



GCSE English Language Model Answers:

**English Language (8700) (NEW SPEC) November 2022**

Paper 1

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Q1.

- The man is old.
- He is a fisherman.
- He had not caught a fish in 84 days.
- He is considered unlucky.

**Examiner's report:**

- Evidence is selected directly from the text, within the **specified lines** 1-5.
- The points can be direct **quotes or paraphrases** from the text.
- This question assesses the **first part of AO1**- identify and interpret explicit and implicit information and ideas.

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Q2.

In this extract, the writer presents the old man as a pitiable and frail character. His 'thin and gaunt' body, wracked by 'the brown blotches of the benevolent skin cancer' he has contracted from the sun, emphasises that the man is ill and possibly weak or underfed. The plosive alliteration in 'brown blotches of the benevolent' creates a violent repetitive 'b' sound, suggesting that the man has been attacked mercilessly by his illness. Furthermore, the sarcastic use of the word 'benevolent' personifies the sun as a cruel force and makes the old man seem like a victim of his profession as a fisherman, as its 'reflections' on the water have caused the cancer.

The writer additionally presents the man as being very old and experienced, worn away by long years as a fisherman. His 'deep-creased scars', none of which are 'fresh', give the impression that the man has been a fisherman for a long time, leading his hands to become calloused by scars. The simile 'as old as erosions in a fishless desert' is effective in creating a vivid image to describe the man's physical decline, as he has become eroded like a rock or cliff face in his long years of struggling with 'heavy fish'. Just like an eroded rock face, the back of his neck is beset with 'deep wrinkles' that indicate his age. Yet on another level, the simile also refers to the

inconsistent results of his profession. The 'fishless desert' alludes to his lack of luck in catching fish, which leads the reader to pity him even further as his hard work and the pain he has suffered has been fruitless, and left him in a terrible bodily condition. As the sun has beaten down on the man to such an extent that he has developed skin cancer, the simile also reinforces the idea that the sea is a hopeless and dangerous 'desert'.

The repetition of 'old' further emphasises the man's age and experience; this is contrasted with the 'cheerful and undefeated' gleam in his eyes. The cheerfulness of the man's eyes make him seem like a more inviting character despite his wretched scars and poor bodily condition, as his 'undefeated' resilience may lead them to respect him for his hope and strength in the face of adversity. The overall impression given is that the man does not mind the difficult path he has chosen in life as a fisherman. This is likely due to a close feeling of connection with the sea, as his eyes are 'the same colour as the sea'. This suggests that the sea is the only thing allowing him to retain vitality and a feeling of 'cheerful' youth, as 'everything about him was old except his eyes'.

#### Examiner's report:

- This question assesses you 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 student has analysed the **effects** of the writer's choices of language in great **depth**.
- The student has selected a range of relevant textual **evidence** from the source, which adequately supports the points being made.
- **Sophisticated language** and subject terminology are used.
- The student has **accurately signposted** to the examiner language techniques and the effects of these through phrases such as 'the plosive alliteration [...] creates...'.

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Q3. As this text is from the start of the novel, the writer has structured it to build exposition by setting the scene and beginning to describe the characters through imagery and dialogue. Hemingway immediately alludes to the title of the novel in the first sentence when he encourages the reader to picture 'an old man who fished alone in a skiff'. The use of past tense in 'He was...' suggests that the novel will recount the old man's final days leading up to his death, whilst the seemingly omniscient third person narration allows the reader to understand multiple characters from an external point of view. Hemingway builds the reader's understanding of the man as the narrator describes how other characters view him. The boy's parents view the old man as an 'unlucky' fisherman and the boy pities him and feels 'sad' when the fisherman returns with an empty skiff.

This creates a tone of failure and ruin at the start of the text, which develops as the simile 'like the flag of permanent defeat' is used to emphasise the hopelessness of the old man's profession, and encourages the reader to pity him as much as the boy does. This sets the tone for the rest of the novel. Hemingway then develops the text by describing the man in more

detail, emphasising his age and the trials of being a fisherman, evident in his 'wrinkles', 'scars' and cancer 'blotches'. He juxtaposes this with the man's 'cheerful and undefeated eyes', lending a more hopeful tone to the text and making the man seem less wretched than Hemingway has led the reader to suppose. This makes the old man a more admirable figure, and the reader may want to read on to find out how he has maintained this sense of hope and cheer despite his age, weak physical condition and poor luck.

Dialogue then helps to hold the reader's attention following this initial exposition as it brings life to the story by drawing the readers into a conversation. The eager tone of the boy who 'loved' the old man and wants to 'go with [him] again', despite the fact that the old man has not caught any fish for a long time, leads the reader to understand that the old man is kind. The old man's dialogue when he encourages the boy to stay with the more successful 'lucky boat' and does not blame him for the 'quite normal' act of leaving further shows the reader that the old man is kind and cares for the boy. This dialogue is particularly effective in engaging the reader, as Hemingway is no longer directly describing the man, but is able to use dialogue to reveal the character of both the man and the boy and establish the close relationship between them.

The focus then shifts as the dialogue is interrupted and Hemingway juxtaposes the old man's poor luck when fishing with the 'successful fisherman of that day', who are 'staggering' under the weight of the fish they have caught. This is a stark reminder of his failure as a fisherman and his pitiable state in contrast to the other fishermen. The reader further pities the kind old man as 'many of the fishermen made fun of' him and older fishermen are 'sad' when they look upon him. The fact that he 'was not angry' when being made fun of further indicates the old man's virtue, further leading the reader to like and pity the character. The sympathy that they feel for the old man further draws the reader into the text as they feel an emotional connection to the character.

At the end of the extract, the reader is led to feel a little more hopeful for the old man. The fact that he is 'thinking of many years ago' suggests that he had more success in the past, and the reader may suspect that he will be cared for as the boy is determined 'to serve in some way', to fish with the old man and to look after him by bringing him sardines and beer. This reinforces the loyalty and respect that the boy feels for the man, and leads the reader to believe that he will be supported despite his bad luck. The reader remains engaged in the text as they may want to learn more about the old man's past and see whether their speculations about the man's future are accurate.

#### **Examiner's report:**

- This question assesses you 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 analyses the **effects** of the writer's choices of structural features in great **depth**.
- The student has selected a range of relevant textual **evidence** from the source, which adequately supports the points being made.

- The answer uses **sophisticated language** and subject terminology.
  - The student has **accurately signposted** to the examiner the structural techniques they are discussing and the effects of these through phrases such as 'The focus then shifts...' and 'This dialogue is particularly effective in engaging the reader'
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Q4. In this part of the story, the respect between the two characters is made clear through the character's dialogue. The boy's clear respect for the old man is shown as he addresses him by name when each section of dialogue begins. This emphasises the fact that the boy is eager to speak with the old man, and speaks to him as if he is asking permission from a father with his questioning tone. The boy suggests 'I could go with you again' and directly asks 'Can I go out and get sardines with you tomorrow?', almost pestering the old man because he wants to spend time with him and support him.

The old man's simple responses and instructions as he says 'Yes' or 'No' show that he has a paternal power over the boy's decisions. Despite this seeming power imbalance in the relationship, the old man recognises the boy as a peer when he calls him 'a man' and they share drinks 'between fishermen'. He also respects the boy's time and clearly does not want to burden him. The old man tells the boy to stay on the 'lucky boat' and encourages him to 'play baseball' rather than getting sardines for him. Yet he also recognises the boy's eagerness to help him, and is willing to make slight concessions, allowing the boy to buy him a beer.

It is clear that the old man and the boy share a mutual respect and a deep relationship that has lasted for many years. Although the old man has been reduced to a pitiable figure, 'made fun of' by some fishermen and given 'sad' pitiful looks by others, the boy appears to give him hope. His sense of hopeful camaraderie with the boy is emphasised by the use of the collective pronoun 'we', as the old man explains that although the boy's father does not have faith, 'we have. Haven't we?'. The boy's agreement with this question suggests that he continues to have faith in the old man, and genuinely believes that his luck will improve and he will be successful. This is reinforced by the boy's recollection that 'you went eighty-seven days without fish and then we caught big ones every day for three weeks'. This shared memory of overcoming past failures together is paired with other flashbacks to more successful times to reinforce the mutual hope and respect that draw the two characters together.

Even more poignant is the shared memory of the first fishing trip the pair took together. The fact that the old man recalls the age of the boy and what happened on their first trip together suggests that despite his age, his first moments with the boy were precious and memorable to him. The boy's recollection is even more vivid, showing his excitement as he remembers the 'tail slapping and banging and the thwart breaking and the noise of the clubbing'. This series of onomatopoeic and violent verbs with plosive 'p' and 'b' sounds demonstrate the excitement and terror of the experience, which has stuck with the boy through the ages. These verbs also emphasise the size and strength of the fish, thereby indicating the past strength of the old man as he was able to catch the fish and bring it into the boat. The old man's strength is further

suggested as the boy recalls him 'throwing me into the bow' and the simile 'clubbing [the fish] like chopping a tree down' shows the lumberjack-like power the old man used to possess. Clearly, the boy respects the heroic strength the old man used to possess. The repetition of 'I can remember' as the boy recalls these events, and his confident statement that he can 'remember everything' shows that the boy admires and respects the old man so much that every moment with him is memorable, regardless of his weakness and poor luck.

Overall, I strongly agree with the student's statement, as the characters' shared memories and the father-son relationship that they appear to have demonstrates their strong and unwavering respect for one another. Their desire to cater to one another's needs and their collective faith in a more hopeful future (despite the old man's illness and failure) is made clear through Hemingway's use of dialogue.

#### Examiner's report:

- This question assesses you on **AO4** - evaluate texts critically and support this with appropriate textual references.
  - The answer develops a **convincing and critical** response relevant to the statement in the question.
  - The student shows a perceptive understanding of the **writer's methods**, for example the use of onomatopoeia, dialogue, and collective pronouns.
  - The student has **evaluated critically** and in detail the **effects** of the writer's use of language and their methods on the reader.
  - A range of judicious **textual evidence** from the source has been selected which adequately supports the points being made.
  - **Keywords** from the question such as 'faith' and 'respect' are used in order to **signpost** the answer to the examiner.
  - A short **conclusion** is written in order to **signpost** to the examiner what has already been argued throughout the answer.
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Q5.

a)

The sea spray leaps up as waves crash against the barren cliffs. If you stand upon the rocks in the early morning and gaze upon the vast stretches of ocean ahead, you feel like the only living thing for miles around. Yet in the day, the village teems with life. Market stalls shine in shades of amber and green, and the acerbic odour emitting from the rows of freshly-caught fish mingles with the scent of sea salt. Heels clatter quickly up and down the cobblestones in the early morning as locals desperately try to grab their necessities or head to work before the onslaught of the masses. As the sun rises high, the streets become crowded with groups of tourists that seem to dart about like a shoal of excitable children as they scour the market stalls for cheap trinkets, shells and sweets.

The beach is also filled up with masses of people, ebbing and flowing upon the sand with the coming and going of the tide. Screaming, sunburnt children shriek along the shore like gulls, building sandcastles or half-drowning their siblings with splashes of salt water. Their parents look on, adorned with brightly-coloured beach towels and enjoying the last glimmers of the weekend before returning to the dull monotony of their everyday lives. Hidden amongst the rocks nearby, timid crustaceans file deep into a sanctuary of stone and patiently await the disappearance of the giant, shell-less beings, hoping beyond hope that they are not discovered before the tide can sweep them away from harm.

To the dismay of the innocent crabs, their sandy home is peppered with an assortment of discarded plastic; buckets and spades, bottles and wrappers. They litter the coast with marks of humanity that will beleaguer the sea for aeons after the happy families that left them are reduced to no more than ash and bone. They will choke the sea as generations of crabs are turned into crab sticks. They will fester on the seafloor as wave after wave of thoughtless children and indifferent adults continue to carelessly saturate the beach with clutter.

Oblivious to the destruction, the rotation of the sky and the waves march on ceaselessly. The summer sun casts its long net well into the evening, painting the sky with glorious hues of orange, pink and vermillion as the ocean encroaches on the sandy banks. The quaint pastel houses of the village continue to be warmed by an ethereal glow until the sun sinks well below the horizon. Then, in a timeless nightly ritual, the midsummer daylight makes way for beams of moonlight. Moonbeams dance over the glittering surface of the dark and forbidding waters, turning the sea into a vast expanse of a thousand twinkling stars as it sends out soft ripples to lap against limestone cliffs. The houses fall invisible in the gloomy abyss, and the only sound to be heard is the ominous chirping of a cricket or the faint and mysterious clamour of far-off noises in the night. The fish sleep in peace at the bottom of the sea, the humans tucked up in their beds and the beach under a blanket of salt water. Until the sun rises once more, and the village stirs again.

#### Examiner report:

- This will be marked on **AO5** - content and organisation- and **AO6**- technical accuracy.
- **AO5:** The answer's communication is **convincing and compelling**, and the tone, style and register are suitable to the **purpose** of a **description**.
- There is use of **extensive and ambitious vocabulary** such as 'ethereal' and 'beleaguer'.
- The answer employs a varied use of different **language techniques**, such as simile and rule of three.
- A variety of **structural features** are used, including repetition, complex sentences and focus shift
- **AO6:** The answer uses a **wide range** of **punctuation** including commas and dashes, and there is a **high level** of accuracy with **spelling**.

- Complex and compound sentences show secure control of **complex grammatical structures**.

b)

What in the seven seas are *you* doing here?’ asked the merdragon in surprise. It wasn’t every day that one came across anything pink and squishy down in the black depths of the sea. ‘Oh, hello’ began the merboy, as he clumsily shuffled closer and plastered his hands behind his back to keep them from shaking.

The merdragon came closer.

If merboys needed to breathe, then the poor boy’s breath would have stopped short. As he looked up to meet the fell beast’s eye, his tail wobbled uncontrollably. He wondered whether he should tuck it behind his back like his hands, but he thought that might not look quite natural. Or maybe he should wriggle it about a little and pretend to swim in order to conceal his terror. He had to be professional now. Shaking was not allowed. There was no room for fear.

Towering above him was a gigantic green mass of gleaming scales, almost shapeless and emerging into the light like an amalgamation of dark pebbles made animate. At first glance, its only identifiable feature was its sickly yellow eyes. They were the colour of plasma and they contained no pupils. This disconcerted the merboy to say the least. One could not tell where the creature was looking, or what it might do next...

‘Well?’ boomed the merdragon. ‘Who are you? What business do you have here?’

The merboy took a breath, cleared his throat, and words began to unconsciously flow and babble from his lips.

‘My name is Abasterion. I have come down from... well, you-know-where... Atlantis, that is... to speak with the merdragon called Lorokai. I can always come back later if he’s not about, though. Always plenty to do up in the Lost City! Paperwork and so on...’.

The merdragon watched with amusement as the little boy squeaked and gulped. She had never seen a merperson before, but she had heard that they were immensely intelligent, beautiful beings with a power beyond all reckoning. According to all reputable sources, they were not to be trifled with, and ideally, they should be avoided at all costs. Therefore, she reasoned that this funny little being could not possibly be a merperson, and after an eternity of drowning masses of squealing creatures in the depths, she welcomed the diversion of speaking with him.

‘Paperwork! That sounds dreadful!’ She laughed.

‘How on earth do you work with paper down here? I’ve devoured so many ships, all full of paper, and it turns into a mushy mess as soon as it dips below the surface. Surely you must mean stonework? We dragons are very good at it- we filled up a huge rock with runes just last week.’

Hearing this, the merboy swam back with wide eyes and an open jaw. The merdragon’s voice croaked with a snarl that would send chills down the spine of even the bravest of mortals, but in a curious kind of way, her tone was almost pleasant. And if there was any subject on which the

merboy could chatter about for hours, it was the dull and monotonous task of waterproofing paper.

Before long, the merdragon brought out some mugs and boiled some fragrant kelp weed tea. For a while, Abasterion forgot what he had descended down here to do as he sipped the concoction from his cup and warmed himself by a hydrothermal vent as the pair cut through the silent sea with the sound of laughter.

**Examiner report:**

- This will be marked on **AO5** - content and organisation- and **AO6**- technical accuracy.
  - **AO5:** The answer's communication is **convincing and compelling**, and the tone, style and register are suitable to the **purpose** of a **story**.
  - There is use of **extensive and ambitious vocabulary** such as 'disconcerting' and 'reputable'.
  - The answer employs a varied use of different **language techniques**, such as simile and rule of three.
  - A variety of **structural features** are used, including short sentences and dialogue.
  - The **paragraphs are fluently linked** with seamlessly integrated **connectives**.
  - **AO6:** The answer uses a wide range of **punctuation** including semicolons, and exclamation marks, and there is a high level of accuracy with **spelling**.
  - Complex and compound sentences show secure control of **complex grammatical structures**.
-