

Paper 2 Section A – Reading C20th and C21st Texts.

There is a lot of information here. Don't be overwhelmed but do read carefully.

Section A is worth 35%

- You have 1 hour 20 minutes to complete Section A. If you allocate 15 minutes for reading, that roughly gives you 1 minute per mark when it comes to answering the questions. Timing is vitally important in this paper. Some students write approximate times on their paper. i.e. they work out by 9.45am they should be on question 6.
- You must leave 45 minutes for Transactional Writing (Section B)
- Write in very clear black pen. All scripts are marked online.
- Think of the paper in 3 Sections:
 - Section 1 – Text 1 Questions 1-3
 - Section 2 – Text 2 Questions 4-6
 - Section 3 – Texts 1+2 Questions 7a + 7b

Question 1

- Question 1 tests AO1. It focuses on Text 1 (usually the C20th text. Remember C20th can mean 1901!) It is **normally** worth 1 mark. It asks you to extract information from the text. Take note of the line reference. Rule off on the text. If it asks for 'the' word or phrase there is only one possible answer. 'A' word or phrase allows for a selection. If it asks for a 'word' and **not** a 'phrase' do not write more than one word.

Question 2

- Question 2 has changed for your year group. Now, like Question 1 it tests the ability to 'select and retrieve'. The key is to read the question properly. Last year many students read 'how many' as 'how' and gave an adverb instead of a number. Frustratingly easy to lose marks on!
- **Question 3**
- Question 3 also tests AO2 but this time is worth 15 marks. Think of AO2 as a 'zoom in' skill. Aim to spend between 12 and 15 minutes on this question. You must answer on language **and** structure in order to progress past a Level 2. The answer does not have to be balanced between language and structure but both have to be included. Some students like to start their answer with a structural point so that it is definitely covered. For high mark answers language and structural points are often combined rather than separate paragraphs on each. Some points such as contrast, repetition etc. can count for either language or structural points - be wary about using them as your only structural point in case examiners consider it to be a language point.
- Question 3 will always be the same question: **Analyse how the writer uses language and structure to engage the reader.** As you read through the text on that first reading, underline key words, phrases and sentences that you think may engage a reader. Remember, a text may have a number of different readers who will be engaged using different techniques.
- It is helpful to '**mind the GAP**' – **Genre, Audience, Purpose** straightaway. This is especially helpful for questions 3, 6 and 7b. You may not be the intended audience. If you have established who is you may be able to understand how they are being engaged a little easier.
- Unlike Paper 1, you will be asked to analyse ways in which language and structure are used to engage the reader across the **WHOLE** text, not just a shorter section.
- Top answers often show how language and structure effects are built over the course of a text with students using discourse markers in their answers to signify this: in addition, furthermore, building on ..., further emphasising etc.

What to include in your paragraphs:

Language:

- You should try to include features used by the writer. This is where you should use your **subject terminology**, so identify the correct part of speech or literary device - e.g. metaphor, verb, adjective. Do not worry if you cannot label it. Discussing the effect is more important!
- You must **support each point with a quotation**. Keep it short and embed it if you can. Aim for no more than 4 words. This allows for precise word-level analysis. Rather than writing 'This can be proved by the quotation 'they destroyed everything'', embed your quotation in your answer. For example: The writer uses the verb 'destroyed' to show the reader how vicious and destructive the Taliban are.
- You need to discuss **the effect of the language** because it's not good enough to just feature spot. If you see a simile, great, but you must write about the effect of that simile to get marks for it!
- When you're making AO2 comments, remember that you need to keep your comments about the effect on the reader. How does the writer want them to think, feel and imagine? How has the writer used language and structure to achieve this? If you can thoroughly explore the effects on the reader, this will help maintain an analytical style, which you need for the top band.
- One way to mess up this question is to make generalised comments such as 'to make the reader read on' or 'to create an effect'. These don't actually mean very much and won't get you marks so remember to explain the specific effect of words and phrases. Make sure your points are applicable to just the text in front of you.
- The other way to make a mess of this question is to not analyse structure. If you only focus on the effects of language you can only get 6 out of 15 marks, regardless of how good your analysis is.

How to analyse structure:

- Firstly, you need to be able to spot structural features and identify the effect that they have. Most readers can identify a list, rule of three or repetition but you should also be thinking about the sentence structures and the overall structure of the extract. Contrasts within the text, title, whether there is dialogue etc. could all be relevant. Look for punctuation – brackets (parenthesis), dashes, exclamation marks, commas – how might this effect pace or tone and in turn reader engagement?
- Ideally, you should have a fairly balanced analysis of both language and structure but it is vital that you have at least one developed point analysing the effects of structure. Just identifying the use of a list would not be enough to count as structural analysis.
- It is essential that you use a textual reference to support your structure point but try not to write out lengthy quotations and waste time. For example, copying every item in a list from the text is not a good use of your time. Writing 'The writer lists a number of beautiful places such as 'waterfalls' and 'lakes' is a much more straightforward and simple way of doing it. However, it is vital that you analyse the effect of the structural features and link it back to the engaging effect on the reader. If you are commenting on complex, compound sentences then use ellipsis (...) to show an edited sentence.
- This question is not asking you to evaluate whether it is engaging or not. Even if you find the text boring, you are looking for reasons why some readers might be engaged. Think of the audience for the text – it's not necessarily you!
- The most common way students mess up their structure points is by making sweeping comments that don't really mean anything. For example, 'The writer uses a lot of complex sentences to engage the reader.' How? You need to develop an analysis of how the complex sentences help to engage the reader. What job are they doing?

Question 4

- Question 4 moves onto Text 2 (normally the C21st text) and is another AO1 question and requires you to find a specific piece of information from the text. You are given key lines to focus on and should select the relevant information from that section. Your response should be in the form of a relevant quotation. This question is worth 1 mark.
- **Question 5**
- Question 5 is another short 'select and retrieve' AO1 question worth one mark.

Question 6

- Question 6 is a 15-mark AO4 question that will ask you to **EVALUATE** how successfully the writer achieves something. Just like in Paper 1, you will need to read the text and identify how the **settings, people, ideas, tone and/or events (SPITE)** help convey whatever the writer is aiming for.
- SPITE or INSECT is a possible starting point, but it is not always appropriate for the text in front of you. It should never be used as a check-list. Sometimes just people and tone may be appropriate to analyse for example.
- Evaluate is to make a critical judgement
- Remember, it is often easier to agree that the writer HAS achieved what the question is asking you to evaluate.
- You must spend some time planning/thinking, even if you simply quickly identify some SPITE elements and think about how they effectively or successfully achieve what the writer was aiming for. Try to ensure you have a **range of points** and think about how they work together within and across the text. Remember that you do not need to cover all elements of settings, ideas, themes and/or events (SITE) in your response and you need to show a careful judgement with what you do choose to cover.
- Your teacher may have taught you the 'hot spots' technique or asked you to rank your points in order of effectiveness. Both are good things to do and a different way into the text.
- Question 4 will always begin with **'In this text, there is an attempt to...'** Go through the text and underline/highlight places where the settings, people, ideas, tone or events help to create whatever the focus of the question is.
- Your focus for this question is **'how well'** the writer achieves something so each of your paragraphs **should contain evidence of a judgement being made - e.g. The writer successfully conveys a sense of tension by ...'**
- Evaluative vocabulary should be used. *The writer succeeds ... The writer creates a significant moment of tension by .. Fear is clearly conveyed ...*
- You need to create a sustained critical overview of the text so you MUST try to use your evaluative language consistently and think about how the text works as a whole. Remember question 3 is 'zoom in' but question 6 is 'zoom out'.
- Try to pull out one of your examples from towards the end of the text so you cover the whole text. Ranking helps with this.
- To gain the highest marks, you need to create a **persuasive tone with your response. Aim to use phrases such as: This impression/effect is reinforced by...The writer effectively builds the sense of ...further by...The effect of the setting is enhanced by the writer's use of...**
- You need to ensure that you are focused on the question so try to use the language from the question in your response.
- The highest band asks you to use **discriminating references** so you should aim to embed short quotations (try to limit them to 4 words) to support your ideas. 'Discriminating' implies that out of a range of choices you have you chosen the best to exemplify your point.
- The evaluate question allows for personal engagement with a text. Do not try to second guess what the examiner wants to read. They want to see your own (supported) opinions.
- The reason that most students lose marks in this question is because they forget to show a judgement by using evaluative language or by focusing on the narrow effects of language rather than the wider effects of things like settings, ideas, themes and events.
- Students may also lose marks by not fully linking their response to the question. Remember to incorporate the language of the question in your response.

Question 7a

- Question 7a is a comparative AO1 question and **has a very straightforward structure.** It is worth 6 marks and you should aim to spend 6 minutes on it.

- You will be given an opening line which tells you something about both texts - e.g. The two texts both describe times of conflict. You can use this line as your first comparison if you need to.
- The question is asking you to find **SIMILARITIES** between the two texts.
- Your basic structure for this question is: **Both texts show...This can be seen in Text 1 by "...” and also in Text 2 by "...”** You should then aim to repeat this structure at three times.
- You **MUST** give evidence from both texts and try to ensure a balanced approach.
- For the higher marks, you should aim to include some points which demonstrate your inference skills as this will help you show a detailed understanding of the texts rather than a limited or sound understanding that is demonstrated through the use of more obvious comparisons. Still stick with the same structure for your response and do not write too much!

Question 7b

- The last question on the paper is worth 14 marks. Please make sure you leave enough time to answer it adequately without encroaching on Section B time. Aim to spend 15 minutes on 7b.
- Question 7b is a **comparative AO3 question** and requires you to analyse how BOTH writers present their ideas and perspectives about a subject covered by both texts. **Unlike question 7a, you can explore similarities and differences between the two texts.**
- In the mark scheme, the examiner is looking for you to write about the **ideas and perspectives** of the writers but also to think about how the themes, language and structure reflect these ideas and perspectives. It is vital that you are also consistently linking back to the question.
- Because you are being asked to look at the presentation of the writers’ ideas and perspectives, you should be using phrases such as **The writer clearly feels...The writer believes...The writer finds the...**
- It is vital that you give a balanced, consistently comparative approach so your planning should focus on making connections between the texts.
- If you are planning to write a similarities paragraph, you could start your analysis off with a phrase such as **Both** writers clearly show the negative impact of conflict. Yousafzai does this in Text 1 by... **Similarly, Text 2 also conveys the impression that the writer feels negatively towards conflict as Frank says "...”**
- If they are relevant to the question, you can use some of the same ideas in 7b as you did in 7a but the analysis must be much more detailed and developed in 7b.
- If you are writing a differences paragraph, you should use your **contrast connectives** to help you. *Text 1 gives a personal account about how she has experienced poor treatment at the hands of others whereas Anne Frank focuses on the negative experiences suffered by others.*
- Level 4+ asks you to explore comparisons, which means you should try and write about a range of points, exploring and developing your response about how the themes, language and/or structure are used.
- Again for Level 5 discriminating references are required
- A final thing to remember is that the mark scheme explicitly asks you for **balance across the texts**. It is vital that, when you proof-read, you also check that you have a balanced approach to the texts. i.e. that you are not writing about one text significantly more than the other.