



GCSE English Language Model Answers:

English Language (8700) (NEW SPEC) Nov 2020

Paper 1

Q1.

- Rosie has just moved house
- She sees a child she does not recognise
- She drove up from London the evening before
- Rosie has a car

Examiner's report:

- Evidence is selected directly from the text, within the **specified lines 1-4**.
- 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.

Q2. In the passage, the writer uses a range of language techniques to describe the garden. The passage has a consistent theme of personification to describe the garden and the different plants and trees in it. The 'ancient mulberry tree' is described as being 'stood' in the centre, which suggests it is looming over the garden, right in the middle, almost as if it is protecting the garden; a supernatural force of nature. Furthermore, with the phrase 'the gnarled growth threw long, twisted shadows', the writer creates dark and foreboding imagery. The personification in the words 'gnarled' and 'twisted' also suggests anger and bitterness, further contributing to the tension of the passage as Rosie journeys towards the locked door. The writer describes the ivy as 'choking' the tree as it was 'snarled' with it, and this imagery suggests that the garden is almost at war with itself, and is in chaos. The descriptive language here once again has connotations of vindictiveness and anger, as if the garden is angry and sprawling, which further builds the tension of the text.

Furthermore, the writer uses metaphorical language and similes throughout the passage in order to describe the garden. The writer uses a metaphor and simile to describe the huge tree in the garden, in 'its knuckles in the earth like a gigantic malformed hand'. This personification in the comparison of the tree to a hand, through 'malformed hand' and 'knuckles', allows the reader to intensely imagine the scene. The connotations of these words are harsh and

unwelcoming, even scary, and the reader is left feeling like the garden is an unfriendly and terrifying place. Furthermore, the theme of anger in the description of the garden is continued here, through the word 'knuckles' which carries the connotation of a punch or a fight, and we are left once again with the sense that the garden is at war with itself, the plants constantly twisting and turning with each other.

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 'theme of personification'.
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Q3. The writer has used a variety of structural techniques to interest the reader throughout the source. At the start of the source, the writer focuses the reader's attention on 'the stranger child' immediately through a simple sentence. This has the effect of drawing in the reader's attention and builds up the sense of mystery in the text. The phrase 'stranger child' is repeated consistently throughout the text, thus returning the reader's attention to this mysterious character and building up the tension in the narrative. After introducing the unexplained stranger child at the start of the text, the writer then shifts the focus onto her own children, describing them playing in the garden. This withholding of information within the text delays the discovery of the mystery of the child, and thus builds tension, leaving the reader desperate to find out when this character will be introduced. Finally, at the end of the narrative, the single line paragraph tells us that the child is 'gone', thus completing the circular structure of the narrative. This further contributes to the reader's understanding of the mystery element to the narrative, and leaves them eager to find out what is happening next.

Furthermore, the writer's repetition of rhetorical questions within a short paragraph interests the reader and creates a personal feeling to the text. The reader feels involved in the mystery, and has a desire to solve it alongside the writer. Furthermore, the repetition of these rhetorical questions emphasises the curiosity and slight panic the writer is feeling in regards to the stranger child, and highlights how desperate they are to find out where the child had come from. The use of the shorter paragraph here separates this from the rest of the text, and thus builds up tension, mirroring the panic the writer is feeling build up inside them.

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 'shifts the focus' and 'shorter paragraph'.

Q4. Despite Rosie's initial thoughts of the child being real, the writer leaves so many clues towards the child being imaginary, that we are not surprised at the end of the extract when she disappears.

In the passage, the writer describes the 'animal-like' movements of the stranger child, and the use of the simile 'like the darting of a mouse or the flit of a sparrow' adds depth to the description and allows the reader to imagine how fast she must be moving. From this, we can infer that the child is not moving in a human-like way, and that the movements seem unpredictable and fast. These fast, animal-like movements, however, remain unnoticed by Rosie's child Cara, who has no reaction to the girl. The fact that Rosie's daughter cannot see the girl suggests that the girl's movements are not only animal-like, but also that she herself is not human, and is simply a figment of Rosie's imagination.

Furthermore, the imagery throughout the passage when describing the girl has connotations with an old, ghostly figure, as well as fairy-tales. The stranger child's hair is described as being tied back in a 'matted, dusty-looking plait', and she looked young in height and build, however something in the 'hunch of her shoulders made her seem older'. Those readers well-versed in ghost stories will pick up on the ghostly connotation in this passage. The fact that the girl's hunched shoulders made her seem older gives us a clue that this could be a supernatural being, and thus it would not be surprising to find out that the girl has suddenly 'gone' at the end. Moreover, the use of the simile in 'like a home-made Cinderella costume' compares the girl's outfit to a well-known fairy-tale, which insinuates that the girl may belong in such a story. As the reader will know, fairy-tales are often characterised by mystery and magic, and thus the reader is not surprised when the little girl disappears at the end of the passage.

The writer also structures the text in such a way that gives us clues that the stranger child is imaginary. The short sentence 'Something wasn't right here', is structured in a one line paragraph so as to build tension in the narrative, and aims to draw in the reader's attention to this line. By drawing our attention into the fact that 'something wasn't right', it is once again insinuated to us that the child is somewhat abnormal. Furthermore, the repetition of rhetorical questions asking how the child had entered the garden reflect the impossibility of the situation. The use of the question 'how had she got in?' emphasises the difficulty and impossibility that a child could have entered the garden, what with the high fences that separated the houses. We

are therefore unsurprised by the end of the passage that the child has disappeared, just as impossibly as she had entered.

Overall, I would agree with the statement, as despite Rosie's thoughts of the child being real, the writer peppers clues throughout the structure and language of the text which suggest to us that she is imaginary, or ghostly.

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 **perceptive** understanding of the **writer's methods**, for example the use of similes and structural features.
 - 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 'disappeared' and 'surprised' 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) Write a description of a mysterious place, as suggested by this picture.

The smell hanging in the fog was stale, almost suffocatingly thick. Looking ahead, only shapes could be distinguished through the heavy, unmoving fog. Occasionally, a bird or animal flitted past over the steady stone wall and was gone in a flash.

Overhead, the sun had long set, and the full, round face of the moon blinked back with a scarily steadfast gaze. The hearty crows of birds could be heard, and the delicate scampering paws of stoats and moles pitter-pattered through the undergrowth. The gates groaned in the wind. They sounded almost in pain, as the wind whistled through their hinges and they moaned in distress. A crow, or a raven, landed with a clack onto the gate, and as it perched on the edge its beady black and yellow eye glinted in the moonlight.

The reliable stone wall had stood high and proud for years, untouched for just as long by terrified folk too frightened to go anywhere near the gates of the old Manor. It was so cold it felt almost damp, like the rain that had pummelled it for so long had seeped into the crevices, infiltrating the uninviting barrier.

Turning the corner, you could just about make it out above the sea of fog: the Manor. Derelict though it was, it was so hauntingly beautiful that it could set the hairs on the back of your neck

standing on end just with one glance. The remaining turrets held their heads up high, still so proud to be standing despite being neglected for so long. The distinctive shape of the huge, foreboding oval door was impossible to miss, eerily open in an inviting- yet sinister- greeting.

Examiner's 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 'steadfast' and 'distinguished'.
- The answer employs a varied use of different **language techniques**, such as similes in 'like the rain that had pummelled it for so long had seeped into the crevices', onomatopoeia and metaphors throughout.
- The description appeals to the reader's **senses** with 'smell' and 'hear'.
- A variety of **structural features** are used including varied sentence length.
- The **paragraphs are fluently linked** with seamlessly integrated **connectives**.
- **AO6:** The answer uses a wide range of **punctuation** including commas and colons, and there is a high level of accuracy with **spelling**.
- Complex and compound sentences show secure control of **complex grammatical structures**.

b) Write a story about an event that cannot be explained.

Verity awoke with a start. It was as if something had pulled her from her slumber, and she sat up, looking around the room groggily. Everything looked to be in order, however, and she could see the half-empty bottle of wine from the night before perched on her dressing table. Some had spilled, and it was pooled around the base of the bottle like a delicate lace collar.

Now, she sighed, and tentatively raised a hand to her head. She didn't feel as bad as she'd expected, thankfully, since there was plenty of arduous work to be getting on with today. Her eyes travelled over to the windowsill, quickly landing on a darkened patch on the window. At first, she thought it must just be muck, or a smudge of makeup. But, no! It looked like cloth, or, was it paper? She could see the edges were curled upwards in an uninviting snarl.

What is that? Verity thought; a slightly uneasy feeling was beginning to consume her as she hopped out of bed and crept over to the cream-coloured, old sash window.

As she got closer, Verity could see that it was in fact a piece of paper, and there was a thin strip of clear tape along the top sticking it to the window. Small in size, the paper was square, couldn't have been more than a couple of inches wide each way, and most importantly, it was filthy. Utterly filthy. Fingerprints of dirt and dust covered its front, so much so that it took Verity a while to spot it. But when she did, her heart beat so hard that it tumbled out of her chest, ran along the windowsill and out of the front door.

There, on the front of the paper in tiny, scrawly pencil handwriting were the words:

We're watching you.

Examiner's 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 'arduous'.
 - The answer employs a varied use of different **language techniques**, such as a metaphor in 'uninviting snarl' and a simile in 'like a delicate lace collar'.
 - A variety of **structural features** are used, including varied sentence length and type, and withholding information at the end of the story.
 - The **paragraphs are fluently linked** with seamlessly integrated **discourse markers**.
 - **AO6:** The answer uses a wide range of **punctuation** including question marks and exclamation marks, and there is a high level of accuracy with **spelling**.
 - **Varied sentence length** shows secure control of **complex grammatical structures**.
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