

## Tips for the reading sections of Edexcel GCSE English Language papers

The following tips are focused on the reading sections of Paper 1 and Paper 2.

### Paper 1: Section A - Reading

These are the assessment objectives for the **reading** part of paper 1:

#### A01:

- identify and interpret explicit and implicit information and ideas
- select and synthesise evidence from different texts

**A02:** 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

**A04:** Evaluate texts critically and support this with appropriate textual references



### The extract

You will be given an unseen **19th-century prose fiction** extract.

Make sure you read any introduction as it will provide clues to the context of the extract.

#### Question 1

Worth 1 mark

#### Assessing A01

- This question is testing your ability to retrieve specific information.
- There will only be one correct answer, so choose it carefully.
- Use a quotation, don't paraphrase.

#### Question 2

Worth 2 marks

#### Assessing A01

- This question is also about information retrieval.
- You can use your own words or quotations.

### Question 3

Worth 6 marks

#### Assessing A02

- This question assesses your understanding of **language** i.e. words, phrases, language features, language techniques and sentence forms.
  - It is also assessing what you know about a writer's use of **structural features** like the order of events, repetition, sentence lengths, dialogue, listing etc.
  - As ever, the vital thing here is that you keep referring to **the effect on the reader**.
  - Use **specific examples from the text**.
  - You must use **detailed and specific analysis** for this question, and always come back to the effect on the reader.
  - **Single-word analysis** will gain you more marks here.
  - Use **subject terminology** and **specific textual references**.
  - You **MUST** comment on both language and structure.
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### Question 4

Worth 15 marks

#### Assessing A04

- Evaluate means 'to judge from available evidence', therefore your opinions here must be fully supported from the text.
  - This question is asking you to think about how effectively the writer has achieved a specific purpose.
  - The examiner is looking for comments which demonstrate your ability to analyse the effect of the writing, not just describe technical features.
  - Use evidence to support anything you say - remember that you can embed your quotes 'like this', or that you can highlight short phrases from within a longer section 'like ... this', as the ellipsis shows that some words have been left out.
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#### Top tip for question 4:

Don't keep saying 'this makes us want to read on.' It's a meaningless comment! Instead, think about **exactly** what makes us want to read on: you could say that 'this creates suspense/expectation/fear/uncertainty'. Or you could say that 'we feel empathy/sympathy/anger/compassion for the narrator/character'.

You will gain the highest marks here by identifying the **specific effect** created.



### Top tips

- Read the question - there are no marks to be gained by writing a fantastic answer to a question that wasn't asked. Underline the command words and any specific instructions.
- Check your work at the end - I know you'll feel tired, but please read through it to check for glaring errors.
- You must refer to the effect on the reader. That's why people write! You will not gain marks for merely spotting techniques.

## Paper 2: Section A - Reading

These are the assessment objectives for the **reading** part of the paper:

### A01:

- identify and interpret explicit and implicit information and ideas
- select and synthesise evidence from different texts

**A02:** 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

**A03:** Compare writers' ideas and perspectives, as well as how these are conveyed, across two or more texts

**A04:** Evaluate texts critically and support this with appropriate textual references



### The extracts

You will be given two 20th- and 21st-century non-fiction prose extracts.

### Question 1

Worth 2 marks

### Assessing A01

- This question is testing your attention to detail.
- Use your own words or quotations.

### Question 2

Worth 2 marks

#### Assessing A01

- You must provide an example (or two - check the wording) from the text here.
  - Pay close attention to the wording of the question, and make sure you comment on the **use of language** in your example.
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### Question 3

Worth 15 marks

#### Assessing A02

- This question assesses your understanding of **language** i.e. words, phrases, language features, language techniques and sentence forms.
  - It is also assessing what you know about a writer's use of **structural features** like the order of events, repetition, sentence lengths, dialogue, listing etc.
  - As ever, the vital thing here is that you keep referring to **the effect on the reader**.
  - Use **specific examples from the text**.
  - You must use **detailed and specific analysis** for this question, and always come back to the effect on the reader.
  - **Single-word analysis** will gain you more marks here.
  - Use **subject terminology and specific textual references**.
  - You cannot achieve more than 6 marks for this question if you only mention either language or structure - you must refer to both to gain the higher marks.
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### Question 4

Worth 1 mark

#### Assessing A01

- Read the question carefully!
  - It's not clear from the mark scheme whether you should quote or paraphrase here. A quotation may be safest.
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### Question 5

Worth 1 mark

#### Assessing A01

- You must give an example from the specified text selection.
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### Question 6

Worth 15 marks

#### Assessing AO4

- 'Evaluate' means 'to judge from available evidence', therefore your opinions here must be fully supported from the text.
  - This question is asking you to think about how effectively the writer has achieved a specific purpose.
  - The examiner is looking for comments which demonstrate your ability to analyse the effect of the writing, not just describe technical features.
  - You should consider ideas, themes, settings and events: you are analysing the whole piece of writing.
  - Be systematic and work from the beginning to the end of the text so that your writing is fluent and your ideas cohesive.
  - Use evidence to support anything you say - remember that you can embed your quotes 'like this', or that you can highlight short phrases from within a longer section 'like ... this', as the ellipsis shows that some words have been left out.
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### Question 7(a)

Worth 6 marks

#### Assessing AO1

- Refer to both texts for this question.
  - Don't get bogged down here, as this question is just worth 6 marks while the following one is worth 14.
  - As ever, it's vital to read the question carefully as it may say 'what differences' or 'what similarities'.
  - You need to identify points of similarity in two texts and choose appropriate evidence to back up your points.
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Question 7(b)

Worth 14 marks

Assessing A03

- This question is assessing whether you can **compare** ideas and perspectives in a perceptive way, rather than just identifying people's points of view.
  - To achieve the highest marks here, you need to analyse **how** writers' methods are used and how this communicates their attitudes.
  - Use quotations to back up your points.
  - You should refer to the form of each piece of writing, for example article/diary/blog /letter and so on, and why you think that particular form has been chosen.
  - Pick out language differences which reflect that the texts are written for different audiences.
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Top tips

- Take care to write about the correct source!
- Leave time to check your work at the end.
- If you are running out of time, leave question 7(a) until the end. 7(b) and question 8/9 are worth many more marks.