

**Each exam is 2 HOURS** – Make sure you read the front of the exam paper as it suggests how long to spend on each section.

**Each exam has a READING and a WRITING section** – Section A assesses your reading and Section B, your writing.

**Remember to CHECK your answers at the end** – Have you answered every question? Have you written in enough detail? Have you met the success criteria for each task?

### **Paper 1 – Prose**

**Section A** - There will be an extract of a **story** and **four** questions.

- **Read** the extract once for **understanding**.
- Read each of the questions and **highlight the key words in the question**.
- For each question it specifies which **lines** you are to look at. '**Section off**' the text using this guidance to ensure that you only select quotes from the relevant area.
- **Focus** on exactly what the question is asking you;
  - Personal response – *What are your thoughts/ feelings..., What do you learn..., What impressions do you get...?* – your understanding or thoughts about what you have read
  - Deeper meaning – *How does..., How do...?* – reading between the lines often trying to consider themes or ideas
  - How does the writer – *How does the writer..., How effective...?* – consider the writer's techniques and their effect on the reader
  - Empathy – *Imagine ...* - put yourself in the position of the character and consider their thoughts and feelings
- Before you answer the question, **highlight the quotes** you will use – aim for them to be short and specific
- When answering the question, make sure you make **clear and distinct points**. This may be (at least) three PEE chains or embedded quotes within your explanations (more if you are aiming for the top grades)
- Aim to spend **12 and a half minutes** on answering each question.

**Section B** – Answer B1 and B2

**B1** – Writing to Describe – There will be **one** task

A good piece of descriptive writing will;

- Create an **atmosphere**, not tell a story
- **Avoid using 'I'** – this will help you to prevent your piece from becoming narrative

- Consider all **five senses** – this will help the examiner imagine the whole scene
- Use **interesting and specific vocabulary** – remember to use powerful **adjectives** and **adverbs** to help convey precise meaning
- Use **narrative devices** (similes, metaphors, onomatopoeia, alliteration, personification) to help create specific images
- Use a variety of **sentence structures** (simple, compound and complex);
  - simple sentences help add pace and tension and make the point you are making clear
  - use interesting connectives when joining ideas together in compound sentences
  - complex sentences might start with an adverb or a prepositional phrase or use an embedded subordinate clause to add interest and specific detail to your writing
- Move from **general description to specific detail** – imagine you have a camera and are ‘focusing in’ on the features of the scene.
- Have a **logical structure** and order – use paragraphing clearly to make changes in subject, person or time.

**B2** – Writing to Entertain – There will be a **choice** of tasks, select **one**.

Whether you select a title, an opening/closing sentence or a personal experience you are being assessed on your **narrative writing** skills.

A good piece of narrative writing will contain the following;

- A clear description of the **setting** – stick to the rule of **one time, one place** to ensure that you can create a place your action will take place that your reader can clearly picture. Use of all the **descriptive techniques** you are familiar with here. (It is often useful to make this your opening paragraph)
- An insight in to the **characters thoughts and feelings** – again, keep it simple and focus on one or two main characters with only limited reference to others. Use the techniques of **showing, not telling** (describing the characters facial expressions and body language) to describe how they are feeling and **rhetorical questions** to show their thoughts. (This usually occurs near the beginning of the piece and again at the end to show some kind of change or progression.)
- A clear and simple **main event** – remember you are narrating a short story and not a novel so focus on one key piece of action. Break the event down and ensure that what is happening is clear to follow.
- A **range of sentence structures** – remember, complex sentences are useful during descriptive parts whilst simple sentences build tension around the climax of your narration.
- Only **limited speech** – a conversation is much easier to understand (and to write!) if it is summarised using **reported speech**. However,

one or two key lines of **direct speech** make a real impact, especially if they obviously link to the main idea running through the piece.

- A clear **theme** – have one concept or idea at the centre of your writing and link back to this. It might be something hinted at in the task or a phrase that is repeated at key points through your writing.
- An **ending with impact** – this might be a link back to the characters emotions, a change in tone or atmosphere, a link back to the key theme or the beginning of something else.

## **Paper 2 – Media and Non Fiction**

**Section A** – There will be **two** texts and **four** questions

- **Read both** texts once for **understanding**.
- Read each of the questions and **highlight the key words in the question**.
- For each question it specifies which **text(s) and lines** you are to look at. **'Section off' the text** using this guidance to ensure that you only select quotes from the relevant area.
- **Focus** on exactly what the question is asking you;
  - Locating details – *Find...* - find facts or details and list them (this is the one question that doesn't require a PEE chain response but you can list the information as bullet points)
  - Explain and summarise – *What impression..., What does the writer say..., What attitude does the writer...?* – show understanding and explanation of what the text is about
  - How does the writer - *How does the writer..., How effective...?* – consider the writer's techniques and their effect on the reader
  - Compare two texts – *Compare..., Which of these two texts has more impact on you and why?*
- Before you answer the question, **highlight the quotes** you will use – aim for them to be short and specific
- When answering the question, make sure you make **clear and distinct points**. This may be (at least) three PEE chains or embedded quotes within your explanations (more if you are aiming for the top grades)
- Aim to spend **12 and a half minutes** on answering each question.

**Section B** – Answer B1 and B2

You will be tested on **two** of the following skills; **Writing to argue, persuade, advise** and **Writing to analyse, comment, review**.

Before you begin the question make sure you are aware of the **Form, Audience and Purpose** as well as the **Formality** of what you are being asked to write as you should always aim to adapt you writing to suit this.

Use these suggestions as a guide to help you adapt you writing;

## Letters

- **Lay out** your writing correctly - the address you are writing from on the top right, the address you are writing to below and to the left, who you are writing to (with the correct salutation) below this and followed by a comma and the start of you letter indented on the line below.
- Use the correct **salutations** – if you know who you are writing to address them by name, if not *Dear Sir or Madame* or *To whom it may concern*. This should suit the formality and the same is true for your closing.

## Leaflets

- **layout** - focus on the quality of your writing so don't try and write in columns or include pictures. However, use **headings, sub-headings** or **bullet points** where they are appropriate.

## Articles

- It will usually specify that these are to be **lively** – all this really means is that you are trying to engage the audience. You might try the following techniques to help you do this;
  - involving the reader using **'you' or 'we'**
  - using **rhetorical questions** to make the reader consider things from your point of view
  - use **rules of three** to make it catchy, particularly if you use **alliteration**
  - if the task asks you to present the argument or discuss a topic use an **either/or** statement
  - **humour**, playing on the assumed likes or dislikes of the reader, helps to establish a warm and informal tone

## Reviews

- In a similar way to articles these need to be **lively and engaging** so you may wish to use similar techniques
- Whatever it is you are going to review, you need to **explain or summarise** it as well as present the **good/bad points** and offer your **personal opinion**
- The **tone** of your piece will be dependant on whether you like or dislike the thing being reviewed (although you should mention something for each). You should use specific **language** choices to help establish this.

## Writing to Persuade

- Use **strong statements of belief** to establish your perspective. These can make effective openings but should also be used throughout the whole piece. Remember this might not always be your personal point of view you are being asked to present.
- **Rhetorical questions** show that you are trying to get the reader to think of things from your perspective. Again, they often make an effective opening. Try to use them in a specific, rather than a general way to express particular points or ideas.
- Using **facts** helps to develop and support your argument. The task you are asked to write about is often linked to the texts that you will have just read and, if this is the case you can use ideas from here. However, the examiner will not mind if your facts are inaccurate. This is also true for your use of **anecdote** or **personal experience**.
- Aim to be specific with your use of **emotive language**. Exaggerate the feelings that reflect the perspective you are writing from. Using **hyperbole** also helps with this.

## Writing to Argue

- Remember to present **both sides** of the argument
- Although you are presenting the argument in an **unbiased** way, you may draw conclusions or make suggestions in your final paragraph.
- Use **connectives** that help draw attention to the fact you are presenting different points of view such as 'on the other hand', 'some may say' and 'however'

## Writing to Advise

- Regardless of formality, adopt a tone that suggests rather than instructs your reader. Use words such as **should**, **could** and **might** to help with this.
- Again, speak directly to the reader and consider all of the techniques that help to **engage** them. (Rhetorical Questions, using 'you' and 'we'....)