

Spotlight on GCSE English Language

with Jonny Kay

Post-16 English expert





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Paper 1
Q4

Spotlight on GCSE English shines a light on exactly what examiners are looking for.

We've worked with Jonny Kay, post-16 English expert and author, to create a pack of resources to provide your students with best practice, guidance and top tips to improve their performance in GCSE English Language.

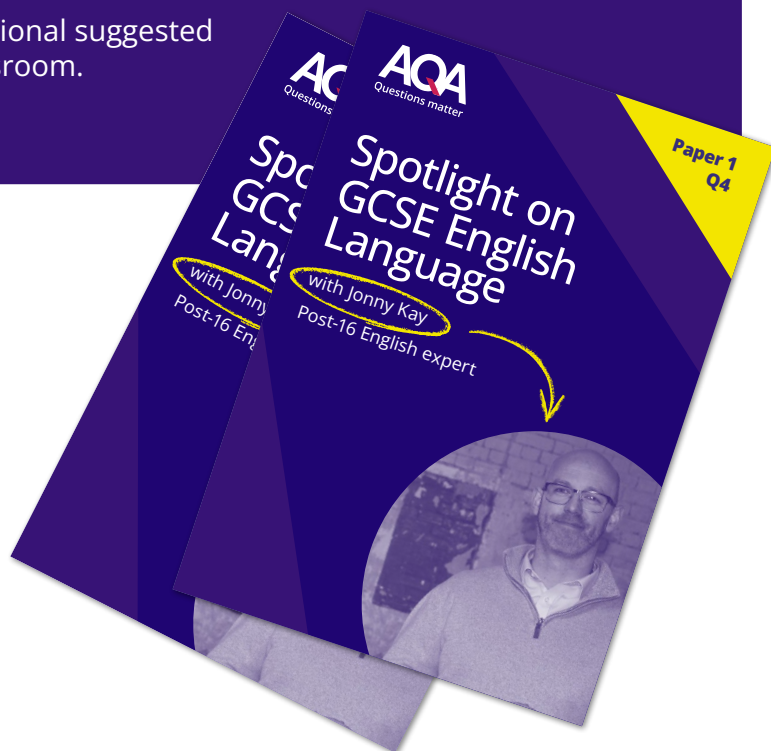
Our new, classroom-ready Spotlight teaching resource packs will allow you to focus your students on the things that make the most difference.

These resources support our new [Spotlight videos](#)



Each pack contains:

- A video for students breaking down the question and what they need to do to succeed.
- This teacher guidance booklet, including a question from a past paper and an example student response to pinpoint exactly what examiners are looking for.
- An editable PPT presentation to help you deliver the content to your students.
- Differentiated tasks and some additional suggested resources for you to use in the classroom.
- Jonny Kay's suggested lesson plan.



What does the question look like?

Question 4 is always 20 marks and assesses AO4. As a guide, it's advised that students spend around 20 minutes on this question.

A statement will be provided about the Source in Section A and it'll guide students to a certain area of the text.

The question will ask students to respond to and evaluate a statement about a section of the passage.

It's important that they only quote and reference this specific part of the text because any quotes from other areas of the text will not be rewarded.

The student is prompted by the words:

To what extent do you agree?

Students are provided with three bullets to help frame the answer. These bullets don't change.

AO4:

Evaluate texts critically and support this with appropriate textual references

Example source - November 2018

Source A



Using a time machine, an organisation called Time Safari transports clients into the past to take part in hunting expeditions. A group that includes Mr Eckels, together with their guide, Travis, is visiting a prehistoric jungle in order to shoot a Tyrannosaurus Rex.

- 1 The jungle was high and the jungle was broad. Sounds like music and flying tents filled the sky, and those were pterodactyls soaring with huge grey wings.

'I've hunted tiger, wild boar, buffalo, elephant, but now, this is it,' said Eckels. 'I'm shaking like a kid.'

- 5 'Ah,' said Travis.

Everyone stopped.

Travis raised his hand. 'Ahead,' he whispered, 'in the mist. There he is. There's his Royal Majesty now.'

- 9 The jungle was wide and full of twitterings, rustlings, murmurs, and sighs.

- 10 Suddenly it all ceased, as if someone had shut a door.

Silence.

A sound of thunder.

Out of the mist, one hundred yards away, came Tyrannosaurus Rex.

'It,' whispered Eckels, 'it.....'

- 15 'Ssh!'

- 16 It came on great oiled, resilient, striding legs. It towered thirty feet above half of the trees, a great evil god, folding its delicate watchmaker's claws close to its oily reptilian chest. Each lower leg was a piston, a thousand pounds of white bone, sunk in thick ropes of muscle, sheathed over in a gleam of pebbled skin like the armour of a terrible warrior. Each thigh
20 was a ton of meat, ivory, and steel mesh. And from the great breathing cage of the upper body those two delicate arms dangled out front, arms with hands which might pick up and examine men like toys, while the snake neck coiled. And the head itself, a ton of sculptured stone, lifted easily upon the sky. Its mouth gaped, exposing a fence of teeth like daggers. Its eyes rolled, ostrich eggs, empty of all expression save hunger. It closed its mouth in a
25 death grin. It ran, its pelvic bones crushing aside trees and bushes, its taloned feet clawing
26 damp earth, leaving prints six inches deep wherever it settled its weight.

It ran with a gliding ballet step, far too poised and balanced for its ten tons. It moved into a sunlit area warily, its beautifully reptilian hands feeling the air.

'Why, why..., ' Eckels twitched his mouth, 'it could reach up and grab the moon.'

30 'Ssh!' Travis jerked angrily. 'He hasn't seen us yet.'

31 'It can't be killed.' Eckels pronounced this verdict quietly, as if there could be no argument. He had weighed the evidence and this was his considered opinion. The rifle in his hands seemed like a toy gun. 'We were fools to come. This is impossible.'

'Shut up!' hissed Travis.

35 'Nightmare.'

'Turn around,' commanded Travis. 'Walk quietly to the Machine. We'll remit half your fee.'

'I didn't realize it would be this big,' said Eckels. 'I miscalculated, that's all. And now I want out.'

'It sees us!'

40 'There's the red paint on its chest.'

The Tyrant Lizard raised itself. Its armoured flesh glittered like a thousand green coins. The coins, crusted with slime, steamed. In the slime, tiny insects wriggled, so that the entire body seemed to twitch and undulate, even while the monster itself did not move. It exhaled. The stink of raw flesh blew down the wilderness.

45 'Get me out of here,' said Eckels. 'It was never like this before. I was always sure I'd come through alive. I had good guides, good safaris, and safety. This time, I figured wrong. I've met my match and admit it. This is too much for me to get hold of.'

'Don't run,' said Lesperance. 'Turn around. Hide in the Machine.'

'Yes.' Eckels seemed to be numb. He looked at his feet as if trying to make them move. He
50 gave a grunt of helplessness.

'Eckels!'

He took a few steps, blinking, shuffling.

'Not that way!'

The Monster, at the first motion, lunged forward with a terrible scream. It covered one
55 hundred yards in six seconds. The rifles jerked up and blazed fire. A windstorm from the beast's mouth engulfed them in the stench of slime and old blood. The Monster roared, teeth glittering with sun.

The rifles cracked again, but their sound was lost in shriek and lizard thunder. The great
60 level of the reptile's tail swung up, lashed sideways. Trees exploded in clouds of leaf and branch. The Monster twitched its jeweller's hands down to fondle at the men, to twist them in half, to crush them like berries, to cram them into its teeth and its screaming throat. Its boulder-stone eyes levelled with the men. They saw themselves mirrored. They fired at the metallic eyelids and the blazing black iris.

Like a stone idol, like a mountain avalanche, Tyrannosaurus fell.

END OF SOURCE

Example question - November 2018

Question 4

0 4

Focus this part of your answer on the second part of the source, from **line 31 to the end**.

A student said, 'This part of the story, where the men encounter the Tyrannosaurus Rex, shows Eckels is right to panic. The Monster is terrifying!'

To what extent do you agree?

In your response, you could:

- consider your own impressions of Eckels' reaction to the Tyrannosaurus Rex
- evaluate how the writer describes the Monster
- support your response with references to the text.

[20 marks]

What is the question asking students to do?

We've made this task accessible by providing a focus in the question and directing the student to a specific section of text, as well as providing a statement for them to consider. The intention of the statement is to prompt their thinking; giving students a starting point or a steer.

Students need to evaluate the ideas in the text. This means they are being asked to:

- evaluate the effects of the writer's methods used to convey these ideas
- support with textual references
- focus on the given statement.

The quality of the evaluation of both ideas and methods is the most important part of this question. However, the skills descriptors are obviously linked, and students can fulfil them in any order.

The challenge is for the student to maintain a critical distance. Providing a statement for them to 'judge' helps them to remain detached. They can agree, partially agree, disagree entirely – as long as their views are appropriately supported by the text. What we're looking for is a personal judgement which is informed and evidenced through references to the text. As long as they engage with the statement they're evaluating.

What skills are being looked for in the mark scheme?

The section of the mark scheme below shows the four skills descriptors and what is required at each level of the mark scheme. These remain the same for every Paper 1 Question 4.

AO4: Evaluate texts critically and support this with appropriate textual references	
Level	Skills descriptor
Level 4 Perceptive, detailed evaluation 16-20 marks	Shows perceptive and detailed evaluation: <ul style="list-style-type: none">Evaluates critically and in detail the effect(s) on the readerShows perceptive understanding of writer's methodsSelects a range of judicious textual detailDevelops a convincing and critical response to the focus of the statement
Level 3 Clear, relevant evaluation 11-15 marks	Shows clear and relevant evaluation: <ul style="list-style-type: none">Evaluates clearly the effect(s) on the readerShows clear understanding of writer's methodsSelects a range of relevant textual referencesMakes a clear and relevant response to the focus of the statement
Level 2 Some evaluation 6-10 marks	Shows some attempts at evaluation: <ul style="list-style-type: none">Makes some evaluative comment(s) on effect(s) on the readerShows some understanding of writer's methodsSelects some appropriate textual reference(s)Makes some response to the focus of the statement
Level 1 Simple, limited comment 1-5 marks	Shows simple, limited evaluation: <ul style="list-style-type: none">Makes simple, limited evaluative comment(s) on effect(s) on readerShows limited understanding of writer's methodsSelects simple, limited textual reference(s)Makes a simple, limited response to the focus of the statement
Level 0 No marks	Nothing to reward

Example Level 3 response - November 2018**Response to the question on page 9**

I agree with this statement. The writer states through Eckels' character that the Tyrannosaurus 'can't be killed'. This statement justifies Eckels' panic as they can't find a way to kill this t-rex which is portrayed to be the world's best predator by reader. This raises the stakes as they are playing with their lives as someone is going to die, either them or the T-Rex.

The writer also shows us how ineffective the weapons the human use are to the T-rex. Eckels states to us that the 'rifle in his hands seemed like a toy gun'. This statement means that weapons are ineffective to the 'armoured flesh' of the T-rex, which would also justify the panic as the weapons they believed would protect them by essentially killing the beast seems to do little to no damage on the T-rex.

The writer portrays the T-rex to us to picture. The T-rex is described to be a 'tyrant Lizard'. This description makes readers think of a power person who rules upon a land through the word tyrant, this is due to most people having an awful image of tyrants and can imagine the T-rex doing those bad thing like most tyrants. Furthermore the T-rex is described to have a breath with a stench of 'raw flesh', this implies the T-rex kills other animals and could potentially kill them.

The writer also portrays the T-rex as a monster. This is due to the fact its often referred to as 'it' in the extract. This creates a sense of fear as it's so monstrous it doesn't have a name, show in quotes such as 'it sees us!' and 'it can't be killed'. portraying it as a monster.

How do students perform on Paper 1 Question 4?

Evidence suggests that students aren't allowing enough time to show what they can do for this question. Students who can discipline themselves to time themselves effectively are at an advantage over those who don't.

Most successful responses set out their stance from the outset — providing an overview of the main points of argument and then go on to support with textual references.

There are no right or wrong answers. The more students can select evidence to formulate their views and the more they can link their ideas together with words like 'even though' and 'despite', the more considered their evaluations become and the more likely they were to achieve level 3 or above.

Those who don't do so well:

- focus on the 'what' and don't address the 'how' – there's sometimes little mention of method
- misinterpret certain vocabulary provided in the text
- offer their own speculation rather than interpretation of the text
- don't think or plan their response and start to write before they consider their own impressions.

Successful answers often take a method-based approach. Method-based answers begin with phrases such as, 'The writer used the phrase/ word ... to show how ...' and then continued with this approach throughout their answer.

In summary:

All students should be encouraged to include some discussion of the writer's methods.

Students should be reminded only to write about details within the stated lines. It's not essential to include a counter-argument, or to cover both halves of the statement. Some less able students could be more successful by focusing on a less complex approach.

Tip:

Get students to practise thinking before writing - separate the different elements of the statement, reread the source and select relevant evidence, and then draw evaluative conclusions accordingly.

Support for teaching the AO4 skills

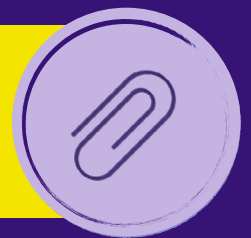
Ideas for teaching

- Encourage students to think of evaluation as the interpretation of content (the what) and analysis of method (the how) in relation to a given statement.
- Make sure students understand that they have to evaluate the 'how' as well as the 'what'.
- Encourage students not to limit themselves to the evaluation of just language and structure as methods, but also other methods relevant to the source.



Use the suggested lesson plan, classroom resources and teaching presentation in this pack

Example student responses across the grades can be found on [Centre Services](#), and we've included one in this guidance



There's a range of material for each question on every paper in the [Exampro Highlights](#) package

Embrace big ideas to help frame the response. View the *Feedback on exams 2019* course materials available on [Centre Services](#) (pages 27-31 of the presentation slides booklet)



Notes

Use this space to jot any notes, ideas or questions

Contact us

Our team of subject experts are here to help and support you as you deliver our specifications.

We're here to provide advice and respond to queries you might have to make sure you feel confident about guiding your students to fulfil their potential.

We understand the trust you put in us to provide great assessments for your students and we are committed to delivering on this.

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