



# **Focus on success: GCSE English Language**

**AO2**

Handout booklet

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## The mark schemes

The mark schemes for Paper 1 Question 2 and Question 3 and Paper 2 Question 3 are provided for your reference to support Activities 6 and 7.

Below are some general reminders about applying levels of response mark schemes which you may find useful.

- A response does not have to fulfil every skill in a level before it can move up to the next level – apply a principle of ‘best fit’.
- The indicative standard exemplifies the standard, not the content, at each level (i.e. the ‘quality’ expected of each level, showing progression from Level 1 through to Level 4).

## GCSE English Language Paper 1, Question 2 (June 2019)

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.		
This question assesses language i.e. words/phrases/language features/language techniques/sentence forms.		
Level	Skills Descriptors	Indicative Standard
<b>Level 4</b>  Perceptive, detailed analysis 7–8 marks	Shows perceptive and detailed understanding of language: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• analyses the effects of the writer's choices of language</li> <li>• selects a range of judicious textual detail</li> <li>• makes sophisticated and accurate use of subject terminology.</li> </ul>	The writer's choice of adjectives to describe Hartop as 'a thin, angular man, starved-faced' suggests both the gaunt appearance of a man who is malnourished and, metaphorically, the hard edges of someone whose character is possibly devoid of generosity or compassion for others, including his family. The use of the adverb 'awkwardly', where it says that he 'seemed to occupy almost all the seat, sprawling awkwardly,' not only reinforces the impression of Hartop's body being tall, sharp and skinny, but also that, in deliberately 'sprawling', spreading his frame and taking up the space in the van, he was self-centred and intentionally selfish towards others – a difficult person in mind and attitude to life, as well as in body
<b>Level 3</b>  Clear, relevant explanation 5–6 marks	Shows clear understanding of language: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• explains clearly the effects of the writer's choices of language</li> <li>• selects a range of relevant textual detail</li> <li>• makes clear and accurate use of subject terminology.</li> </ul>	The writer describes Hartop as 'a thin, angular man, starved-faced'. The adjectives tell us that he has a bony, sharp body and the word "angular" not only suggests a hard physical appearance but also implies harsh characteristics such as a lack of emotion. We learn that he 'seemed to occupy almost all the seat, sprawling awkwardly'. The phrase 'almost all' implies that he left very little of the seat for his wife and daughter, so he was being thoughtless and selfish, and the adverb 'awkwardly' suggests how difficult it was for him to fit in the van, maybe because he was so tall and lanky.

AO2		
<b>Level 2</b>  Some understanding and comment 3–4 marks	Shows some understanding of structural features: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• attempts to comment on the effect of structural features</li> <li>• selects some appropriate examples</li> <li>• makes some use of subject terminology, mainly appropriately.</li> </ul>	Our focus at the beginning is on the old van and the Hartop family in it. We learn that they are very squashed up in the van because Hartop is sprawling across the seat. Then the van moves and we learn that outside it is windy and raining. Later, Alice has to go outside of the van to look for what has dropped off the roof onto the road.
<b>Level 1</b>  Simple, limited comment 1–2 marks	Shows simple awareness of structural features: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• offers simple comment on the effect of structure</li> <li>• selects simple reference(s) or example(s)</li> <li>• makes simple use of subject terminology, not always appropriately.</li> </ul>	The text begins by describing Hartop's van and the three members of the family so that we know who they are. Then the van is moving with the women squashed up inside. Later, Alice leaves the van to find what has dropped off the roof.

## GCSE English Language Paper 2, Question 3 (June 2019)

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.		
This question assesses language i.e. words/phrases/language features/language techniques/sentence forms.		
Level	Skills Descriptors	Indicative Standard
<b>Level 4</b>  Detailed, perceptive analysis 10–12 marks	Shows detailed and perceptive understanding of language: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• analyses the effects of the writer's choices of language</li> <li>• selects a range of judicious textual detail</li> <li>• makes sophisticated and accurate use of subject terminology.</li> </ul>	The phrase 'sucked into the belly of the wave' effectively portrays the sea as a greedy monster, the use of personification suggesting the sea has an insatiable appetite. The curling motion of the wave as it engulfs him is reflected in the metaphorical image of the wave's rounded 'belly' as he is consumed by the ravenous sea. In 'sucked' the writer chooses a short, single syllable verb to echo the speed with which he was suddenly plucked out of the boat and into the water, by the relentless strength of the ocean.
<b>Level 3</b>  Clear, relevant explanation 7–9 marks	Shows clear understanding of language: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• explains clearly the effects of the writer's choices of language</li> <li>• selects a range of relevant textual detail</li> <li>• makes clear and accurate use of subject terminology.</li> </ul>	The writer explains how powerful the sea is by describing how he is 'sucked into the belly of the wave.' The verb 'sucked' suggests the writer is swallowed up very quickly by the sea, emphasising how easily he is overpowered. The personification used in 'the belly of the wave' creates an image of the wave as a powerful giant who eats people up by sucking them into his enormous belly where they disappear and drown.

AO2		
<b>Level 2</b>  Some understanding and comment 4–6 marks	Shows some understanding of language: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• attempts to comment on the effect of language</li> <li>• selects some appropriate textual detail</li> <li>• makes some use of subject terminology, mainly appropriately.</li> </ul>	The writer describes the power of the sea by using the verb ‘sucked’ when he says ‘sucked into the belly of the wave.’ This suggests that the writer is being sucked up like a drink. He describes the wave as having a ‘belly’ which means he is writing about the sea as if it is a person who is trying to eat him. This shows that the sea is very strong.
<b>Level 1</b>  Simple, limited comment 1–3 marks	Shows simple awareness of language: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• offers simple comment on the effect of language</li> <li>• selects simple reference(s) or textual detail(s)</li> <li>• makes simple use of subject terminology, not always appropriately.</li> </ul>	The writer describes the power of the sea by using the words ‘sucked into the belly of the wave’ which makes you think that the sea must be very powerful to suck him in.

## Examiner feedback: Language analysis

### Paper 1, Question 2 and Paper 2, Question 3

The following comments have been lifted from reports on the exam.

Both these questions assess the student's ability to comment on the writer's use of language and to explore the effects of the language choices made.

The most successful students typically:

- make a **wise selection of language examples** (examples cited in the June 2019 report include the imagery of the towering wave, the avaricious belly and the washing machine)
- write about the effects of **specific word choices** (this is an effective approach for all students, but can work particularly well for students aiming for lower grades as it encourages them to focus and explain the effect in more detail)
- explore ideas by **considering different interpretations** of quotations/textual detail
- include perceptive comments and **take a more conceptualised approach** – write about language choices within a framework of the 'big ideas' in the text (an example cited in June 2019 report: 'Students demonstrated an understanding of the writer being sucked into the belly of the wave in terms of the endless battle between man and nature, concluding that man is only ever at a disadvantage because of the imbalance of power').

Students could improve in areas by:

- **avoiding getting distracted by technical terms**; trying to spot techniques without really understanding or acknowledging the effects achieved by the writer
- **making sure that selections are precise** and the comments/analysis relate to the question steer
- **contextualising comments** and avoiding generalised comments on the effect where they are not relevant to the source material (for example, focusing on the colour 'white' used to describe a huge wave and giving the effect as 'pure, innocent, fragile', which was not true of the source)
- **avoiding speculative comments** on how 'the reader' might respond: these are less helpful than specific references to the effects within the context of the source material (for example comments such as, 'The reader might be scared by the description of the wave', which speculates rather than rooting the idea more firmly in the text).



## Examiner feedback: Structure analysis

### Paper 1, Question 3

The following comments have been lifted from reports on the exams.

This question tests a student's ability to see text as a construct, created and ordered for narrative effect. There is continuing improvement in students' confidence with this question and more insight into the passage as 'cinematic'.

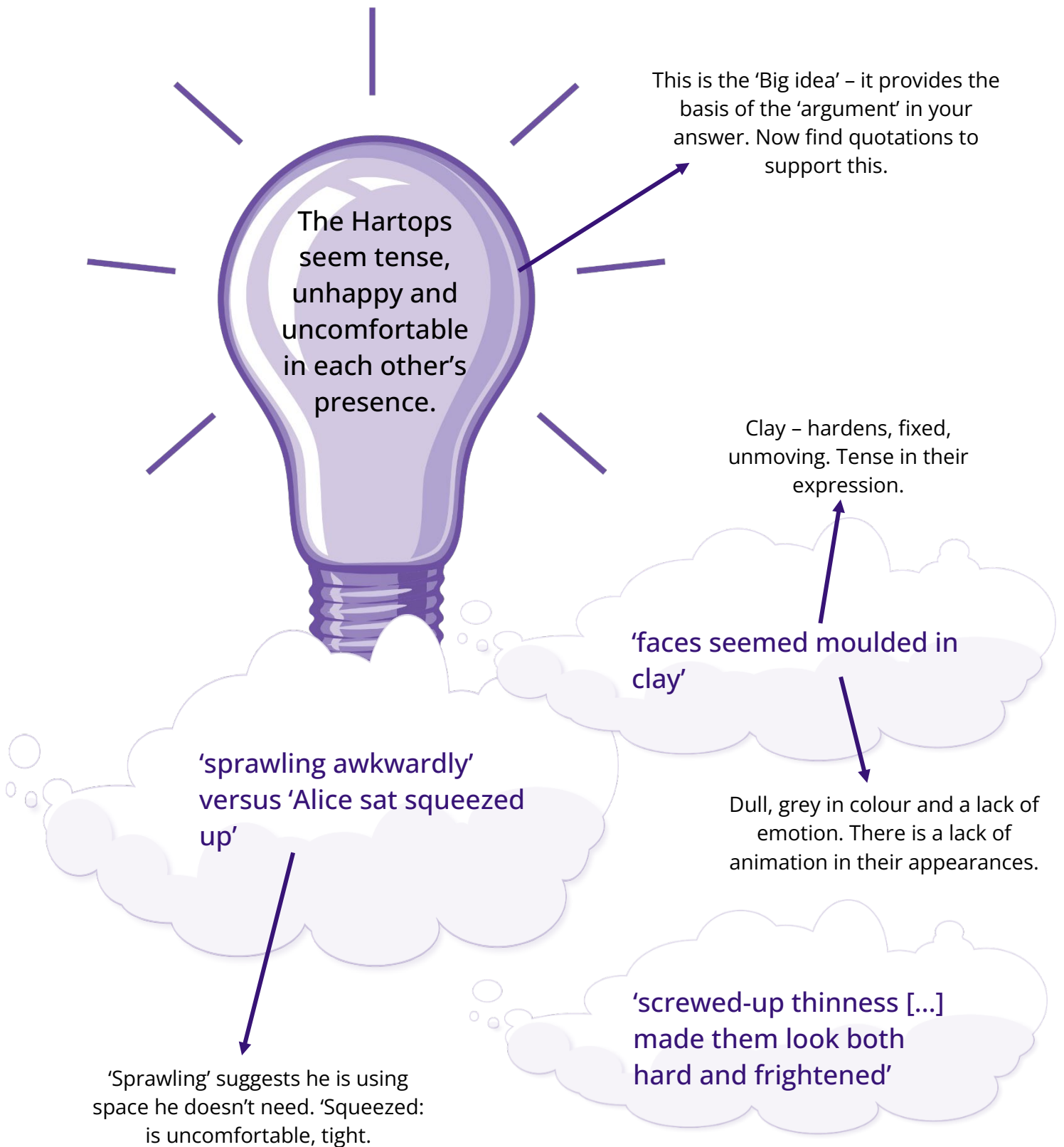
The most successful students typically:

- **note a structural feature at a specific point in the text** and then comment on how it has developed from earlier or how it contrasts with the start or the end. An example of this (from the June 2019 report on the exam): 'At the start of the extract, the writer highlights the severe weather and how rain 'swished like a sea-wave' creating a foreboding and difficult atmosphere inside and outside of the van. Later the weather is mentioned again, 'raining furiously', only now the reader realises just how difficult it is for Alice to find the flowers that dropped, but also how unkind it is of Hartop to send her out in it on foot. The reader realises that the weather mirrors Hartop's attitude and Alice is a victim to both her father's fierce nature and the weather itself'
- **notice shifts in focus and perspective** and make thoughtful comments on what is suggested by these changes (the effects). An example cited in the June 2019 report is: 'Many observed shifts in perspective from outside to inside the van, exploring the link between the weather and the tension between the family members'.

Students could improve in areas by:

- **avoiding over-generalised comments** ('interests the reader', 'makes the reader want to read on') which do not show any understanding of the effect(s) of a particular structural feature and cannot be credited above a Level 1
- concentrating on why the structural feature selected is effective **at that point** in the text
- not getting distracted by or 'shoe-horning' in complex technical terms
- maintaining focus on the structure of the text and **not straying too far into writing about language.**

## Appendix 1: A 'Big idea'



## Appendix 2: Student response marks (A–F)

Below are the levels and marks and for the student responses that correspond with Activity 6 and Activity 7.

- Student A's response was awarded Level 2 (5 marks).
- Student B's response was awarded Level 4 (12 marks).
- Student C's response was awarded Level 3 (9 marks).
- Student D's response was awarded Level 2 (4 marks).
- Student E's response was awarded Level 1 (2 marks).
- Student F's response was awarded Level 4 (8 marks).

## Notes

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