

# English Language

Answers and commentaries  
**GCSE (8700)**

**Paper 2: Writers' viewpoints and perspectives  
(from 2026)**

Marked answers to exemplify the updated questions for first exam in 2026. Supporting commentary is provided to help you understand how marks are awarded and how students can improve performance.

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## Answers and commentaries

Please note that these responses have been produced by a senior examiner and are not from an exam series, therefore they have not been through the usual exam standardisation process. This resource is intended to illustrate possible student answers and generate discussion rather than to indicate a standard for a future exam. As they have been created to represent a student responding in exam conditions, some errors in spelling and punctuation are present.

This resource is to be used alongside the [GCSE English Language updated Sample assessment materials for first exam in 2026](#) Paper 2 Question paper and inserts.

### Question 2

This question has been reworded to make it clearer to learners what they need to do in order to gain marks. This allows all learners to demonstrate their ability to select, infer meaning and synthesise information, as required by AO1.

#### Question

You need to refer to **Source A** and **Source B** for this question.

The writers in **Source A** and **Source B** are travelling on different types of trains.

What can you infer about the differences between the two trains?

**[8 marks]**

#### Mark scheme

<b>AO1</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Identify and interpret explicit and implicit information and ideas</li><li>• Select and synthesise evidence from different texts</li></ul>	
<b>This question assesses both bullets</b>		
<b>Level</b>	<b>Skills descriptors</b>	<b>Indicative standard</b>
		This indicative standard provides an exemplification of the skills descriptors at each level. It is not a model answer, nor a complete response, nor does it seek to exemplify any particular content.
Level 4 Perceptive, detailed summary  7–8 marks	Shows perceptive or detailed synthesis and interpretation of both texts: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• makes perceptive inferences from both texts</li><li>• selects judicious references/use of textual</li></ul>	The train in Source A reflects significant progress in train travel. It is being used to transport mail and people and so has a 'mail van', 'a dining car' and 'five sleeping cars', showing both the advancement of train manufacture and the purpose of rail travel to enable long journeys by providing eating

	<p>detail relevant to the focus of the question</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>statements show perceptive differences between texts.</li> </ul>	<p>and sleeping facilities. This relative luxury is a complete contrast to Source B where the steam engine is an earlier model and is, therefore, much simpler in its design. In Source B, the train is just a functional ‘uncovered carriage’ with ‘benches’ as the purpose at this earlier stage of invention is to develop the mechanics of the engine, not provide more luxurious passenger facilities.</p>
<p>Level 3 Clear, relevant summary  5–6 marks</p>	<p>Shows clear synthesis and interpretation of both texts:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>makes clear inferences from both texts</li> <li>selects clear references/textual detail relevant to the focus of the question</li> <li>statements show clear differences between texts.</li> </ul>	<p>The train in Source A has an engine and several carriages which include a ‘mail van’, ‘a dining car’ and ‘five sleeping cars’ showing that it is used to transport letters and that people can eat and sleep on it, which suggests how the train has been developed to have a range of purposes. This is very different to Source B, where the steam engine has just been invented and has a much more basic purpose which is to provide a new and quicker form of transport. In Source B, the train is simply an engine and an ‘uncovered carriage’ with ‘benches’, so the lack of shelter and comfortable facilities suggests it is in a much earlier stage of its development.</p>
<p>Level 2 Some attempts at summary  3–4 marks</p>	<p>Shows some interpretation from one/both texts:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>attempts some inference(s) from one/both texts</li> <li>selects some appropriate references/textual detail from one/both texts</li> <li>statements show some difference(s) between texts.</li> </ul>	<p>The train in Source A is long and has an engine and several carriages including a ‘mail van’, ‘a dining car’ and ‘five sleeping cars’ which shows that the train is used for many reasons. This is different from the train in Source B, which is much shorter and has less carriages. The train in Source B has just a ‘little engine’ and an ‘uncovered carriage’ which shows it is very basic.</p>
<p>Level 1 Simple, limited summary  1–2 marks</p>	<p>Shows simple awareness from one/both texts:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>offers paraphrase rather than inference</li> <li>selects simple reference(s)/textual detail(s) from one/both texts</li> <li>statements show simple difference between texts.</li> </ul>	<p>The train in Source A is big as it has lots of carriages because it says, ‘five sleeping cars’. This is different to the train in Source B, which is smaller. The train in Source B is not big as it is described as a ‘little engine’ and it has one carriage.</p>
<p>Level 0 No marks</p>	<p>Nothing to reward.</p>	

### Note

- If the quality of the response is Level 1 but only deals with one text, the mark must be 1 not 2.
- If the quality of the response is Level 2 but only deals with one text, the mark must be 3 not 4.
- A candidate has to deal with both texts and address the correct focus of the question to achieve Level 3 or above.

The focus of this question is the difference between the trains.

AO1 content may include the effect of ideas such as:

- size
- number of carriages
- facilities
- performance/ability
- stage in development
- number of passengers
- purpose/design.

## Student responses

### Response A

The two trains in Source A and Source B are very different in terms of their design, function, and the experiences they offer. Source A describes the Trans-Siberian Express, which was evidently a sophisticated and well-established train service designed for long-distance travel. In contrast, Source B focuses on an early train, which is far simpler in its design and primarily experimental.

One key difference is the level of comfort and facilities available. In Source A, the train includes a 'mail van,' 'a dining car,' and 'five sleeping cars,' showing how advanced railway travel had become. The mention of sleeping and dining facilities means that the reader can infer the train's purpose: to transport passengers over long distances while providing them with essential amenities. In contrast, the train in Source B is an uncovered carriage with 'benches,' designed more for testing the new railway system rather than providing comfort. The simplicity of Source B's train implies a more primitive model, where the focus was on the actual function of transport and moving items or people from one place to another, rather than the quality of the passenger experience.

Another significant contrast is the descriptions of the journeys, which in turn implies the differences between the trains. The writer of Source A describes the train as a restrictive force, stating that it had 'bullied' the passengers and 'regulated our life.' This sounds as though it's being said with some irony, as the luxury on board the train does not really sound unpleasant, but it does suggest that despite its sophistication, the train was uncomfortable and possibly made passengers feel trapped after long periods on board. In Source B, however, the writer is fascinated by the train's ability to give the sensation of 'cutting the air' and move 'swifter than a bird flies,' which creates a sense of excitement and wonder, in spite of the rough and primitive seats and relative discomfort.

Overall, Source A presents a train that is commercially developed but somewhat frustrating for the traveller, while Source B describes an early, simpler train that inspires awe and enthusiasm due to its novelty.

### This is a Level 4 response

This response demonstrates a detailed understanding of both texts, identifying perceptive differences. This is a Level 4 response because it synthesises evidence from both sources insightfully and goes beyond surface-level differences.

There are perceptive inferences, such as describing Source A as ‘commercially developed but somewhat frustrating’ and Source B as ‘inspiring awe and enthusiasm.’

Judicious references are used to support points. The mention of ‘mail van,’ ‘dining car,’ and ‘benches’ highlights key contrasts effectively. The textual details are well-integrated into the analysis and effectively support the response.

In the latter part of the answer, the response slips into writing about the writers’ perspectives and methods. Where there is overlap with the analytical skills required in Question 4, these comments would not be rewarded.

This is a well-structured answer, with perceptive comparisons and inference throughout.

### Response B

The two trains in Source A and Source B are very different. Source A describes a more comfortable train which sounds like it was really luxurious, even if you didn't want to spend a long time on it, but the train in Source B is a less comfortable train but went very fast. Also I think both sounds quite dangerous.

In Source A, the train is designed for passengers traveling long distances, because you could sleep (‘sleeping car’) and eat on it, ‘dining car’. This implies that it is meant to be comfortable for people spending a lot of time on board. However after the crash the writer looks at the train and said ‘she had bullied us’ about the train which makes me infer that it’s not that comfortable to be on and you may feel trapped or pushed about by the train. He literally sounds happy when it crashed too.

In contrast, the train in Source B is much more basic. The passengers sit on benches and it’s an ‘uncovered carriage’ which sounds like you are not protected from the rain or wind, or any cold weather. Plus there is no mention of eating or sleeping. This makes me infer that the train was not built to be comfortable. However the writer really likes this train because it says that the train is a ‘wonderful beast’ and that she felt ‘inclined to pat’ which suggests that she feels kind towards it, not like the other train which was a bully, which helps me infer that it was a nice vehicle even if it was a bit basic.

### This is a Level 3 response

The response demonstrates clear synthesis and interpretation of the differences between the two trains, making comparisons and inferences. It identifies key contrasts, such as the comfortable nature of the train in Source A versus the less comfortable train in Source B and uses appropriate textual references to support these ideas. The answer responds to the use of 'infer' in the wording of the question with regular references to what can be inferred from the chosen references.

The response makes clear inferences by discussing how Source A's train could be seen as luxurious but also uncomfortable, shown through the phrase 'she had bullied us.' It is clear that the impression that the writer of Source A has a negative view of the train, despite its advanced facilities. Similarly, in reference to Source B, the response identifies how the 'uncovered carriage' and 'benches' make the train seem uncomfortable. These comparisons are valid and show a developing ability to interpret textual details relevant to the focus of the question.

The response selects relevant references, such as 'dining car,' 'sleeping car,' and 'uncovered carriage,' which help to demonstrate key differences between the trains. However, some explanations are slightly underdeveloped, such as the idea that both trains 'sound quite dangerous,' which lacks further clarification or evidence.

Overall, this response meets the Level 3 criteria as it makes clear inferences, selects relevant references and identifies clear differences between the texts.

### Response C

The two trains in Source A and Source B are very different. The train in Source A is big but the writer does not like it. They say it was a 'thing of no use' after it crashed. This shows that even though it was made for travel, it was not always good because it crashed and they never arrived.

In Source B, the train is smaller and it moves at 'ten miles an hour,' which infers it is slow. But the writer enjoys it and says the train's movement is good I know this because it says 'as smooth as possible.' This infers the ride felt not too bumpy.

Overall, the train in Source A is bigger but not very nice, while the train in Source B is smaller but makes the writer happy.

### **This is a Level 2 response**

This response shows simple interpretation of the differences between the two trains. The response states that the train in Source A is 'big' and the writer 'does not like it,' while the train in Source B is 'smaller' but 'makes the writer happy.' These statements show a simple understanding of differences, but there is an attempt at inference 'because it crashed and they never arrived' and so it moves into Level 2.

Some references to the text are used, such as 'thing of no use' and 'as smooth as possible.' Although there is an attempt to infer, as prompted by the wording of the question, the response does not always go beyond paraphrasing. For example, it states that 'as smooth as possible' implies that that the ride was 'not too bumpy' which is a paraphrase, rather than interpretation.

## Question 4

This question has been updated to use ‘comment on’ in the second bullet to clarify that the focus of AO3 is the comparison between the authors’ ideas and perspectives.

### Question

For this question, you need to refer to the **whole of Source A**, together with the **whole of Source B**.

Compare how the writers convey their different feelings and perspectives about their experiences of travelling on a train.

In your answer, you could:

- compare their different feelings and perspectives
- comment on the methods the writers use to convey their different feelings and perspectives
- support your response with references to both texts.

[16 marks]

### Mark scheme

<b>AO3</b>	<b>Compare writers’ ideas and perspectives, as well as how these are conveyed, across two or more texts.</b>	
<b>Level</b>	<b>Skills descriptors</b>	<b>Indicative standard</b>
		This indicative standard provides an exemplification of the skills descriptors at each level. It is not a model answer, nor a complete response, nor does it seek to exemplify any particular content.
Level 4 Perceptive, detailed comparison  13–16 marks	Compares ideas and perspectives in a perceptive way: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• analyses how writers’ methods are used</li> <li>• selects a range of judicious supporting detail from both texts</li> <li>• shows a detailed and perceptive understanding of the different ideas and perspectives in both texts.</li> </ul>	The writer of Source A feels that his experience of travelling by train has been something to be endured and he cannot wait for his journey to conclude after over a week of travel. His use of repetition and listing of ‘no more’ in his first paragraph not only makes clear how many aspects of the journey he disliked but also reflects for the reader the monotony he has felt on this trip. In complete contrast to the almost contemptuous and weary feelings of the writer of Source A, the writer of Source B is filled with admiration and awe as she embraces the novelty of train travel. She indicates this from the start of her letter with the idea that ordinary writing paper is not adequate to contain her ‘raptures’. Her use of ‘raptures’ has connotations of euphoria and an almost spiritual experience. Here, the writer of Source B establishes the idea of how out of this world her trip was.

<p>Level 3 Clear, relevant comparison  9–12 marks</p>	<p>Compares ideas and perspectives in a clear and relevant way:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>explains clearly how writers' methods are used</li> <li>selects relevant detail to support from both texts</li> <li>shows a clear understanding of the different ideas and perspectives in both texts.</li> </ul>	<p>The writer of Source A feels that his experience of train travel has been miserable and he is looking forward to the end of his long journey. He uses repetition and listing of 'no more' in his first paragraph to highlight how many aspects of the experience he cannot wait to leave behind, maybe because he has been on this train for so long and become bored. On the other hand, the writer in Source B feels that her train ride has been overwhelming and astonishing, which may link to this being her first time on a train, unlike the more experienced writer of Source A. Her delight in the experience is clear at the start of her letter, where the noun 'raptures' suggests she felt in a state of utter joy on her journey. She has been amazed by her experience because it is so extraordinary.</p>
<p>Level 2 Some attempts at comparison  5–8 marks</p>	<p>Attempts to compare ideas and perspectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>makes some comment on how writers' methods are used</li> <li>selects some appropriate textual detail/references, not always supporting, from one or both texts</li> <li>shows some understanding of different ideas and perspectives.</li> </ul>	<p>The writer of Source A feels that his experience of travelling by train has been awful and he is fed up of being on the train. At the start, he uses repetition and listing of 'no more' to emphasise all the things he doesn't like about the train. On the other hand, the writer in Source B has really enjoyed her train ride and had a great time. She introduces her account with the phrase 'my raptures' to make it clear that her experience was very exciting. This shows that she is more enthusiastic about her experience.</p>
<p>Level 1 Simple, limited comment  1–4 marks</p>	<p>Makes simple cross reference of ideas and perspectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>makes simple identification of writers' methods</li> <li>selects simple reference(s)/textual detail(s) from one or both texts</li> <li>shows simple awareness of ideas and/or perspectives.</li> </ul>	<p>The writer of Source A feels that his experience of travelling by train is bad and he doesn't like it. At the start he repeats 'no more' and lists all the bad things about the train journey. This is different from Source B, where the writer feels good about her train ride. She uses the phrase 'my raptures' to her friend at the start of her letter. This shows that the writer has liked her experience.</p>
<p>Level 0 No marks</p>	<p>Nothing to reward.</p>	

**Note**

- If the quality of the response is Level 1 but only deals with one text, the maximum mark is 2.
- If the quality of the response is Level 2 but only deals with one text, the maximum mark is 6.
- A student has to deal with both texts to achieve Level 3 or above.

- References to the writers' methods may be implicit without specific mention of the writer.

AO3 content may include the comparison of feelings and perspectives such as:

- boredom/intrigue
- loathing/liking
- familiarity/novelty
- apathy/curiosity
- experience/innocence
- underwhelmed/overwhelmed
- contempt/admiration for the train.

and comment on methods such as:

- first-person accounts – though Source A is travel writing with a general, public and plural audience and Source B is a private letter with a specific, singular audience
- chronological narrative structure of the end of the experience in Source A and the whole experience in Source B
- shifts between action and reflection in both Source A and Source B
- climax of the train crash in Source A and the experience of the journey in Source B
- tone – sardonic/mocking but also dramatic in Source A; dramatic/excited but also explanatory in Source B
- language features – personification in both Source A and B; listing in both Source A and B; repetition in both Source A and Source B; use of full name of train in Source A, various animal synonyms for engine in Source B
- audience – no direct reference to reader in Source A, direct address of letter recipient with second person pronoun in Source B
- word choice.

## Student responses

### Response A

The writers of Source A and Source B have very different perspectives on their experiences of train travel. The writer of Source A feels unimpressed and even bored as well as smugly pleased when the train crashes, while the writer of Source B is excited and fascinated by the experience of her train journey.

In Source A, the writer expresses feelings of confinement and frustration. He describes how the train had 'regulated our life' and 'bullied us,' and this semantic field of restraint suggests a lack of freedom and of being controlled by the train during the journey. The writer personifies the train in these descriptions, perhaps making the irritation he feels with the vehicle easier for the reader to comprehend, as we can all connect with the concept of a controlling person, or a schoolground bully. Coupled with these descriptions of the train being a bully, the reader also finds the contrasting images of the train being 'sprawled foolishly' after the crash, and also having a 'defiant and naughty look'. The adverb 'foolishly' and the adverbs 'defiant and naughty' reduce the train to that of a naughty or ridiculous child. The phrase 'she was down and out' after the crash further conveys his contempt, reducing the powerful train to

something weak and insignificant. This highlights the writer's dissatisfaction with the experience and the rigid nature of modern train travel.

In contrast, the writer of Source B conveys a sense of wonder and admiration. She describes the train as a 'curious little fire-horse' and expresses a desire to 'pat' it, personifying the train in a way that makes it seem friendly and endearing. Her description of the train's speed as 'swifter than a bird flies' highlights her excitement and sense of freedom, in stark contrast to the controlled and monotonous experience of the writer in Source A. The writer also connects with the reader directly in this part of the source, when she states 'you cannot conceive what that sensation of cutting the air was'. The direct address in "You cannot conceive what that sensation of cutting the air was" makes the reader feel personally involved, as if the experience is so thrilling and unique that it is beyond their imagination. This creates a sense of excitement by emphasizing the writer's awe and wonder, making the train ride feel even more extraordinary.

### This is a Level 4 response

This response meets the criteria for a Level 4 answer. It compares the writers' perspectives on train travel, selecting a range of well-chosen textual details and demonstrating a strong analytical approach to the methods. The response comments on the methods used in both texts without attempting to compare the methods, which suggests effective engagement with the new question wording.

The response makes detailed comments about the different feelings in each source. For example, it identifies the writer of Source A's 'unimpressed' and 'smugly pleased' reaction to the train crash and contrasts this with the 'wonder and admiration' felt by the writer of Source B, which supports the assessment of this as just into Level 4 for its understanding of perspectives.

The analysis of the methods used by the writers is perceptive too. The response discusses the 'semantic field of restraint' in Source A (supported with references such as 'regulated our life' and 'bullied us') and effectively explains how personification helps the reader understand the writer's irritation. The references to the adverbs 'foolishly,' and the adjectives 'defiant,' and 'naughty', add depth to the commentary, showing a precise engagement with language.

### Response B

The writer of Source A has a negative experience of train travel, while the writer of Source B finds it exciting. The writer of Source A is tired of the journey and describes the train as a 'prison,' which suggests that she feels trapped and controlled by it. This makes her experience seem frustrating rather than enjoyable. In contrast, the writer of Source B is amazed by the train and describes it as a 'brave little she-dragon,' showing freedom and excitement. The animalistic description here makes the train seem alive and powerful, especially because we associate dragons with mythical and powerful things, making the journey feel magical.

The writer of Source A also seems to take pleasure in the train coming off the tracks which shows that she has built up some resentment for the experience of travelling on this train. She says 'this was great fun' about the crash and she can say that because nobody was hurt but also the irony reflects her irritation, because she says it was a 'comical and violent climax' and that 'comedy and violence had been lacking' on her journey. This is a kind of understatement and we understand from the writer that basically she was bored of travelling on this train and the crash brought a bit of excitement.

On the other hand, the writer of Source B expresses genuine joy, saying the train moved 'as smooth as possible,' which shows how impressed she is by the ride. The writer of Source B uses the metaphor that she 'drank the air' which could even make her sound like she is gulping back this amazing experience and trying to experience it both in her mind and physically, and this helps the reader understand the sheer joy of the ride.

### **This is a Level 3 response**

This response makes several clear comparisons between the writers' perspectives, selects relevant textual references and provides elements of analysis of the writers' methods.

The response effectively identifies the contrasting experiences of the two writers, stating that the writer of Source A finds the journey frustrating while the writer of Source B expresses excitement. This shows understanding of different ideas and perspectives. The response explains how Source A's writer describes the train as a 'prison,' which suggests feelings of confinement, while Source B's writer uses the phrase 'brave little she-dragon' to show freedom and excitement. This comparison is clear and supported by appropriate references.

The response also comments on how the writers convey their feelings through methods such as personification and metaphor. The explanation of the 'she-dragon' metaphor highlights how the train is made to seem powerful and magical, reinforcing the sense of excitement in Source B. Similarly, the response explores the irony in Source A's description of the train crash as 'great fun,' explaining how the writer's irritation and boredom are reflected in this sarcastic phrasing, clearly commenting on how writers' methods are used.

A number of references to the text are well-selected, such as the metaphor 'drank the air' in Source B, which the response explains as emphasising the writer's eagerness to fully experience the journey.

## Question 5

This question focuses on AO5 and AO6 and the mark schemes have been updated to include typical features at each level.

### Question

'Cars are convenient, comfortable and save time. However, we need to use them less by making public transport such as trains, trams and buses cheaper, more reliable and easier to access.'

Write a speech to be given at a meeting of your local council in which you argue your point of view on this statement.

(24 marks for content and organisation  
16 marks for technical accuracy)  
**[40 marks]**

## Mark scheme

<b>AO5 Content and organisation</b> Communicate clearly, effectively and imaginatively, selecting and adapting tone, style and register for different forms, purposes and audiences. Organise information and ideas, using structural and grammatical features to support coherence and cohesion of texts.			
<b>Level</b>		<b>Skills descriptors</b>	<b>Typical features – rhetorical writing</b>
			This is not intended to be a checklist, but an indication of the typical features often included by candidates working at each level
Level 4 Compelling, convincing communication  19–24 marks	Upper Level 4  22–24 marks	<p><b>Content</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Communication is convincing and compelling and directly relevant to focus and task.</li> <li>• Tone, style and register are assuredly matched to purpose and audience.</li> <li>• Extensive and ambitious vocabulary with sustained crafting of linguistic devices.</li> </ul> <p><b>Organisation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Varied and inventive use of structural features.</li> <li>• Writing is compelling, incorporating a range of convincing and complex ideas.</li> <li>• Fluently linked paragraphs with seamlessly integrated discourse markers.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Convincing argument.</li> <li>• Conceptualised focus on task.</li> <li>• Detailed/complex ideas.</li> <li>• Fluid sequencing of ideas/argument.</li> <li>• Judicious choice of register.</li> <li>• Confident and varied tone.</li> <li>• Convincing and impressive vocabulary.</li> <li>• Deliberate crafting of language and use of rhetorical devices.</li> <li>• Subtle variation of pace.</li> </ul>
	Lower Level 4  19–21 marks	<p><b>Content</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Communication is convincing and directly relevant to focus and task.</li> <li>• Tone, style and register are convincingly matched to purpose and audience.</li> <li>• Extensive vocabulary with conscious crafting of linguistic devices.</li> </ul>	

		<p><b>Organisation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Varied and effective structural features.</li> <li>• Writing is highly engaging with a range of developed complex ideas.</li> <li>• Consistently coherent use of paragraphs with integrated discourse markers.</li> </ul>	
<p>Level 3 Consistent, clear communication</p> <p>13–18 mark</p>	<p>Upper Level 3 16–18 marks</p>	<p><b>Content</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Communication is consistently clear and consistently relevant to focus/task.</li> <li>• Tone, style and register are consistently matched to purpose and audience.</li> <li>• Increasingly sophisticated vocabulary and phrasing, chosen for effect with a range of successful linguistic devices.</li> </ul> <p><b>Organisation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Effective use of structural features.</li> <li>• Writing is engaging, using a range of clear, connected ideas.</li> <li>• Coherent paragraphs with integrated discourse markers.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clear point of view/argument established.</li> <li>• Clear and relevant focus on the task.</li> <li>• Clearly developed range of ideas.</li> <li>• Clear and logical sequencing of ideas/argument.</li> <li>• Appropriate level of formality.</li> <li>• Sustained and effective tone.</li> <li>• Accurate range of vocabulary chosen for effect.</li> <li>• Effective use of rhetorical devices.</li> <li>• Controlled pace.</li> </ul>
	<p>Lower Level 3 13–15 marks</p>	<p><b>Content</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Communication is generally clear and relevant to focus/task.</li> <li>• Tone, style and register are generally matched to purpose and audience.</li> <li>• Vocabulary clearly chosen for effect and appropriate use of linguistic devices.</li> </ul> <p><b>Organisation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Usually effective use of structural features.</li> <li>• Writing is engaging, with a range of connected ideas.</li> <li>• Usually coherent paragraphs with range of discourse markers.</li> </ul>	

<p>Level 2 Some successful communication</p> <p>7–12 marks</p>	<p>Upper Level 2 10–12 marks</p>	<p><b>Content</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Communicates with some sustained success and sustained relevance to focus/task.</li> <li>Some sustained attempt to match tone, style and register to purpose and audience.</li> <li>Conscious use of vocabulary with some use of linguistic devices.</li> </ul> <p><b>Organisation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Some use of structural features.</li> <li>Increasing variety of linked and relevant ideas.</li> <li>Some use of paragraphs and some use of discourse markers.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Attempts to establish point of view/argument.</li> <li>Some focus on task.</li> <li>Attempts to develop ideas.</li> <li>Some sequencing of ideas.</li> <li>Some relevant register/ formality.</li> <li>Attempts to establish tone.</li> <li>Some attempt to select vocabulary.</li> <li>Some use of rhetorical devices.</li> <li>Some attempt to create pace.</li> </ul>
	<p>Lower Level 2 7–9 marks</p>	<p><b>Content</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Communicates with some success and some relevance to focus/task.</li> <li>Attempts to match tone, style and register to purpose and audience.</li> <li>Attempts to vary vocabulary with some use of linguistic devices.</li> </ul> <p><b>Organisation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Attempts to use structural features.</li> <li>Some linked and relevant ideas.</li> <li>Attempt to write in paragraphs with some discourse markers, not always appropriate.</li> </ul>	
<p>Level 1 Simple, limited communication</p> <p>1–6 marks</p>	<p>Upper Level 1 4–6 marks</p>	<p><b>Content</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Communicates simply with simple relevance to focus/task.</li> <li>Simple awareness of matching tone, style and register to purpose and audience.</li> <li>Simple vocabulary; simple linguistic devices.</li> </ul> <p><b>Organisation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Evidence of simple structural features.</li> <li>One or two relevant ideas, simply linked.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Simple or limited point of view.</li> <li>Limited focus on task.</li> <li>Limited scope/ideas.</li> <li>Simple sequence of ideas.</li> <li>Simple register.</li> <li>Simple tone.</li> <li>Simple/limited vocabulary.</li> <li>Simple use of devices.</li> </ul>

GCSE ENGLISH LANGUAGE – 8700/2 – ANSWERS AND COMMENTARIES UPDATED QUESTIONS: FIRST EXAM 2026

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Random paragraph structure.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Limited sense of pace.</li> </ul>
Lower Level 1 1–3 marks	<p><b>Content</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Limited communication with limited relevance to focus/task.</li> <li>• Occasional sense of matching tone, style and register to purpose and audience.</li> <li>• Simple vocabulary.</li> </ul> <p><b>Organisation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Limited or no evidence of structural features.</li> <li>• One or two unlinked ideas.</li> <li>• No paragraphs.</li> </ul>		
Level 0 No marks		Students will not have offered any meaningful writing to assess. Nothing to reward.	

NB – If a candidate does not directly address the focus of the task, their communication cannot be clear or convincing and therefore the mark for AO5 is capped at the top of Level 2 –12 marks.

<b>AO6</b>	Students must use a range of vocabulary and sentence structures for clarity, purpose and effect, with accurate spelling and punctuation. (This requirement must constitute 20% of the marks for each specification as a whole.)
<b>Technical Accuracy</b>	
<b>Level</b>	<b>Skills descriptors</b>
Level 4 13–16 marks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sentence demarcation is consistently secure and consistently accurate.</li> <li>• Wide range of punctuation is used with a high level of accuracy.</li> <li>• Uses a full range of appropriate sentence forms for effect.</li> <li>• Uses Standard English consistently and appropriately with secure control of complex grammatical structures.</li> <li>• High level of accuracy in spelling, including ambitious vocabulary.</li> <li>• Extensive and ambitious use of vocabulary.</li> </ul>
Level 3 9–12 marks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sentence demarcation is mostly secure and mostly accurate.</li> <li>• Range of punctuation is used, mostly with success.</li> <li>• Uses a variety of sentence forms for effect.</li> <li>• Mostly uses Standard English appropriately with mostly controlled grammatical structures.</li> <li>• Generally accurate spelling, including complex and irregular words.</li> <li>• Increasingly sophisticated use of vocabulary.</li> </ul>
Level 2 5–8 marks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sentence demarcation is mostly secure and sometimes accurate.</li> <li>• Some control of a range of punctuation.</li> <li>• Attempts a variety of sentence forms.</li> <li>• Some use of Standard English with some control of agreement.</li> <li>• Some accurate spelling of more complex words.</li> <li>• Varied use of vocabulary.</li> </ul>
Level 1 1–4 marks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Occasional use of sentence demarcation.</li> <li>• Some evidence of conscious punctuation.</li> <li>• Simple range of sentence forms.</li> <li>• Occasional use of Standard English with limited control of agreement.</li> <li>• Accurate basic spelling.</li> <li>• Simple use of vocabulary.</li> </ul>
Level 0 No marks	Students' spelling, punctuation etc. is sufficiently poor to prevent understanding or meaning.

## Student responses

### Response A

Ladies and gentlemen - we stand at a crossroads. On one side, the ever-growing presence of cars - convenient, comfortable, and fast. On the other, the undeniable necessity of reducing our reliance on them in favour of better, more sustainable public transport. The question is not whether we should make a change, but how quickly and effectively we can do so. And to do so, we need our governments to act: we need policy change – and fast.

Cars are, without doubt, a marvel of modern convenience. They give us the freedom to travel on our own schedules, in comfort, and with ease. They have transformed the way we live, work, and connect with one another. But let us not overlook the costs. Our roads are choked with congestion, our air is thick with pollution, and our towns and cities groan under the weight of an infrastructure designed around cars rather than people. For all their benefits, cars have shackled us to a system that is unsustainable, inefficient, and, in many cases, deeply unfair.

Public transport is the obvious solution - if only it were designed to truly serve the people. We need cheaper, more reliable, and more accessible public transport, not just as an alternative to cars, but as the superior choice for everyday travel. Imagine a world where buses, trams, and trains are so efficient and affordable that taking the car is not the first option, but the last. First and foremost, cost must be addressed. It is absurd that in many places, taking a train can be more expensive than driving a car. Public transport should not be a financial burden - it should be the economically sensible choice. If we truly want to shift people away from car dependency, we must make public transport affordable for all. That means subsidised fares, capped ticket prices, and discounts for frequent travellers. Investment in public transport should not be seen as an expense, but as an investment in a cleaner, more efficient future. Reliability is the second key issue. How can we expect people to abandon their cars when trains are cancelled without warning, buses run late, and routes are cut to save money? If public transport is to be a real alternative, it must be punctual, frequent, and dependable. Imagine if people could trust that their train would arrive on time, their bus would not disappear from the timetable overnight, and their tram would run without delays. That level of reliability is not a luxury - it is a necessity.

Accessibility must also be radically improved. Too many areas, particularly rural communities, are poorly served by public transport. If you live in a city, you may have choices - trams, trains, buses - but for those in smaller towns or villages, public transport is often non-existent or painfully infrequent. This forces many into car ownership not as a choice, but as a necessity. A truly fair transport system would ensure that every town, every village, and every community has a viable public transport option. We must demand better routes, more frequent services, and an end to the postcode lottery of transport provision.

Opponents argue that people will always prefer the independence of cars, that public transport can never compete with the personal convenience of driving. But let us look to cities around the world where public transport is so efficient that cars become an inconvenience

rather than a necessity. In places like Vienna, Seoul, and Copenhagen, cheap, reliable, and well-connected public transport systems have dramatically reduced car use. This is not a fantasy - it is entirely possible, if only we have the will to demand it.

The truth is, our over-reliance on cars is not an inevitability - it is a policy failure. For too long, we have prioritised road expansion over railway investment, fuel subsidies over fare reductions, and short-term convenience over long-term sustainability. The time has come to reverse that trend.

We need public transport that is not just an afterthought, but a priority. We need investment, innovation, and political will. We need a system that puts people first, not cars. And we need it now.

So, to our council, I say this: be bold. Take action. Invest in better public transport, and give people a real choice. If we build a system that is cheaper, more reliable, and easier to use, people will make the switch - not because they have to, but because they want to.

We are at a crossroads. If we turn one way, the future is more roads, more cars, and more congestion. The turn we need to take is for a future in which public transport is the obvious, sensible, and preferred choice. Let's make that future a reality.

Thank you.

### This is a Level 4 response

This response securely meets the criteria for Level 4, demonstrating convincing and compelling communication throughout. The argument is conceptually focused, framing its argument around policy solutions, and consistently engages the audience with a clear and urgent call to action. The assured tone and register effectively match the purpose of the speech, making it both persuasive and engaging for a local council meeting.

The response demonstrates detailed and complex ideas and thus the Level 4 indicative features in the mark scheme are fulfilled. For example, the response gives a structured argument about cost, reliability and accessibility. Each point is well-developed and reinforced with examples, such as referencing global cities where public transport is successful. The judicious choice of register ensures the speech remains authoritative yet accessible.

There is deliberate crafting of language and a confident use of rhetorical devices, such as the use of the extended metaphor of a crossroads ('We stand at a crossroads'), which is returned to at the end of the answer.

The organisation is seamless, with fluid sequencing of ideas. The structure follows a logical progression: introducing the issue, explaining the consequences, outlining solutions and delivering a strong conclusion. Inventive use of structural features, such as contrasting perspectives, emphatic short sentences and repetition, reinforces the message effectively.

For AO6, the response also exhibits a high level of technical accuracy. Sentence demarcation is secure and consistent, with a wide range of sentence forms used for impact, such as emphatic one-liners ('We need it now!'). Punctuation is varied and used effectively, including colons, dashes and rhetorical commas. The spelling of ambitious vocabulary, such as 'viable,' 'infrastructure' and 'necessity,' is consistently correct. The response maintains excellent control of Standard English, with complex grammatical structures executed precisely.

### Response B

Hello fello council members. Cars are a big part of our daily lives. They are convenient and comfortable, but they also cause serious problems. Roads are overcrowded, pollution is rising, and public transport is often ignored. If we want to improve our towns and cities, we need to start making public transport cheaper, more reliable, and more easier to use. One major reason people prefer cars is cost. Public transport can be to expensive, and sometimes driving is actually cheaper then taking a train or bus. If we want more people to use public transport, it has to be affordable for everyone. Government funding could help lower ticket prices, making it a smarter choice. If taking the bus costs half the price of driving, wouldn't more people use it?

Another issue is reliability. Many people drive because they cannot trust buses and trains to be on time. A delayed or cancelled train can cause major problems, making people late for

work or school. If buses and trains were always on time and frequent, people would be more willing to use them.

Then there is accessibility. Public transport works well in cities, but what about small towns and villages? Many people outside big cities have no choice but to drive because their nearest bus stop is too far away or the service is too infrequent. More routes and better connections would help people rely less on their cars.

Some say cars will always be better because they offer freedom. But in countries like Germany and the Netherlands, better public transport means fewer cars on the road. There, trains and buses are affordable and efficient, and they have less traffic and pollution as a result.

If we want cleaner air, less congestion, and a better future, we need to improve public transport. Lower ticket prices, more reliable services, and better accessibility will encourage people to leave their cars at home. It won't happen overnight, but if we start now, we can create real change for the future.

Thank you for listening and I hope you all have a great day!

### **This is a Level 3 response**

This response meets the criteria for Level 3 because it establishes a clear point of view and maintains a relevant focus on the task. Additionally, there is an effective argument in favour of improving public transport throughout the piece, addressing key issues such as cost, reliability and accessibility in a logical sequence that moves towards a persuasive conclusion. It is possible to apply the indicative features from the mark scheme to this piece to see that it fits the Level 3 criteria.

The response demonstrates a clearly developed range of ideas, expanding on each point with supporting explanations. The argument follows a structured and logical progression, beginning with the problems caused by excessive car use, moving into practical solutions and concluding with a clear sense of urgency and a relevant plea to the audience.

The response uses an accurate range of vocabulary, with words like 'congestion,' 'pollution' and 'reliability' enhancing the effectiveness of the argument. There is appropriate use of rhetorical devices, such as direct address ('If we want cleaner air...'), rhetorical questions ('wouldn't more people use it?').

The response also demonstrates usually effective use of structural features. Ideas are well connected, and discourse markers ('Another issue is...,' 'Then there is...,' 'Some say...') ensure coherence between points. Paragraphs are mostly well-formed and logically ordered, matching well with the indicative features on the mark scheme for Level 3 of 'clear and logical sequencing'.

For AO6, the response is mostly technically accurate; any errors do not significantly impact clarity. There is a range of sentence structures and punctuation, mostly used with success.

### Response C

I think cars are good because they help people get places faster and public transport is really bad especially round here! But I also think too many cars are bad because they cause traffic and pollution so we need better public transport.

One reason people like cars is because cars is easy to use and you can go whenever you want. But buses and trains can be better if they are cheaper. Sometimes tickets cost to much and people don't want to pay. If buses was cheaper more people would use them.

Also buses and trains need to be on time. If a train is late then people are late. That's why some people drive insted. If they ran on time more people would of use them. Another thing is that not all towns have it. Some places don't have buses or trains so people, have to drive. If their was more bus stops and more trains then it would be better.

Some people think cars are better no matter what but in other counties people use trains and buses more so we should try to make are public transport better too.

If public transport was cheeper and everywhere then people might not use cars so much. That would help stop traffic and pollution. And save the planet.

#### **This is a Level 2 response**

This response expresses a point of view that public transport should be improved, showing some relevance to the task.

The response links some ideas together, such as mentioning cost, reliability and accessibility. The sequence of ideas shows some success, although paragraphing is inconsistent, making the argument feel disjointed at times. The ideas are present but lack expansion or explanation.

There is some awareness of tone and register, but, again, this is inconsistent. Phrases such as 'public transport is really bad especially round here!' sound too informal for a council meeting. While at other points there is an awareness of the need to match the tone, style and register to the purpose and audience, this is not developed. The tone lacks control and shifts between casual and slightly more formal.

Vocabulary is repetitive, with words like 'better' and 'cheaper' used frequently without variation. There is an attempt to use rhetorical devices, such as repetition ('If trains are late, then people are late' and 'more bus stops and more trains'), but these are not developed effectively.

With regards to technical accuracy, sentence demarcation is mostly secure with some inconsistencies, and there is some accurate spelling of more complex words. Errors such as 'cars is easy to use' affect clarity.

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