



GCSE English Language Model Answers:

English Language (8700) (NEW SPEC) June 2018

Paper 1

Q1.

1. Mr Fisher lived alone.
2. Mr Fisher did not own a car.
3. Mr Fisher preferred to do his marking after school.
4. He travelled home by bus.

Examiner's report:

- This question assesses the **first part of AO1**- identify and interpret explicit and implicit information and ideas.
 - Information is **correct** and the student has read the source carefully.
 - Only information from within the **specified lines** 1-4 has been used in the answer.
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Q2. The writer uses a variety of linguistic techniques in order to convey Mr Fisher's view on books from the past as both nostalgic and romanticised. Colour imagery is prominent in the source. The adjective 'golden' is used to describe books, depicting them as precious, and highlighting Mr Fisher's utter adoration for past stories. Additionally, he muses that his dreams were 'in colour', demonstrating the immense power stories have, that they are able to come to life in his imagination.

Harris also implements metaphorical language, stating that stories 'ran like gazelles and pounced like tigers'. This metaphor seems to suggest the ability of stories to almost attack the imagination of readers. The comparison to such majestic animals conveys the sense that readers would be ambushed by the brilliance of the stories, swept up and entirely immersed in the words on the page. Past stories are also said to have been 'illuminating minds and hearts'. The phrase indicates Mr Fisher's belief that good stories had an all-encompassing impact on the reader, captivating them as if they were under a spell. Harris' use of metaphor is complemented by the use of complex sentences. The run on lines cement Mr Fisher's passion for books,

mimicking the sort of breathlessness that would be expected when discussing something dearly loved.

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.
 - A **clear focus** is maintained on **language features** throughout; the student has read the question carefully, and doesn't focus on structural techniques.
 - The **effect** of the language, specifically how it relates to Mr Fisher's views on books and stories of the pasts, is stated throughout and explanations are extended.
 - **Short concise quotes** which demonstrate these language techniques have been **integrated** well into sentences.
 - Points are **fully expanded** and **linked back** to the question.
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Q3. The beginning of the text serves to establish Mr Fisher's character, alluding to his job through the task of 'weekend marking' and the revelation of a 'disappointing' school term. Once the reader is able to visualise the character and domestic setting, the focus narrows to his thoughts on teaching creative writing, which is the central aspect of the text. Harris uses temporal references and flashbacks to emphasise Mr Fisher's disillusionment with his job. Alternating between the past and present is shown through glorifying references to 'the old days' in which he recounts that students' 'imagination soared'. His musing that 'we dreamed in colour', is used to depict the past's stories as vivid, in direct contrast to the present day which is said to be 'in black and white.'

Varied sentence structures are used to change the pace of the text, in effect making it more interesting to the reader. When reminiscing about the past, long sentences are implemented to incorporate lists of story subjects, 'there were heroes; there were dragons and dinosaurs; there were space adventurers and soldiers of fortune and giant apes'. The sentence length is indicative of Mr Fisher's previous passion, as the short, staccato structuring is indicative of someone speaking in a fast and excitable manner. In this sense, the pace of the text quickens when Mr Fisher is describing his past love for old stories.

The middle section of the passage then slows down the overall pace of the story. Short repetitive sentences, such as, 'Shakespeare was boring. Dickens was boring', has the effect of stunting the previously fast paced narrative. In this sense, the sentence structure reflects Mr Fisher's decreasing enthusiasm when he thinks about the present day.

The final section of the text shifts away from stunted enthusiasm and builds up suspense. Harris chooses to focus on Mr Fisher's physical response to Tibbet's story. The continual switching between simple and complex sentences which then occurs, is suggestive of an intense physical reaction to something; 'his breathing quickened, stopped, quickened again'. It is then stated that 'He began to sweat', which serves to heighten the sense of tension, as the reader cannot tell if he is stressed or even in pain. Since the reader is not yet aware that it is the story that triggered this response, they are spurred to read on to discover the cause of this strange behaviour. In this way, the writer successfully implements a number of techniques to retain the interest of the reader throughout.

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 shows a perceptive understanding of **structural features**, and a number of these are identified with **evidence** from the text, such as the use of **flashback**.
 - The **effects** of these structural features are adequately analysed and the points are **explained** fully.
 - The answer uses sophisticated **subject specific language** to explain the points.
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Q4. I agree with the student's statement to some extent that Mr Fisher's reaction is extreme, however, it is also realistic as the passage shows the absolute joy that stories can bring to people. Initially, Mr Fisher does not seem overly enthusiastic about reading Alistair Tibbet's story. He comments that Tibbet is not a 'brilliant scholar by any means' and 'had obviously done part of his homework on the bus,' indicating that Tibbet does not prioritise his studies. In this way, the reader can see that Mr Fisher does not have high expectations regarding his piece of homework. Though he recognises Tibbet's imagination as different from the other boys in the class, due to the 'spark in him which deserved attention,' Mr Fisher is preoccupied with his own domestic routine. The trio of 'home; dinner; bed,' and the fact he only had 'four books to go' highlights that he would much rather finish the task quickly so that he can resume his comforting domestic schedule.

The shift that takes place in the next paragraph explores Mr Fisher's strong reaction to reading the story. His physical response could be considered extreme, as Harris incorporates complex sentences detailing the impact of the story within the text. The statement that, 'It began as a tightening in his diaphragm, as if a long unused muscle had been brought into action', highlights the start of his excitement in reading the story. The detail of the unused muscle is indicative that no stories have made Mr Fisher react in this way for a long time. The choice to link the diaphragm to this renewed sense of passion, as a muscle linked to breathing and respiration,

indicates the life-giving power which the story has upon Mr Fisher. Therefore, though extreme, the reader may share in the fact that his passion has been reignited.

His astonishment may be rooted in the fact that he sees Tibbet's story as something 'entirely original'. Thus the reader can even more deeply understand why he responds in such a physical manner. Juxtaposition of long and short sentences shows Mr Fisher's epiphany that Tibbet has crafted a brilliant story, particularly as he 'put down his red pen and went back to the beginning, re-reading every word very slowly and with meticulous care'. In this way, the initial rush of physical excitement is complemented by his treatment of the work with slow and meticulous care, evidencing that Mr Fisher is in complete awe.

Harris' use of the metaphor of the prospector to highlight the sense of triumphant discovery also contributes to the impression of extremity in Mr Fisher's reaction. His comparison to a gold digger who was 'discouraged and bankrupt and ready to go home' before finding 'a nugget of gold the size of his fist', demonstrates that the story is almost like a precious treasure. His joy at this finding is made more extreme as it provides a true contrast to the gloom of his initial attitude. The sense of hope Mr Fisher feels is especially powerful, as it 'swelled in him and grew strong'. The reader wants to share in this hope. Hence, the severity of Mr Fisher's reaction is realistic to his situation, as previously he had felt resigned to his students' lack of imagination, and passion for the subject.

Overall, I agree with the student that the reaction is extreme, however it is understandable in the wider context of the text. The overtly disillusioned Mr Fisher is filled with hope that Tibbet's imagination meant that something new was taking place within storytelling, and that the imaginative ability he possesses indicates hope for the future.

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 juxtaposition.
- 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 detail** from the source has been selected which adequately supports the points being made.
- **Keywords** from the question such as 'extreme' and 'expectation' are used in order to **signpost** the answer to the examiner.
- A short **conclusion** is reached in order to link back to the argument presented within the answer.

Q5.

- a) Deep wrinkles were etched into the sallow yellow skin. Piercing blue eyes stared out from the saggy hooded eyelids. The mouth drooped as saliva began to pool in the whiskery beard. Ragged, laboured breathing permeated the calm of the clean, clinical room. Crooked fingers, like gnarled wintery branches, sat clasped in the valley of the lap, shrouded in the green tartan blanket. He hadn't spoken since the stroke. The eyes swivelled as the nurse entered the room, moving eagerly in an attempt to communicate. 'Bluurghp'. A familiar exasperated gurgle bubbled from the man as the blue eyes flashed. The nurse began to move the man into the wheelchair with as much dignity as the manoeuvre would permit.

Legs which had once firmly marched towards victory, now lay limp and withered as the muscles wasted away. Wisened skin stretched over the brittle bones as the arms tensed involuntarily. Everything about the man was frail. The bedside table displayed a black and white photo in a gilded frame. You would never have guessed that they were the same person unless you had been told. The taunt bronzed man stood smiling amongst the sand dunes. The strong crop of jet black hair lay in stark contrast to the ghostly white strands that clung to the now balding head. Where rows of straight white teeth had gleamed, diseased gummy stumps remained.

The nurse felt overwhelmed with pity. His sons had telephoned a day prior to say they wouldn't be able to visit that day; he couldn't just be left alone like that, it was too cruel. Despite his physical appearance, the burning blue orbs showed that the man in the picture was still there mentally. She wheeled him towards the window, overlooking the manicured hospital grounds, and began to talk about her day. Though he couldn't respond, she knew he followed every word intently with those eyes. She was going to do everything in her power to keep his spirit alive.

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 'wisened' and 'etched.'
- The answer employs a varied use of different **language techniques**, such as simile and onomatopoeia
- A variety of **structural features** are used, including complex and simple sentences and juxtaposition
- **AO6:** The answer uses a **wide range of punctuation** including commas and semicolons, and there is a **high level** of accuracy with **spelling**.
- Complex and compound sentences show secure control of **complex grammatical structures**.

- b) Laura hadn't slept. She gazed at the clock, the neon digits burning against the inky dark of her room. Results day. One hour until the realisation of her failure was complete. Until she'd have to face her fate. Her long fingers with their short bitten-down nails began to tremble. If only she'd not been so preoccupied with getting to the next level of Raceway Vegas, she could have done so much more revision.

But it was too late now.

The sinking feeling she'd experienced when she had opened the maths exam was like nothing she had ever felt before. It could've been written in an alien language, it would've made no difference. The numbers swarmed like angry bees buzzing around the fog of her brain. She'd answered the questions as best she could, but as she neared the staples in the centre of the exam booklet any shreds of confidence she'd been clinging to had waned completely. It had been a complete failure. Her stomach clenched as she thought about how she'd have to break the news to Rosie. They'd been planning on going to Beckley College together ever since the open day last year, planning their outfits and musing over which options to choose. Her mind raced. What was she going to do now? She imagined herself alone and anxious at a different college, without Rosie, and a single silent tear traced her pale cheek, before it caught in a tendril of her mousy hair.

Suddenly, her phone buzzed. An email from the school. The results were out. Laura steadied herself, stretched out her clawed hands, and took a deep breath. She opened the email and felt her eyes blur as she searched for confirmation that her worst fears had come true. The blue-green eyes nervously traced the spreadsheet until they reached Maths and widened in astonishment. Chapped lips broke into an almighty grin stretching across her face. It was a pass....

Examiner report:

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- **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 'almighty' and 'tendril.'
- The answer employs a varied use of different **language techniques**, such as simile and alliteration.
- A variety of **structural features** are used, including varied sentence structure and flashback.
- 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**.