



GCSE English Language Model Answers:

English Language (8700) (NEW SPEC) June 2017

Paper 2

Q1.

- The writer's son knows how to turn off the TV.
- The writer's son has just turned two.
- The writer hasn't slept well for the past year.
- The writer's son hasn't learned to walk yet.

Examiner's report:

- This question assesses the first part of **AO1** - 'identify and interpret explicit information and ideas'.
 - The answer selects the four statements that are true, based on the specified lines in the question: lines 1 to 17.
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Q2. Model Answer

As the child in source A is just a baby, he is not developed enough to enjoy the pastimes that the Victorian boy in source B undertakes. The baby in source A mostly engages in activities that are related to his own body rather than external objects; including 'running', speaking 'gibberish', laughing 'uncontrollably' and resting his head on his father's shoulder. In contrast, the Victorian boy in source B spent his childhood cracking 'little whips' and playing with 'drums and tin trumpets' as well as 'pop-guns, bows and arrows, whips, tops and go-carts'.

As such, the Victorian child's sense of play and freedom is found externally, relying on inanimate objects and trinkets, whereas Stuart Heritage's son has his sense of play completely wrapped up with his own self, and with that of his family. There are repeated references to the physicality of Heritage's son, he loves 'running' up to people, and for them to 'twang his lips like a ruler...', and indicates an interactive, personal, and intimate kind of fun. This juxtaposes entirely with the play of Source B's child, which is completely external, impersonal, and focused around an extended list of objects. It is evident that the ways in which the two boys find enjoyment is starkly different.

It is also suggested that as the child in source B grew from a baby 'lying in his crib' to an older boy, he needed greater stimulation from toys to learn and develop his creativity. It is notable that the children in both sources attempt to make noise and attract attention, but they do this in different ways due to their difference in age, and perhaps, environment. The author of source A does not mention that his son plays with such toys, although the reader may imagine that the baby is starting to become capable of this type of play, as he 'knows how to switch off the television' and is 'blasting ahead as far as he can'; again alluding to his rapid development.

Examiner's report:

- This answer assesses **both parts of AO1** - identify and interpret explicit and implicit information and ideas, and select and synthesise evidence from different texts.
 - The answer makes **perceptive inferences** from both texts, making sure to analyse how the boys enjoy different activities based on their age-related development.
 - Makes shrewd references to the text, sometimes using **direct quotations**, which are relevant to the question.
 - The student has shown perceptive similarities and differences between texts, signposting to the examiner using phrases such as 'in contrast' and 'in both sources'.
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Q3. Model Answer

The writer metaphorically describes his son as 'a sleepy ball of scrunched-up flesh'. This creates an image that is endearing, as it evokes an image of a contented infant curled up in a 'sleepy ball'. The adjective 'sleepy' is suggestive of peace and tranquillity, which creates a sense of innocence when applied to a newborn baby. The infant, however, also seems rather comically revolting, as his 'scrunched-up flesh' conjures an image of something wrinkled and unformed, with the verb 'scrunched-up' creating a parallel with discarded cloth or rubbish: to the writer, the newborn is not yet recognisable as an individual.

A year later, the baby has become 'determinedly his own person', and has a recognisable body and personality. It becomes clear from the use of the triplet in 'me, my wife, my parents', that the child is considered to be a product of his parents and grandparents, with the list appearing as ingredients in a recipe. Whilst acknowledging this mixture, the author also reinforces his son's individuality by using hyphens to indicate that the baby is 'already separate' from the rest of his family. The author, therefore, uses language to indicate to the reader that the baby has rapidly transformed from an endearing yet removed and unknown bundle of 'flesh', into a fully-fledged person with their own unique characteristics and identity.

The writer's use of language continues to paint an endearing picture of the baby, and indicates that the writer's son is continuing to change and develop, even at the time of writing. The adjectives 'giddy and silly' conjure the stereotypical image of a charming and funny baby, and

the use of simile in the humorous anecdote of the baby running up to people so they will 'twang his lips like a ruler' makes the child seem innocent and a source of joy. The writer makes it clear that habits such as these may disappear in the future as the child grows, to be replaced with new habits and characteristics. Therefore the theme of loss runs alongside the joy he finds in his son, with each stage of development meaning they are 'confronted' with a 'slightly different child'. The implied aggression of the verb 'confronted' indicates the emotional assault the writer feels as a result of this constant evolution, and tinges the text with a deep sadness.

The alarming nature of the baby's rapid growth is highlighted by the author's use of a hyperbolic simile when he muses that 'Photos of him taken in the summer seem like dispatches from a million years ago. Photos of him taken last week seem like a different boy'. This extreme description calls into question the author's reliability, and suggests that the author feels a great deal of alarm at the rapidity of his child's milestones. They are described as 'ambushing' the author, demonstrating his wish to consciously or unconsciously avoid these new stages of development, laced as they are with loss. The author's reflective tone indicates to the reader that he is perhaps concerned about not spending enough time with his son. He feels that if his child is continually 'blasting ahead as far as he can', he may miss out on precious moments of bonding, and be left alone with discarded 'tiny parts' of himself.

Examiner's report:

- In this question you will be marked on **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.
- The answer specifically focuses on **language**, and uses phrases such as 'The writer's use of language' and 'The writer makes it clear', to signpost this to the examiner.
- The answer clearly explains the **effects** of language choices on the reader.
- **Terminology** such as metaphors, triplets, and similes are identified, and their effects are explained in detail.

Q4. Model Answer

Both writers convey a sense that children seem to grow up too quickly. Heritage, a 21st century father, uses the rhetorical question 'How is he one already?' to convey his surprise at his son's seemingly rapid growth, and uses hyperbole to describe how he only 'blinked', and his son turned from a newborn into 'a little boy who can walk and has teeth'. Similarly, the Victorian mother in source B dislikes the fact that her son has grown into a 'manly figure', so much so that she declares 'I am rather unwilling to own him'. This statement indicates the deep disconnection she feels from her son now that he has grown up, the use of the word 'unwilling' demonstrating her lack of desire to connect with her son and accept him as her 'own' child. She perceives him

as other and unknown, 'unwilling' and unable to see the young man before her as a continuation of the 'little' boy she loved so much. Her exclamation 'If I only had my little boy again, how patient I would be!' emphasises this further, and indicates her deep and unattainable 'wish' to turn back the clock and be a better parent to her son.

The Victorian writer's sense of loss is so strong that she claims her son has 'disappeared' and is 'lost' forever; in reality her son is still physically present in her life, and this statement of loss is a hyperbolic emotional metaphor. Heritage similarly conveys regret at 'This sadness, this constant sense of loss, of time slipping just beyond your grasp', but unlike the writer of source B, he recognises that this is 'an important part of this process' of growth. Therefore, while both authors convey a sense of lost time as their children grow, Heritage's text has a more hopeful tone, and shows a willingness to accept and embrace the fact that his son 'will never stop changing'. He even goes so far as to express fatherly pride in his son's development, when he uses the onomatopoeic word 'blasting' to evoke the image of a rocket or explosion, indicating an acknowledgement that his son's rapid development is part of his personal journey, with the end point as his eventual adulthood.

The difference in the feelings of the writers regarding their sons' growth may be explained by the difference in age between the two sons. While Heritage's son is still just one year old, the son in source B is a fully-grown man, and much of the text provides flashbacks to his lost youth. The merging of timelines in both texts emphasises the speed at which the authors have seen their children develop. Both texts also dwell more upon the past iterations of their children, indicating that the writers are unable, or unwilling, to consider their children as individual people, separated from their parents' experience of them.

The writer of source B even uses the past tense to describe her son when she recalls his characteristics, 'He had black eyes, with long lashes, red cheeks, and hair almost black and almost curly'. It is unlikely that these features have changed very much over time, yet the author uses past tense to emphasise that she feels her 'little boy' and her 'big boy' are entirely different people. Heritage similarly remarks that his child seems 'like a different boy' each week, however his use of simile rather than metaphor suggests that he recognises his child is essentially still the same person, as his son has only experienced a year of growth rather than growing into a man.

Examiner's report:

- This answer assesses **AO3** - compare writers' ideas and perspectives, as well as how these are conveyed, across two or more texts.
- The answer addresses the question by **perceptively comparing** the perspectives and feelings of the authors, using **evidence** from the text to support the points made.
- **Language features** such as simile and metaphor are identified to highlight the **methods** writers use to convey their different perspectives, and the effects of these techniques are fully explained.

- **Structural features** such as past tense and flashback are used to describe and explain differences between the writer's perspectives.
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Q5.

Model Answer:

Children are not made of porcelain.

Everywhere you look, parents these days are wrapping their children up in bubble wrap, and failing to let them explore and grow. How many times have we heard young parents cry 'Get down from there!' or 'That's dangerous!'. There is a ridiculous and infectious notion spreading throughout Western society that children are simply too young, too soft, and too fragile to engage in almost any outdoor activity- or even to access a broad range of online content. I do not suggest that parents should allow their children to play in building sites or access pornography. However, they should certainly let their offspring climb trees, play outside with their friends, and equally, to learn about difficult topics such as death or mental health, from quality online resources.

Some might argue that their child is 'too young' or 'too innocent' to explore the harsh realities of life, and that they do not have the capacity to do so, either physically or mentally, but the reality is often that we are not giving youngsters enough opportunities to learn. Of course they are going to fall from a few trees, perhaps they will even break a limb or two. Of course they are going to misinterpret information, find 'fake news', or discover uncomfortable content which we will need to have uncomfortable conversations about. But allow me to propose this question- how else will they learn? Countless studies have proven time and time again that both children and adults retain information much more effectively when they learn from experience. Explain to your child that they might encounter false information, and that they need to think critically, and they may immediately forget your advice and choose to believe everything they read or hear. However, this should not prevent us as adults from allowing our children to encounter false information. This is how a sense of judgement is developed, as clashing or uncomfortable narratives are stumbled across and thought about. They will learn to make their own minds up.

Likewise, a child who has never crossed the street without holding hands with their parent or caregiver will be much more likely to fall foul of roads and other dangerous situations when they are finally granted some independence. Parents undoubtedly have good intentions when they shelter their children from the perils of daily life, but unfortunately, shielding a child from all harm can have catastrophic effects on their confidence and capability, even preventing them from gaining and improving vital life skills.

In short, when considering parenting choices, it is prudent to consider the long-term, as well as short-term effects of your decisions. Preventing a child from going out with their friends, or restricting the content they can view online, can be uniquely dangerous in its own way. Will their life or wellbeing be seriously threatened by a proposed course of action,, or will they learn a valuable lesson about safeguarding themselves and acting responsibly around others?

Examiner's report:

- In this answer, you will be marked on **AO5**: content and organisation, and **AO6**: technical accuracy.
 - AO5: the student has employed **convincing and compelling communication** through a range of language techniques such as triples and rhetorical questions.
 - AO5: the answer's **tone, style and register** are accurately matched to the purpose and audience of parents.
 - AO6: the student has employed **varied structural techniques** such as repetition and varied sentence lengths.
 - AO6: Paragraphs are **fluently linked**, with first person prose maintained throughout.
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