I get the impression his dad doesn't know what to do as he 'gazed helplessly at the open door'. ✓ After this, the writer shows him to be getting angry again as he 'yelled furiously' at Bobby. ✓ Finally, I get the impression he is embarrassed as he 'slunk back inside' when he saw the neighbours watching. ✓

5/5

How questions (could be A2, 3 or 4)

Type 1: How is a character presented? (Could be open or could give you the way.)

How does the writer show the character of Bobby in these lines?

How does the writer show Bobby's anger in these lines?

This isn't the same as impressions as you have to cover the methods the writer has used. You'll have two bullet points which cover what is said and how it's said. The first of these is always what you should start with. Some basic explanation is needed.



How does the writer show the character of Bobby in these lines? [5]

The writer suggests Bobby is very spontaneous as he 'just walked without knowing his destination' which shows he has not thought it through. After this, it seems like he is not concerned about his safety as 'the night started to close in and it was hard to see the path, but he didn't care' so he does not feel it is unsafe to be out alone in the dark. The writer then shows him to be very self-confident as he describes his attitude as 'invincible' so he doesn't think he could be hurt. Next we see Bobby to be quite lonely as he realised 'there was no one left to turn to' so he couldn't get help if he needed. Finally, Bobby is shown to be stubborn as 'he wouldn't turn back and grovel' as the verb 'grovel' implies he is too proud to apologise to his dad.

5/5

Type 2: How is excitement, drama or tension created?

How does the writer make these lines dramatic?

Now you're looking at what is happening and the mood created. Again, basic explanation is needed but don't attempt to simply spot literary devices. Think carefully about what is happening in the extract. Tension or drama will usually be increasing so tracking is even more essential here.



How does the writer makes these lines tense and dramatic? [5]

When Bobby starts to ride up the hill 'night was looming' and this sounds dramatic as 'looming' sounds dangerous and he will struggle to see. Next, the writer says 'the bike shuddered over rough ground' and this makes it sound like it would be hard to control so he may fall. As he climbs the hill, Bobby realises 'there was no turning back' which suggests he is vulnerable and can't back out of this now, even if it's dangerous. When the writer says 'the ground dropped away' it sounds like there is suddenly no safe ground for Bobby to ride on so he is going to fall. Finally, Bobby 'screamed for help' which shows his sense of panic, but also that he is helpless as we know he is alone.

5/5

Evaluate question—always A5

This question will be on a final extract and the whole text. It can be worded in a number of different ways but you are always looking at how a character or situation has changed or developed across the text.

The best way to answer is by giving an overview answer and then making a few points on the text as a whole (if you're running out of time, you can get some marks without reading the final part). You should then track through the final section and cover how things have changed.

Type 1: Statement + to what extent do you agree?

'Bobby has brought on the disaster by himself.' To what extent do you agree?

You can fully agree, fully disagree or be between.



'Bobby has brought on the disaster by himself.' To what extent do you agree?

I mostly agree with this view because Bobby sped away without thinking of the consequences. He 'ran out of the door' and 'didn't stop to collect anything on the way'. However, his dad was grumpy with him when he 'snapped' and shouted at him which led him to dash out like he did. In this extract, Bobby 'powered on' even though he knew it was dangerous which could show he is reckless. However, he also 'could not go back and face dad now' so he is being stubborn and leading himself into danger...

(extract, not full answer)

Type 2: Evaluate the way a character is presented. (Could be open or give a way.)

Evaluate how Bobby is presented here.

To what extent could Bobby be said to be to blame for the accident?






Evaluate how Bobby is presented here.

I think Bobby is shown to be a reckless character throughout the text, but he does start to realise he is to blame towards the end. He 'ran out of the door' and 'didn't stop to collect anything on the way' which shows he wasn't thinking ahead. He did this because his dad 'snapped' at him which shows he is led by his emotions as it's an extreme reaction. In the extract, Bobby starts off being reckless as he 'powered on' when it started to get dangerous. However, he changes here and becomes a bit more thoughtful when it 'dawned on him that this was a foolish idea' so he is starting to think of the consequences...

(extract, not full answer)

Checklist

Section A – 20th century fiction reading				Next steps needed (Check component guides on Firefly? Read notes and practice tasks? Ask for help?)	New rating after completing next steps:
I know how long to spend on each question					
I know how many points to aim for in each question					
A1: I know how to list the answers					
A2-4: I know how to answer thoughts and feelings or impressions questions					
A2-4: I know how to answer questions about multiple characters or relationships					
A2-4: I know how to answer questions about how a writer presents a character or relationship					
A2-4: I know how to answer questions about how a writer creates a mood or atmosphere					
How questions: I know how to identify typical techniques and explain their effects: dramatic or violent verbs; similes; metaphors; exaggeration; hyperbole; adjectives; adverbs					
A5: I know the two different kinds of question which can be asked and how this question differs from the other 10-markers					
A5: I know how to evaluate and give my own opinion					

Quiz—20th century fiction reading

How long should you spend on each question?	
How many points should you aim for in a 5-mark question?	
How many points should you for in a 10-mark question?	
How do you set out your answer for A1?	
What are impressions?	
What do you need to do if asked to write about two or more characters?	
What do you need to do if asked to write about relationships?	
What kinds of moods or atmospheres are you likely to be asked about in a how question?	
List likely techniques which you could identify and analyse in a how question:	
What are the two different question stems for A5?	
How do you evaluate?	
What needs to be included for A5 which isn't needed in the other questions?	

Sample paper

On the next two pages is a text to read and then a set of questions. Use this to practise for the exam but remember to do the following:

- Rule off the line numbers first.
- Read the question carefully and highlight key words. For example, in question 02 you could easily accidentally focus on the wrong brother so highlight 'Harold'.
- Time yourself and see how many points you can make. If it's too few (your teacher will have told you what to aim for) then go back and redraft to save words—just say it, show it and move on.

Here's a basic mark scheme for 10-mark questions which you can use. Remember, if you haven't tracked through the lines then you won't get these marks.

Give 0 marks for responses where there is nothing worthy of credit.

Give 1-2 marks to those who identify and begin to comment on some aspects of the question focus (such as the impressions or thoughts and feelings).

Give 3-4 marks to those who identify and give straightforward comments on some aspects of the question focus (such as the impressions or thoughts and feelings). These answers may simply identify some relevant subject terminology.

Give 5-6 marks to those who identify and comment on a number of aspects of the question focus (such as the impressions or thoughts and feelings) and begin to show some understanding of how aspects such as language and organisation are used to achieve effects and influence the reader. These responses may begin to use relevant subject terminology accurately to support their comments, where appropriate.

Give 7-8 marks to those who make accurate comments about the question focus (such as the impressions or thoughts and feelings) and begin to analyse how language and organisation are used to achieve effects and influence the reader. Relevant subject terminology is used accurately to support comments effectively, where appropriate.

Give 9-10 marks to those who make accurate and perceptive comments about the question focus (such as the impressions or thoughts and feelings) and provide detailed analysis of how language and organisation are used to achieve effects and influence the reader. Subtleties of the writer's technique are explored in relation to how the reader is influenced. Well-considered, accurate use of relevant subject terminology supports comments effectively, where appropriate.

This extract is from a book set in America. Victoria, a high-school student who is pregnant, has been thrown out of her home. Raymond and Harold are two brothers who own a farm and who have agreed to take her in.

Harold knocked on the door.

Victoria? he said.

Yes.

Everything all right in there?

5 You can come in, she said.

So he entered her room. It was hers already. She had made it so. It was female now, cleaner and tidier, with little things set out in place. For the first time in half a century someone had taken an interest in the room. The old cardboard boxes were pushed under the bed and the clothes in the closet had been shoved back farther into the dark. Against the wall the old mahogany chest of drawers, its oval mirror darkened and finely cracked at the edges, had been dusted and polished, and her belongings were now arranged on it, hair ribbons and comb and brush, lipstick and liner, hair clasps, a little cedar box of jewellery whose lid was closed by a tiny brass lock.

10 She herself was sitting up in the bed in a square-necked winter nightgown with a sweater pulled over her shoulders, a schoolbook and a blue notepad propped up in her lap, while the lamp beside the bed cast yellow light onto her clear face and her shining dark hair.

15 I just was wondering, he said. If you was warm enough in here.

Yes, she said. It's fine.

They're saying how it's suppose to get kind of cold tonight.

Is it?

20 And this old house ain't very warm.

I'm fine, she said again. She watched him. He was standing just inside the door, his hands poked into his pockets, his weather-blasted red face shining in the lamplight.

Anyhow, he said. He peered around. You think of something, you can let us know. We don't know much about this sort of thing.

25 Thank you, she said.

He looked at her once more, quickly, as some shy country animal might, and closed the door.

In the dining room Raymond sat at the table waiting, curious, the newspaper held up captured in his hands. She all right? he said.

I guess so.

30 She need more blankets?

She never said she wanted any.

Maybe we ought to get her some anyhow. In case.

I don't know. You about done with that paper?

It's going to be a goddamn cold night tonight.

35 I told her that. She knows. Why don't you let me have the front page. You're done with that much.

Raymond handed him the newspaper, and he took it and shook it out and began to read. After a while Raymond said, What was she doing in there? When you was inside her room.

Nothing. Reading. Working over her schoolbooks.

Was she in bed?

40 Harold looked up at him. I don't know where else was she going to be.

Raymond stared back at his brother. Then Harold began to read again. The wind blew and whistled outside. After a time Raymond spoke again. She didn't eat very much supper, he said. I don't think she did.

Harold didn't look up.

I reckon maybe she just don't like steak.

45 Oh, she ate enough. She's just a small eater.

I don't know if she did. She didn't hardly touch none of what I give her. I had to scrape most of it to the dog.

Did he eat it?

Who?

Did the dog eat it?

50 What in hell do you think? Course he did.

Well, Harold said.

He looked up again now, peering at his brother from above the top of the newspaper. Not everybody likes their beefsteak covered in black pepper.

Who doesn't?

55 Victoria, maybe.

He bent back to the paper and Raymond sat at the table watching him. His face took on a disturbed and arrested look, as though he'd been caught in some sudden and disquieting act.

You think she didn't like my cooking? he said.

I wouldn't know, Harold said.

60 The wind howled and cried. The house creaked.

An hour later Raymond stood up from the table. I never considered that, he said.

Considered what?

About peppering her steak.

He started upstairs. Harold followed him with his eyes.

65 Where you going?

Up.

To bed already?

No.

70 He went on. Harold could hear him walking on the pine floorboards overhead. Then he came back down carrying two thick wool blankets that smelled of dust and disuse, and he carried them to the front door and stood in the open doorway in the howling gusts of snow and wind and shook them out. Afterward he crossed to the door and tapped lightly, not wanting to wake her if she were asleep. There was no sound from inside. He stepped in and found that the girl was lying deep under the covers and that the light from the high purple farmlight outside was shining palely onto the bed. He stood for a quiet moment looking at her, at the room and all its new disturbances and the things in it, and then he spread the two blankets over her in the bed. When he turned to come back out, Harold was standing in the doorway watching. They came out together and left the door slightly ajar.

75

I didn't want her to take a chill, Raymond said. Not on her firstnight.

Much later in the night she woke up sweating and shoved the blankets aside.

From 'Plainsong' by Kent Haruf

0	1
---	---

Read lines 1-12

List five things we learn about Victoria's room.

[5]

0	2
---	---

Read lines 13-26

What impressions does the writer give us of Harold in these lines?

[10]

You must refer to the language used in the text to support your answer, using relevant subject terminology where appropriate.

0	3
---	---

Read lines 27-59

How does the writer show the relationship between Harold and Raymond in these lines?

[10]

You should consider:

What Harold and Raymond do in these lines

The writer's use of language to show their relationship

You must refer to the text to support your answer, using relevant subject terminology where appropriate.

0	4
---	---

Read lines 60-79

What are Raymond's thoughts and feelings in these lines? How does the writer show his thoughts and feelings?

[10]

You should write about:

What happens in these lines

The writer's use of language

You must refer to the text to support your answer, using relevant subject terminology where appropriate.

0	5
---	---

To answer this question you will need to consider the passage as a whole.

'Raymond and Harold are very bad hosts.'

How far do you agree with this view?

[10]

You should write about:

your thoughts and feelings about Jonathan and how he is presented in the passage as a whole

how the writer has created these thoughts and feelings

You must refer to the text to support your answer.

Transactional Writing Guide



How do I aim for my target grade?

What are the features of each text type?

How do I interpret the tasks?

What do good texts look like?

Transactional Writing

Transactional writing means texts which aim to communicate ideas, persuade or advise. They are real-life texts which many people use daily, perhaps as part of their job. In the GCSE English Language exam, transactional texts are:

Letters
Talks
Guides
Articles
Reviews
Reports

This guide (see, transactional texts are everywhere!) will aim to explain the key features of each of these texts as well as make clear exactly what the examiners are looking for to award different grades. It will also show you how to interpret details in task descriptions so that you don't risk missing out all-important details. The tasks you will be given can be deceptively simple-looking but it is very easy to lose huge numbers of marks by making one mistake. Read the information which follows to make sure you don't fall into any traps!

Layout Features

Most of these texts are set out in a similar way. Articles, reviews and guides should have a clear heading and may use subheadings. You must never try to use columns or include pictures or diagrams. If you were writing these texts as part of your job, you'd just write the words and someone else would sort out the layout.

Letters do have strict layout features and you must get this right: your address top right; the date below that; the recipient's address below and on the left; Dear... below that; your signoff at the end (see more on that on the letters page).

Reports should begin with the heading: '*A report to _____ about _____*' and you put your name at the bottom - but don't use 'yours sincerely' because it isn't a letter. You should introduce yourself and say what research you did then present your findings. It's best to use a heading for each different issue or finding.

What skills are the examiners looking for?

Grades	Key Features
7-9	Indistinguishable from a real-life text <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wide range of varied points made which are realistic at all times • Small details included (e.g. good thing to eat from the menu at a restaurant) • Developed and convincing reasons/explanations for each point • Audience's needs fully met, including potential range of wide audience • No noticeable SPaG errors
5-6	Convincing text <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A range of points is made (5?) and all ideas are realistic • Convincing reasons/explanations follow each point • Audience specifically referred to and range clear (e.g. separating individuals of 'family' for day out) • SPaG errors are rare
4	Meets needs of task <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Purpose is met • Key format needs met • Some range of points made and mostly realistic • Most points are explained • Points made are mostly relevant for the given audience • SPaG errors don't detract from meaning at all
3	Shows some understanding of needs of task <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attempts made to meet purpose • Beginning to meet format needs • Limited range of points and may be sensational or based on stereotypes (e.g. closing youth centre leads to crime spree) • Limited explanation/support of points • Some points are chosen for given audience • SPaG errors don't usually detract from meaning
1-2	Lack of understanding of needs of task/serious errors <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • points may be hard to follow • may use wrong format or misinterpret audience/purpose • unclear purpose • no links to audience • SPaG errors make it hard to work out meaning

Letters

Letters can be **formal** or **informal**.

Formal letters tend to be to newspapers, schools, councils or businesses.

Informal letters will be for friends or family members.

Make sure you know how to set out a letter. The examiners are very strict about this so learn it well! This is also a life skill as most job applications require letters and those working in recruitment often reject candidates who they feel haven't bothered to properly set out a letter.

Top Tips

- You only need to write 'my address' and 'their address' - the full address isn't needed (this saves time and avoids SPaG errors)
- Although you only really need the recipient's address in a formal letter, you won't lose marks if you include it in an informal one. If you're not sure whether you need it, add it anyway to be on the safe side.
- 'Yours faithfully' is used when you haven't addressed the letter to a specific person (for example, you used 'editor'); 'yours sincerely' is used when you have used a name. If you can't remember, just always make up a name and use 'sincerely' – but learn how to spell it! If it were real life, you could always have Googled the name of the shop manager or newspaper editor. You don't need this signoff for an informal letter. 'Love' or 'from' will do, depending on the recipient.

Formal letters

- You need to think about your purpose carefully. No one ever wrote to a newspaper or company unless they wanted something. Perhaps you want a head teacher to change a rule or readers of a local paper to support your petition.
- If writing a letter to a local newspaper, remember that the audience is the readers.
- Openings need to make clear why you are writing. For a newspaper, did you read an article which made you angry? Have you just heard of a local issue you want to share?

Informal letters

- The purpose will usually be to share a view or persuade.
- You should start with a friendly opening. Explain why you're writing, but also ask how your friend or family member is.
 - Show a clear relationship by remembering anecdotes. *'Remember when we were in Year 7 and...?'*
 - Include light-hearted humour.
- Don't forget: this is actually still a letter in an English exam. Slang, abbreviations and anything else non-standard is not going to gain you marks!

Talks

A talk is the same thing as a speech, but the examiners always use the word 'talk' so I'm going to use it too.

Talks tend to be to your year group but they can also be for a wider audience, such as people in your local area.

For a talk, you just write the words you'd say. Don't use speech marks and don't include features like stage directions or reminders to pause. The examiners just don't want that. You also can't do things like underline words for emphasis or use block capitals for shouting. Real speech writers, such as those who write politicians' speeches, just do the words. The speaker decides how they read it out.

Openings

You could choose to bore your audience by beginning with something like, *'Hello. My name is Joe and I'm here today to talk to you about...'* A much better option would be to grab their attention. A question is okay but how about a shocking statistic or controversial opinion? *'Good morning. Did you know that you've probably done seven things to destroy the planet since you got out of bed?'* Much better, right?

Save the introductions until you've got them listening.



Keep them hooked

We all know how easy it is to drift off when you're being talked to in a big group (except in English lessons, obviously). To keep your audience engaged, you can directly address them, ask them rhetorical questions or keep dropping in interesting or shocking details and facts.

Endings

Like with any transactional task, the idea is that it's something for real life. You wouldn't do a talk to a big crowd of people for fun - unless you were a bit unusual. Think about what you want to encourage them to do after your amazing talk has convinced them that you're right and end with that. '

Now you know how important this issue is, please go out there and make a difference! Pick up some litter; switch off those unused lights; choose a plastic-free lunch! is a lot better than, *'thank you for listening.'*

Guides

Guides used to be called 'leaflets' on the old foundation paper. Examiners don't tend to use that term anymore because it encouraged people to write with bullet points and to waste time using columns and adding pictures. Headings are all you need in terms of layout.

Essentially, a guide is just giving information or advice. You're writing as if you're an expert – so you might need to make up some facts and details, but that's okay – and as if you want to share your expertise. You might be giving your audience information on a great destination for a day out or advising them on how to keep fit.

Audience

Your audience don't know much about your topic, otherwise they wouldn't read your guide. This means you need to include loads of specific facts and details. This is also a great text type to show off how well you can address a wide audience, which is a 5-6 skill.

Separate out possible audiences and give them their own sections, naming them specifically.

Never tried running before? Well, here's my advice...

Looking for a way to entertain the toddlers? Look no further...



Specific Details

This is another skill that's high up in the mark scheme. If you're lucky, you'll get asked to write about something you know a lot about and can use your own knowledge. If not, don't panic. You're only being tested on what you know about being a good writer so you can make up details to suit your needs – no examiner will mark you down if you've said the average person wastes £2000 of food each year when the figure is really only £200.

Go into as many layers of detail as you can. Don't say, *'Morecambe's new theme park has a great rollercoaster.'* Tell us that it's called 'Gargantuan', that it goes over a hundred miles per hour, rises as high as a hundred and fifty metres and that it was named as the greatest ride ever by 'Theme Park Fan' magazine in 2019!

Articles

Articles are almost always for magazines, but they'd be no different for a website. The examiners assume every school has a school magazine and they often use that as the text's type.

Articles can have a really wide variety of purposes, but what you write isn't a world away from a talk. Usually, you're giving information and aiming to persuade or advise in a light-hearted way. The examiners love using the term 'lively' and that just means not too serious and with a bit of humour and fun.

Audience

Rather like a guide, your audience is likely to be very wide for this text so think of the different readers and their needs and address them specifically.

Remember that a school magazine would be read by teachers and parents as well as students. (It would also be checked by teachers first so don't write anything which criticises the school or names teachers – in the real world it wouldn't get printed and examiners want real-life texts.)

This audience has chosen to read your article so you can assume they'd be interested in the topic already, but they might not know much about it.



Tone

The tone won't be totally serious. Remember that people read articles to be entertained, as well as to learn something or get advice. This means you want to keep them hooked. You can do that with humour, direct address and interesting facts.

Topics

As a rule, the topic of an article tends to be related to things the examiners feel are teenage issues. This can mean technology, school, parents, friendship, exam stress and more. This isn't a guarantee but it's what we usually expect for an article.

Magazines will usually publish things which are current issues (but remember the exam questions are written a year or so before you sit in the exam hall). Still, it can help to keep an eye on things coming up in the news – this also means reading articles and that's a good way to prepare for writing them.

Reviews

What you can be asked to review can vary on past papers. However, books and films always come up so you should plan one of those. Yes, this is the one transactional type which you can have planned in advance!

Reviews are just a type of article, so many of the details on the previous page apply here, too.

Details

Yes, I've said how important specific details are a lot already but they're absolutely crucial for a review. If it's a film, we need to know the genre, how long it is, who it's suitable for, which actors are in it and what it's about – without spoilers, of course. For a book, we need to know genre and basic plot as well as length and style of writing.

Again, you can make these up but you shouldn't invent a whole book or film because it's just adding to your workload in the exam. No one's marking you down if you get an actor's name wrong or say a book is the second in a series when it's really the third.



Positive or negative?

Personally, I always think a bad review is more fun to write. You can get a lot of humour in and make it genuinely engaging. That said, you could write a fully positive review and really push your enthusiasm for something you love. Most reviews, though, should find something to show both sides of the opinion. If you find that hard, just think of a type of person who wouldn't appreciate your favourite film or who might love that book you hated.

Explanations

No review will be successful if you don't fully explain what you liked or disliked about the book or film you've chosen. We don't all like the same things and your audience need to know whether they're likely to share your opinions.

'Jason Statham totally ruined this film,' doesn't tell us whether that's because his acting was awful, which might ruin it for everyone, or whether you just don't like him as an actor. Instead, tell us, 'Jason Statham totally ruined this film because he can't play a sensitive and thoughtful character. We're used to seeing him as a tough guy so when he tries to be sweet and tender it just seems funny.'

Simple Ideas

Some people use their Literature set text, but that can get a bit boring as the examiner sees a lot of them. Easy review ideas include film remakes or adaptations from books. You can compare the original to the new version and also don't need to worry as much about spoilers.

Reports

A report is written as if you have researched an issue. You set out what you found to whoever commissioned the report and you might give a recommendation at the end.

Like letters, reports have quite a specific layout so check the guide so you know what it should look like on the page. They're often school-based so might ask you to give a report on the range of subjects available at GCSE, the state of the sports facilities or the quality of canteen food.

Audience

A report's audience is really specific. Often, it's a school head, principal or governors. It could be a local council or a business. Whoever it is, the audience is someone who wants to know the specifics of your research. They want to make changes or improvements and you're there to give them a clear picture of the issues.

Writer

Reports aren't written by random people. If it's based on a school topic, you should pretend to be the head boy or girl or member of the school council. If it's outside school, just ask yourself who would be involved in this issue and be trusted to research and present their findings.

Specific details

Yes, I'm back on this topic! Details are needed in a report because you're giving the audience a clear idea of the issues. You need to make it look as though you have done real research but – and you should already know this by now – you should make the details up to fit your point.

You also need to say where you got these details. Don't say things like, *'78% of students felt that they had a wide range of choices when taking their opinions,'* because that figure sounds like it's plucked out the air. Instead, add something like, *'the senior student team surveyed a range of students in years 9, 10 and 11 and found that...'*

A word of warning on survey results: some people massively overuse them and don't include other details. This costs marks because you're not using a range of techniques. As well as survey results, for this example, you could have quotes from students and teachers, you could compare the number of subjects offered at schools in the local area and you could look at which subjects universities counted towards entry requirements.

Formality

A report is the most formal text type out there. Use your most respectful tone and keep emotion out of it. You're presenting the facts of the matter to someone in a position of power.



Exemplar text: formal letter

My address

Their address

3rd April 2020

Dear Ms Peel, editor of Lancaster Guardian,

As a child growing up in Lancaster, one of my great pleasures was exploring the wonderful green spaces of the city. I was lucky, I now know, to grow up in a place which had the best of both worlds: the amenities of a small city alongside fields, woods and riverbank. Imagine my horror, then, when I learned that yet another area of natural beauty was to be flattened to make way for yet more housing.

For readers not yet aware of this travesty, you should know that the council have sold off Freeman's Wood, which stands beside the river, and the plan is for this land to be built upon. Now, I well know the desperate need for homes in this country, but there are suitable and unsuitable places. Building here will affect wildlife, local people and the environment as a whole.

I was walking alongside the wood just last summer and was astonished to round a corner and come face-to-face with a deer. A beautiful and wild creature just a metre away from me! How many people live in a city and experience that? The deer, I learned, reside in the wood. If it was destroyed, where would these elegant and rare creatures go? There is literally no space nearby besides housing estates and farmland so they would have no home and it would be our fault for allowing this disgraceful plan to go ahead. Aside from deer, there are foxes, badgers, rodents and an uncountable range of bird species which make their homes in these woods. We've forced them there by building everywhere else. I urge readers to stand up and not to allow them to lose their final sanctuary.

Also important are the people of Lancaster. I can't be the only one who adores this place because it has a mix of countryside and city on the doorstep. Perhaps readers will correct me, but isn't this what makes Lancaster a unique city? The woods provide a valuable place for children to explore and learn about nature, for them to play and exercise – essentially, time away from those screens! Take the woods and you take a vital experience from our children's lives.

Let's imagine readers still think houses are more important than wildlife or children. What about the damaging impact of building sites? There's already two huge estates near Freeman's Wood; thousand live there. How will they feel if there are trucks and equipment going by all day long? How will they feel if the noise of building lasts from morning until night? How will they feel if the dust and emissions drift over their homes for years?

I say, we must stand up for our woodland. We must stand up for nature, for children and for local residents. I urge all readers of this newspaper to contact the local council and to protest against this outrageously damaging plan.

Yours sincerely,

Margaret Allwood

Exemplar text: informal letter

My address

Wednesday 27th March 2020

Dear Jake,

I can't believe I'm writing this letter to you. How can we be old enough to think about careers? I still feel like we should be trying to pass notes in Miss Abbot's class back in Year 7. Do you remember when you got caught and cried because it was your first detention?

Anyway, let me get to the point. I saw your Facebook status about wanting to join the army and thought I'd better get in touch. I didn't want to just comment because this is quite an important thing so I'm putting my thoughts into this letter. At first I was a bit shocked, to be honest. I mean, you're doing something that could get you killed and I'm getting scared about going to college and having to get two busses. Now I've had a think about it I actually think this could be the best thing you've ever decided.

You've always been the most mature of my friends and you've always got bored really easily. I know that led to you getting into trouble every now and then but I know you and I know you're not a bad person. Some teachers might say you don't take things seriously but I've seen what you're like when you really care about something.

Physical fitness certainly wouldn't be a problem for you. I've never known someone enjoy keeping strong, fit and active like you. I'm sure there's a difference between going for a run before school and what you'll need to do in the army but I've never seen you give up on a challenge. I will never forget that time Mr Morris told you he didn't think you had the upper body strength for shot putt. I can't see anyone beating the distance you got in our Year 10 sports day!

Be honest, Jake, you've never liked being told what to do, but maybe things will be different in the army. I know you used to get annoyed by teachers moaning about your shirt and tie being a mess but I think if you've made the choice to wear a uniform you'll treat it with real pride.

I'd better get finished because I know reading isn't something you enjoy, but I wanted to let you know how I felt and you know I'm rubbish at saying things like this. Good luck at the interview and make sure you let me know how you get on.

See you soon,

James

Exemplar text: talk

I'm here today to talk to you about the curse of the mobile phone.

I know, I know, you're all thinking I must be mad to think they're a bad thing. You might even think I'm a hypocrite because you've seen me using my phone enough times. Well, if you listen to what I have to say then maybe you'll understand where I'm coming from.

As a sixteen-year old, I can't remember life before mobile phones. My mum goes on about how they didn't have anything like that when they were teenagers but, for me, mobile phones are part of life. I got my first phone when I started high school but I was definitely not the first of my friends to have one. That gets me onto my first point, I suppose.

Nowadays I see little kids walking home from primary school with the latest iPhone. The latest iPhone costs about six hundred pounds! I don't think I owned anything that cost a tenth of that amount when I was five or six. There's no way my parents would have trusted me. People claim it's less safe today than it was ten years ago but I still have to wonder why they need a phone at that age. They get walked to and from school by parents and they're not allowed out on their own so who do they need to phone?

But what about us teenagers? Of course, we really do need to be able to get in touch with home when we're out. Well I would ask you, do we really? To be honest, there are times when I wish I didn't have my phone because my mum can call me to ask me stupid things when I'm out with my friends and I can't ever be late home or she's pestering me to find out where I am. If I switch my phone off she goes mad and claims she thought I'd been murdered!

Mobile phones can do all sorts of other things, though. In our pockets we have a little device which lets us surf the internet, take and send pictures to each other in seconds and fill up boring moments. However, I'm not sure these are good things either. It's too easy to be able to snap a photo of someone and send it on to others and what one person finds funny, another might think was hurtful. Cyberbullying goes beyond texting nasty messages and now we all have mobile phones we can have an embarrassing photo passed round school, or even the world, in minutes. We've all sent a text or email and then wished we hadn't but there's no undo button when we pass something on using our phones.

So, what I'm saying overall is that I think we should see our mobile phones as a bit of a curse. I'm not saying we should all throw them in the bin – I'm certainly holding onto mine – but perhaps we could think about whether we really need to be using them as much as we do. I think we also need to think more carefully about what we're using them for. Mobile phones make things really easy but maybe they make bad things easy as well as good things.

Thank you for listening and I hope I've given you something to think about. Maybe you'll think a little bit more about how attached you are to that little device of yours.

Exemplar text: guide

Lancaster: The City For Everyone

Nestled by the stunning Morecambe Bay coastline and just a short journey from Manchester and The Lake District, Lancaster could be described as a 'hidden gem' if not for the fact it's so easy to find so obviously a perfect destination for all.

Allow me to take you on a one-day tour.

Arriving by car is easy as the city is linked to the M6 and has ample parking. If you had taken the train, you'd have found direct links from London, Manchester and Edinburgh and the station is right by the iconic castle.

As it's such a lovely day – Lancaster benefits from a mild climate being by the coast – you might decide to begin with a walk in Williamson Park. Here you find beautiful woodland walks, wildlife-watching areas and the unique and historic Ashton Memorial. Feeling hungry? The park cafe offers a wide range of snacks and light meals and it's even dog-friendly, just in case you brought Fido along. Kids will love the mini-beast cave and butterfly house and can even enjoy meeting our very own meerkats!

Heading into the city centre, you might be looking for a post-lunch shopping spree. Despite being a small city, you find a wide range of big-name shops as well as unique boutiques. Lancaster, you discover, has the best of both worlds.

The afternoon is wearing on and you fancy something a bit different. Lancaster has it! I would recommend the recently-opened Escape Rooms where the whole family can compete to be the first to solve the puzzles and escape from a choice of three themed rooms.

By evening, I hope you are ready for a dizzying range of bars and restaurants. Lancaster's chefs can offer everything from Mediterranean cuisine to gourmet burgers. Satisfied, you head out to experience the city's incredible nightlife. Lancaster is famous for its culture so be ready to see live bands, stand-up comedy and poetry readings. The world-renowned Dukes Theatre will certainly have a film and a play to tempt you.

I wouldn't now blame you for wanting to stay and experience more of what Lancaster has to offer – and there is much more. From budget bed-and-breakfasts to luxurious hotels, you're spoiled for choice if you choose to recharge and head out tomorrow to do it all again.

Exemplar text: article

In my day we only had 180 emojis!

Look, I know it sounds crazy but there will come a time when we utter the words: 'in my day...' Every generation does it and we'll be no different. What will we talk about, though? What will we tell the younger generation about life as teenagers at the start of the 21st century?

Technology is a huge part of our lives today and one of those things our parents and teachers tell us they never had. If they wanted to find something out, they had to go to a library and look it up or they had to use their brains to figure it out themselves – or so they say. We're used to having the world a couple of finger taps away and I think it's incredible. The only problem is, technology can mean we are drowning in a sea of information all the time. I had to find out something about photosynthesis for homework and Google came back with three million results! How can I possibly know which ones are the most useful? At least when our parents looked it up in a book they probably just had one page to read.

It's not all bad, though. Technology makes our lives safer and easier. I literally can't imagine how people got around before smartphones. I can find a train timetable, book a ticket and seat and plan my route from the station all using the little device in my pocket. If I get lost somewhere, one tap of a screen pinpoints my location through the magic of satellites, or at least I think that's how it works. What will they have in the future? I suppose phones will just teleport our own kids to where they want to be and we'll be left there saying 'in my day we had to walk to wherever our phones told us to go!'

The older generation complain that our attention spans are too short because we're so used to fast information and multitasking. I admit, when I sit and do my homework I also have Facebook open, several website tabs and my phone will be sending me Snapchat messages every few minutes. That doesn't mean I can't focus on something when I need to, though.

I don't see how information can get any faster in the future unless there's a way to just upload things directly to brains. What happens then if you've tapped the wrong button? Could you end up speaking French when you just wanted to learn how to play the guitar?

In all, I know we're incredibly lucky to have all the opportunities and information that we have today. I know our parents didn't have the video games, social networks or access to information that we have, but they had things their parents didn't have as well. And our own children will have things we can't even dream of, which will have us claiming everything was simpler back in our day. I think it's just natural.

Exemplar text: review

John Steinbeck's *Of Mice and Men* seems an odd book to study in an English classroom in the twenty-first century but it's been a staple on the curriculum for decades now. It's not your typical piece of English literature, focusing on two world-weary farm workers in 1920s America, but there is something about it which just grabs you and won't let go.

As I've said, the plot involves farm workers in California in the 20s. If you've ever studied History, you'd know that's when America suffered The Depression. Our heroes, if you can call them that, are Lennie and George. Lennie is a child-like man, clearly incapable of looking after himself or of fully understanding situations. George, for reasons which are explained in the book, looks after his simple friend. The world they face is harsh, cruel and completely lacking in hope. I did say it was during The Depression, right?

The title comes from an old poem where we're told that the best laid plans of mice and men often go wrong. And boy, do they go wrong quickly. Lennie is completely incapable of understanding the consequences of his actions and George is left desperately trying to save his friend. Understanding why he'd do that is one of the things that makes this book such a joy, but also so very sad.

Steinbeck writes very simply and one reason this book has been taught for so long is that anyone can pick it up and understand it. It's one of those books with a simple but gripping storyline which can also offer you so much more if you take the time to read between the lines. It is as relevant to today's world as it was to the world in which it is set. The basic themes of friendship, dreams and loneliness will never cease to matter, unfortunately.

It's the characters who make this book. Lennie is the kind of person who would drive you mad in real life but his heart is absolutely in the right place. He does wrong but he doesn't know he's doing it. You can't help but want to rip him from the pages, give him a hug and tell him it'll be alright. George seems less likeable but his loyalty to his friend and his selflessness at the end – don't worry, I'm not giving out spoilers – make him equally real and likeable. Added to these is a mismatched group of workers who have nobody and expect nothing in life, but that doesn't make them dull.

Of Mice and Men has one of the things some novels lack: a truly absorbing and wonderful story. If anyone failed to be gripped as events unfold then I'd be checking for a heartbeat.

Exemplar text: report

A report to the governors into work experience in Year 10.

This report has been commissioned by the governors to identify the best way to offer work experience at Ripley St Thomas. Three options were put forward by the senior student team: a Friday afternoon placement, Easter holiday placement and two-week placement in the summer term, after exams.

On the surface, pupils being on a regular placement each Friday might appear to be an attractive option as it would give pupils a regular and realistic experience of work. However, this would be the option which would result in the largest loss of learning. Pupils would miss a total of 190 hours of lessons, equal to an entire option subject. It is, therefore, clear that the choice is not a viable one as the impact on pupils would be to narrow their career choices by removing a GCSE option. We believe this would cancel out the benefit of the work experience programme.

The next decision which was investigated was to use the Easter holidays for the placement. There were found to be many benefits to this idea. Most importantly, it would not take up any school time and, therefore, pupils would not be missing any work from lessons. Another benefit would be that it might teach pupils that school holidays are not a part of most working lives as the government states that employers need to only offer 28 days of holiday per year. However, these benefits would also be why the plan would be unpopular. Pupils are likely to be unhappy to lose their holiday time and it could cause them to be unfocused in their placements. Some might be tempted to not attend and they would miss out. This option could also make the work experience seem like a negative thing or even a punishment. The new GCSE exams mean that pupils are often given a great deal of revision work in holidays - we found that all the core subjects set Easter homework this year - and pupils may find it difficult to do this as well as attending work placements.




Running the placement in the final two weeks of the summer term was the final option proposed. When the senior student team surveyed pupils, this came out as the most popular option. Whilst it would mean some loss of school time, it would only account for 50 hours, so much less than the Friday placement plan. In addition, many pupils felt that the final weeks were often not the most productive in school, with a lot of lessons being based around videos or project work. Year 10 would have finished their summer exams just before this time so it seems unlikely they would do very much work in school.

After careful consideration, we feel that the summer placement would cause the least disruption to pupils' education whilst also being popular. Although there are no options without any problems, the senior team felt that this was the most sensible.

Catherine McCaw

Head Girl

Checklist—transactional writing

Transactional writing				Next steps needed (Check component guides and Transactional booklet on Firefly? Read notes and practice tasks? Read real nonfiction texts? Ask for help?)	New rating after completing next steps:
I know how long to spend on each task					
I know the key features of each of the six text types					
I know how to highlight key parts of a task to make sure I answer with clear focus					
I know how to plan quickly					
I know when and how to write formal texts					
I know when and how to write informal texts					
I know how to write to persuade					
I know how to include specific, realistic details					
I know how to use a complex persona					
I know how to make sure my text has a clear purpose					
I know how to write about a topic I'm not familiar with					
I know how to target a range of potential audience members					
I know all the SPaG skills as listed on paper 1B					

Quiz—transactional writing

How long do you spend on each task?	
What are the six text types and their key features?	
How do you plan?	
When do you need to be formal?	
When can you be more informal?	
How can you write to persuade?	
What helps you to aim for grades 7-9?	
How can a complex persona help?	
What do you do if asked to write about something unfamiliar?	

How to interpret the tasks

The examiners always say they're not trying to catch people out, but you wouldn't know it from looking at some of the transactional writing tasks. They can have lots of little details which are easy to miss when you're in the middle of an exam and worrying about timing.

No matter how keen you are to get writing, you **must** stop and read carefully. Highlight key question words and double-check that you haven't missed a little detail. It's really sad, but good writers can score zero for AO5. Look at the examples below to see what I mean.

Read the guidance below and then plan each task. You could write an opening or a full response, depending on the time you have.

Your local council plans to save money by closing a local swimming pool. Write a letter to the local newspaper giving your views on this idea.

This is a really common type of question to get wrong. People tend to write as if they're writing to the council, not a newspaper. Phrases like, *'you can't do this to residents of Lancaster!'* suggest that the local paper is to blame. In addition to that, the actual readers of these letters are the newspaper readers, so just other local residents.

Write a lively article with the heading: Being a Teenager in the 21st Century.

This past question caught a lot of people out because they wrote about the stress of sitting exams, issues with bullying, friendship and relationships. All of those things were problems for teenagers in the previous century, too. Read the whole question carefully, and you'd realise that the examiners are looking for details of things which have only existed for the last couple of decades. Issues around social media, technology, new career paths and the media's perception of 'millennials' would all work well here.

A lot of people struggle to exercise enough in their day to day lives. Write a guide explaining ways they can keep fit and healthy.

'Go for a run after work. Join a local football team; go to the nearby gym!' These might all seem sensible ideas, until you look more closely at the question. Look at the first part – this guide is for people who are struggling to exercise. These people would be unlikely to suddenly start playing sports. Instead, think of simple, everyday ways to stay active. You could suggest using a Fitbit to check daily step counts, walking to work instead of driving, using stairs instead of lifts or escalators.

A guidebook is looking for suggestions of good days out for all the family. You decide to write in about a place you know well.

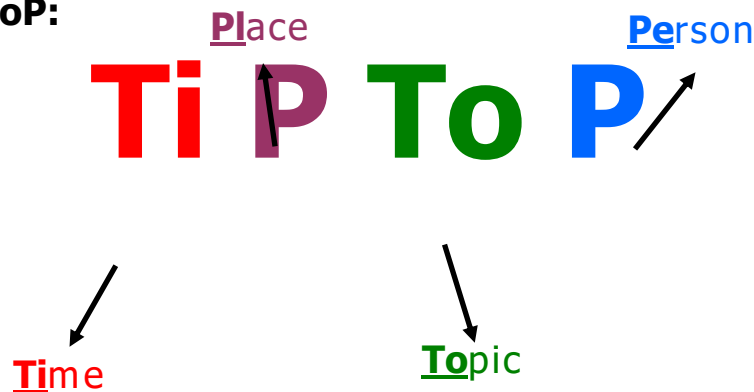
When this question was on the exam, a significant number of people wrote about holidays in caravan parks or visits to Barcelona. The question, however, asks for suggestions for a day out. Anything about a holiday destination would score barely any marks. Instead, think of cities or towns in the UK with a lot to offer. Another issue here is the mention of 'all the family'. If you just mentioned a theme park, you wouldn't have the correct audience.

The SPaG essentials: sentences

Start a new paragraph for a change in:

- **Time**
- **Place**
- **Topic**
- **Person** (entering or speaking)

Remember TiPToP:



Begin paragraphs with a **topic sentence**. This makes clear what the rest of the paragraph will be about.

For example, to start a paragraph about Ripley:

Ripley opened in 1864 as The Ripley Hospital. It originally housed 150 girls and 150 boys who were...

Detail and development

Most paragraphs will contain several sentences which expand on the topic sentence to provide more detail.

Emphasis or impact

A single sentence paragraph can really stand out.

For example:

This has to stop.

The SPaG essentials: sentences

Run-on sentences happen when you do not structure your writing into clear sentences, usually because you were rushing. They make your meaning unclear and your work difficult to read.

A sentence should contain an **independent clause**, or **one idea**. It may add to this using a subordinate clause or a connective to link to a related idea. Otherwise, it should end and a new sentence begin.

- *It was really hot.* ✓
- *It was really hot, which was unusual for March.* ✓
- *It was really hot so I made sure I had plenty of water.* ✓
- *It was really hot I went to the beach I swam in the sea to cool down my mum bought me some ice cream.* ✓



The only fool proof way to avoid run-on sentences is to take your time and to proofread carefully.

Sentence structure should be varied and you should consider using:

Short, simple sentences for impact.

This situation cannot continue.

Longer compound and complex sentences to include further detail.

The school would benefit from having new equipment such as a 3D printer, which is a piece of technology we are going to see much more of in the future. We need this funding because we cannot afford such an expensive piece of kit without your help.

The SPaG essentials: commas



Commas for subordination

Split a main clause from a subordinate clause in a complex sentence:

Parents want what's best for us, even if we don't always agree.

Commas after connectives

If starting a sentence with some connectives, you need to add a comma. This is if the connective links back to the previous sentence.

Furthermore, holidays are when we can finally relax.

Parenthetic commas

Briefly interrupt the sentence to add information in the form of a subordinate clause.

Lancaster, which is a quiet city, does not need this festival.

The SPaG essentials: apostrophes

Apostrophes for omission

In contracted words, the apostrophe shows where one or more letters have been removed.

He is = he's

I am = I'm

Do not = Don't

You would usually only use contractions in informal writing. If writing a formal text, use the separate words.

Apostrophes for possession

A second and trickier use of the apostrophe is to show possession. If the possessor is a singular noun, an **'s** is added to the end of the noun.

I wandered around Lancaster's ancient streets.

If the possessor is a plural ending in **-s**, simply adding an apostrophe after the final **-s** indicates possession.

The pupils' needs must come first.

Never, never, never add an apostrophe simply because a words ends in –s.

If you've added an –s to make something plural, then it doesn't need anything else!

The SPaG essentials: homophones

There: a place. *I am going **there** tomorrow.*

Their: belonging. *It is **their** choice.*

They're: short for 'they are'. ***They're** going to be late.*

Where: a place. ***Where** are you going?*

Were: past tense of are. ***Were** you late today?*

We're: short for 'we are'. ***We're** going to be late.*

To: direction. *I am going **to** the gym.*

Too: much or also. *It's **too** hot. I think so **too**.*

Two: the number 2. *I have **two** brothers.*

Your: belonging. *Is this **your** pen?*

You're: short for 'you are'. ***You're** brilliant at this!*

Bored: uninterested. *I was **bored** all weekend.*

Board: a piece of wood. *Put a **board** over the broken*

Hole: a gap. *There's a **hole** in my shoe.*

Whole: entire. *I ate the **whole** cake!*

Here: a place. *Are we all **here**?*

Hear: detect a sound. *Did you **hear** that noise?*

Allowed: having permission. *I'm **allowed** out tonight.*

Aloud: sound. *I read my work **aloud** to my friend.*