

Writing questions: an overview

Both papers of the English Language GCSE include a writing section: Section B.

1 Read the statement below, and decide which paper is being described by each statement (some may describe both papers). Circle your choices.

- | | | |
|---|----------------|----------------|
| (a) The focus is on descriptive and/or narrative writing. | Paper 1 | Paper 2 |
| (b) The focus is on presenting a particular view or argument. | Paper 1 | Paper 2 |
| (c) It tests your ability to write for different purposes or audiences. | Paper 1 | Paper 2 |
| (d) It tests your ability to write imaginatively and creatively. | Paper 1 | Paper 2 |
| (e) You have a choice of writing question. | Paper 1 | Paper 2 |

Assessment objective 5

- (a) Communicate clearly, effectively and imaginatively, selecting and adapting tone, style and register for different forms, purposes and audiences
- (b) Organise information and ideas, using structural and grammatical features to support coherence and cohesion of texts

Assessment objective 6

Use a range of vocabulary and sentence structures for clarity, purpose and effect, with accurate spelling and punctuation

2 Next, read the statements about the assessment objectives and circle which you are being tested on (some may describe both assessment objectives).

- | | | |
|---|------------|------------|
| (a) Tests whether you can use a wide range of well-chosen vocabulary. | AO5 | AO6 |
| (b) Tests whether you can organise your writing clearly, and signpost the reader. | AO5 | AO6 |
| (c) Tests whether you can use accurate grammar and sentence structures. | AO5 | AO6 |
| (d) Tests whether you can use a range of complex punctuation to create deliberate effect. | AO5 | AO6 |
| (e) Tests whether you can write for a given audience, form and purpose. | AO5 | AO6 |
| (f) Tests whether you can communicate imaginatively. | AO5 | AO6 |

3 Summarise each assessment objective into one short sentence without using the words that are circled in the descriptions above.

Assessment objective 5 (a)

Write

Assessment objective 5 (b)

Arrange

Assessment objective 6

Use

Be

Writing questions: Paper 1

Paper 1 tests your creative writing skills.

1 Read the statements about Paper 1 below. Identify which is true or false, and circle your choice.

- | | |
|--|-------------------|
| (a) You need to write either a description or a narrative. | True False |
| (b) You can write a poem. | True False |
| (c) You can write a play. | True False |
| (d) There may be an image to describe. | True False |

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2 Which of the terms below is another word for 'narrative'? Circle your answer.

Speech

Story

Description

Article

Guided

3 Think about the definitions of 'describe' and 'narrate'. Identify which term applies to the following skills (both may apply to some skills):

- | | |
|--|-------------------------|
| (a) Uses a series of plot points or events | Describe Narrate |
| (b) Uses the senses to create a vivid atmosphere | Describe Narrate |
| (c) Creates a strong atmosphere | Describe Narrate |
| (d) Based on a single scene | Describe Narrate |
| (e) Uses the prompt as a starting point | Describe Narrate |

4 Look at the exam-style question below. **You don't need to answer this question.** Instead, consider its form, purpose and audience. Complete the table by adding in the responses that would be suitable for this task – there might be more than one response for each.

Paper

1

5 You are going to enter a creative writing competition. Your entry will be judged by your classmates.

Either:

Write a description suggested by the picture.

Or:

Write the opening part of a story about doing something frightening.



(40 marks)

Form	Description	Story opening
Purpose		Set the scene and to draw the reader in
Audience		

Writing questions: Paper 2

Paper 2 tests your skills in writing to present a viewpoint.



- 1 When writing to present a viewpoint, you will need to write in a certain way. Circle the words that represent the writing form you should use.

argue

inform

describe

narrate

persuade

explain

Here's a quick reminder of what each form means:

- Argue – give your opinion and state why the opposite view is wrong
- Inform – give facts about a subject
- Describe – give a description of what someone or something is like
- Narrate – write a story
- Persuade – give a one-sided opinion which convinces the reader
- Explain – give detailed information about a topic.

Look at the Paper 2 exam-style question below. **You don't need to answer this question.** Instead, consider what it is asking you to do, then answer Question 2.

Paper

2

- 5 'Surfing the internet is pointless. Time spent browsing online could be used doing something else worthwhile.'

Write an article for your local newspaper in which you explain your point of view on this statement.

(40 marks)



- 2 (a) Circle the word(s) in the exam-style question that tell you which **audience** (the people this is aimed at) you should be writing for.
- (b) Circle the word(s) in the exam-style question that tell you the **form** (the type of writing, e.g. letter, speech) the answer should take.
- (c) Circle the word(s) in the exam-style question that tell you what the **purpose** (e.g. argue, inform) of your writing should be.
- 3 Plan an answer for the exam-style Question 5. Consider the positives and negatives of spending time browsing (looking at things) online. Write your notes in bullet points below. One example for each has been completed for you:

It is a good idea to do a quick table or mind map using the headings 'positives' and 'negatives'. This will help you organise your ideas.

- Positive 1. Lots of educational websites help pupils with their homework and revision.
- Positive 2.
- Positive 3.
- Positive 4.
- Negative 1. Social media is a distraction; you can waste hours chatting with friends.
- Negative 2.
- Negative 3.
- Negative 4.

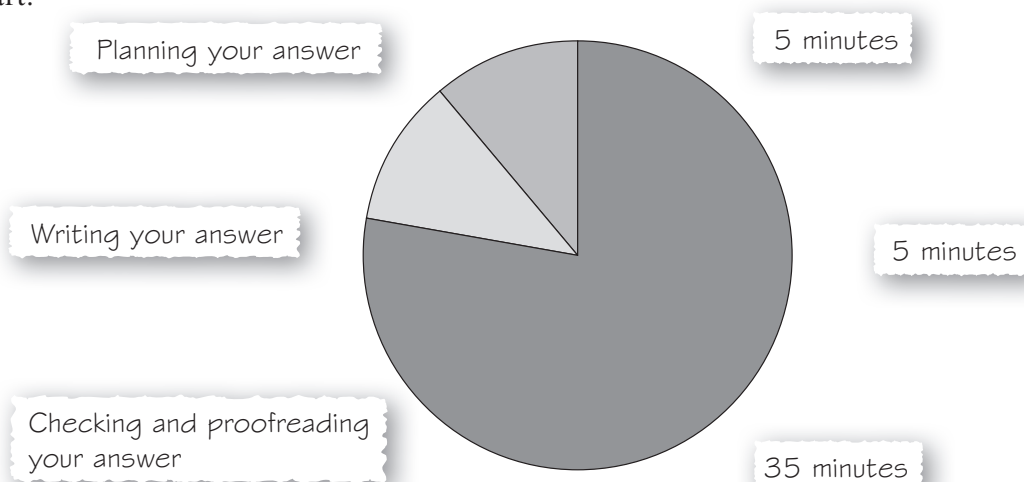
Writing questions: time management

The table below shows the three key stages to complete when answering a Paper 1 or a Paper 2 writing task.

- 1 Complete the table by writing in the number of minutes you should spend on each stage. The first row has been done for you.

	Paper 1, Section B: Writing	Paper 2, Section B: Writing
Total time	45 minutes	45 minutes
Planning your answer		
Writing your answer		
Checking and proofreading your answer		

- 2 Now match each description and number of minutes to the correct part of the time management pie chart.



- 3 Read the statements about the writing task below. Decide whether each statement is true or false. Circle your choices.

- | | |
|---|--------------------------|
| (a) Keep writing till the end, even if it means finishing halfway through a sentence. | True False |
| (b) Conclusions are important. | True False |
| (c) Don't pause during the writing as you might lose marks. | True False |
| (d) You should spend the same amount of time on Section A as on Section B. | True False |
| (e) Use bullets to express your remaining ideas if you run out of time. | True False |
| (f) Write a note to the examiner letting them know you have run out of time. | True False |

- 4 During the writing process, what are six questions you can ask yourself to help you with time management? List your ideas below. Two have been completed for you.

- (a) Am I still writing in the *correct* form?
- (b) Will my target reader be engaged by this?
- (c)
- (d)
- (e)
- (f)

Writing for a purpose: creative 1

Look at the exam-style question below. **Don't answer this question now.** Think about what you might include in a response, then answer Questions 1 to 4.

Paper

1

- 5** You have been asked to write a creative piece for a local magazine. Describe a visit to a local landmark or important place. **(40 marks)**

AO5 asks you to write 'imaginatively', which can include creating a vivid atmosphere or feeling.

- 1** Using the senses can help to create a vivid atmosphere. Complete the table below, gathering ideas for the exam-style question above. Some ideas have been added for you.

See	
Hear	Laughing children in the water fountain
Smell	
Touch	
Taste	Chocolate flake melting into ice-cream

- 2** Writing a description that *shows* emotions or ideas is more engaging than just telling them because the reader becomes more involved in the writing. Complete the table below to suggest some ways these ideas could be *shown* rather than *told*.

He was angry.	
She was nervous.	Her fingers drummed a quick rhythm on the table, waiting.
It was a hot day.	
She was thirsty.	She licked her cracked lips.
They were happy.	

Guided

- 3** Figurative language also helps to develop description and vivid images. Using the idea of a cold place, write an imaginative example that you could use in a response to the exam-style question above.

Simile	
Metaphor	
Personification	

Remember that using a few well-chosen phrases is better than using many unimaginative ones.

- 4** Writing strong verbs can help with descriptive writing. Replace these verbs and adverbs with single verbs. Some have been suggested for you.

Walking quickly	Skip, running, pace
Closed the door firmly	
Shouted angrily	Holler

- 5** Write the first three sentences of your answer to the exam-style question. Use your answers to Questions 1 to 4. Remember to choose your vocabulary carefully, and show ideas rather telling them.

The castle was as
.....
.....