

## Section A : fiction reading

You will be given 60-100 words from a 20<sup>th</sup> Century story. The story might be set in any country and might have some tricky words in it. You must read around these words and try to work out what they mean: the examiner cannot explain any words as this is a reading test.

### Advice:

Read from the top of the paper: often the examiners write useful background information that will definitely help you before you start to read the extract.

You must read methodically. Use a ruler and concentrate!  
Do **not** give up if the story seems unusual or difficult!



Carefully work out what the question actually wants you to do.

Read every question and work out:

Where – where do you have to look to find the answer? (Rule this off.)

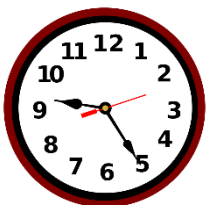
What – what is the question stem? Consider how you should approach this question to get the most ticks due to answering it really well.

Focus – what specifically is the question asking you to look closely at?



Often the questions are on different pages from the texts – so find exactly where you should be reading for each question **very carefully!**

## **Read – think – then write!**



Keep an eye on the time! Look at how many marks per question. Spend approx. 12 minutes writing a 10 mark answer.

The quality of what you write is really important! You must do every question!

## Question Types and How to Get the Best Marks.

Careful methodical reading is absolutely vital!

Use the ruler provided in the exam to ensure that you read every line really, really carefully.

Do not skim or scan for answers – this will definitely trip you up!

Revise! There are just 3 main styles of question answer on this paper so you must ensure that you definitely now how to do each one. They are:

- Search and find
- What or how
- Evaluate

To get the best marks you should revise the following tips for the Fiction Reading Paper:

### Search and find questions

When you answer these question types, the examiner is looking to see if you can read closely and pick out the exact things that answer the set question. Do not just copy long chunks of text.

Advice:

‘List’ or ‘find’ – or questions where it is obvious that you are just looking for something.

- Use bullet points
- Use enough words to make sense
- New line per idea
- Aim for 6/7 points for a 5 mark question

### ‘what’ and ‘how’ questions

When you answer these types of questions the examiner is looking to see: if you can find things in the text that answer the focus of the question; if you can comment on and analyse language, structure and punctuation; if you can show HOW/WHY the writer manages to get certain messages over to you (inference).

Advice:

Always track the text – work through it logically!

Pick out parts of the text – as a carefully copied quotation or paraphrase

Pick out + comment + analyse ( You can comment first if this is best ie C+ PO + A)

- ✓ You need to refer to the writer in your answer
- ✓ Use the question focus in your answer
- ✓ Pick out (quote or paraphrase) + comment and
  - Look at language : analyse words. (adverbs/adjectives etc)
  - Look at structure (if you can )but you can keep it simple: “At the beginning of the passage...” or “By not letting X realise Y until the end this causes...” (If you are unsure then stick to language analysis). Does dialogue tell us more? Sentence lengths for effect – what effect? Are short sentences used



to create tension or show exact feelings/thoughts? Order of events – how does this help the writer to make us realise things?

- Look at punctuation – how does this help the writer to get a certain message across?
- Look at techniques used, if you can say why they are used. Eg repetition for emphasis, exaggeration, imagery etc.

**Subject terminology** must be used to help you to be succinct and accurate! The exam mark scheme requires you to use subject terminology eg verb, adjective, imagery, simile, structure, at the beginning, exclamation mark, subordinate clause etc

### Evaluate question

This is usually the last question . It might not have the word 'evaluate' in the question but the examiners want you to do this. Often it will ask what your impression is or your views, so obviously you must use the word 'I'.

This is where the examiner wants to find out what you think *based on what you have read*.

You are showing if you have understood the plot, the situation, the characters and how they might feel. This is testing inference – what have you understood and worked out.



This question can say 'Evaluate' or maybe it might be in disguise. The question might say:

How far do you agree?

What impression do you have of?

What are your thoughts and feelings about?

How has the writer created these thoughts and feelings?

*Carefully look at the bullet points!*

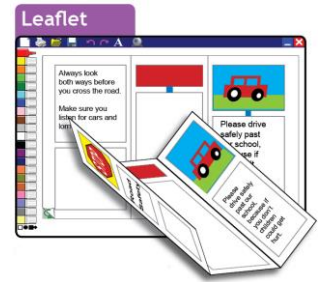
Advice:

- Always include an overview when you start your answer. Use 'the writer'...  
Eg First I think that Mrs Malby was naïve because the writer says that...
- YOU MUST USE THE WORD 'I' AND CLEARLY SHOW/EXPLAIN WHAT YOU THINK AND WHY YOU THINK IT!
- You are working out your thoughts and also must support everything that you put using the text. Use Pick out + comment AND/OR pick out + comment + analyse, depending on what you pick out and what the bullet points say.
- Always use the question in your answer as usual.
- READ this question carefully and use the parts of the text that it says to use!
- The bullet points are really important.

## Section A Non-fiction reading

You might have to read:

- An article
- Diary
- Autobiography
- Web page
- Leaflet
- Guide
- Speech
- Letter
- etc



One text will be old-fashioned (19<sup>th</sup> Century)  
One text will be modern (21<sup>st</sup> Century)

### Advice.

What to do as soon as you are able to start:

1. Read the inside of the exam paper from the very top. Here it usually tells you the text types and the writer's name (if known). Label up both texts with this information.
2. Be ready to read methodically. Get your ruler from your examination pack and use it. Do NOT skim or scan!
3. If you find unfamiliar words, read around the words and try to make it make sense in line with the rest of the meaning of the text.
4. Think about the intended audience and purpose of the text. This will help you to judge its tone.

The most important thing is that you carefully read the extract and work out:

- What is the message? What is the purpose? Why has this been written?
  - Who is it for? Is the writer being sarcastic or funny?
  - What is it actually about? Be very clear about these bullet point please!
5. **Do Where What Focus for the first question and then read and underline! BE VERY CAREFUL! MAKE SURE THAT YOU ARE USING THE RIGHT TEXT!**
  6. **Do this then for every question!**
  7. **When you write your answers, do not forget to use connectives and to use the question in the beginning of your answer.**  
[Advice points 5-7 are the same as in your fiction reading exam!]

Revise! There are just 4 main styles of question answer on this paper so you must ensure that you definitely now how to do each one. They are:

- Search and find
- What or how
- Synthesis (usually a shorter task)
- Compare (usually the last question)

To get the best marks you should revise the following tips for the Non-Fiction Reading Paper:

If the question allows you to use the phrase **the writer** in your answer, then take that opportunity! If you know the writer's surname you can use that instead!

### **Search and find questions**

When you answer these question types, the examiner is looking to see if you can read closely and pick out the exact things that answer the set question. Do not just copy long chunks of text.

Advice:

'List' or 'find' – or questions where it is obvious that you are just looking for something.

- Use bullet points
- Use enough words to make sense
- New line per idea
- Aim for 6/7 points for a 5 mark question



### **'what' and 'how' questions**

Examples of these types of questions:

- a) What impression is given of...
- b) What are your thoughts and feelings... [I think... I feel...]
- c) What's the writer's attitude...
- d) What impression do YOU get...
- e) How does the writer make you...



So:

- You need to refer to the writer in your answer (by name or as the writer)
- Use the question focus in your answer
- Look also to see if there are any bullet points as these are there to help you and must be used!

When you answer these types of questions the examiner is looking to see: if you can find things in the text that answer the focus of the question; if you can comment on and analyse language, structure and punctuation; if you can show HOW/WHY the writer manages to get certain messages over to you (inference).

Advice:

Always track the text – work through it logically!

Pick out parts of the text – as a carefully copied quotation or paraphrase

Pick out + comment + analyse ( You can comment first if this is best ie C+ PO + A)

- ✓ You need to refer to the writer in your answer
- ✓ Use the question focus in your answer
- ✓ Pick out (quote or paraphrase) + comment and
  - Look at language : analyse words. (adverbs/adjectives etc)
  - Look at structure (if you can )but you can keep it simple: “At the beginning of the passage...” or “Later the writer shows that she feels X by saying Y...” or “By not letting the reader realise Y until the end this causes...” (If you are unsure then stick to language analysis). Are anecdotes included to support points made? Visual graphs etc? Is it written in first person? Sentence lengths for effect – what effect? Are short sentences used to make direct points or to give commands? Order of events – how does this help the writer to make us realise things?
  - Look at punctuation – how does this help the writer to get a certain message across?
  - Look at techniques used, if you can say why they are used. Eg repetition for emphasis, exaggeration, imagery etc.

**Subject terminology** must be used to help you to be succinct and accurate! The exam mark scheme requires you to use subject terminology eg verb, adjective, imagery, simile, structure, at the beginning, exclamation mark, subordinate clause etc

**Synthesis** – often Q5 (or next to the last question and is sometimes worth less marks). This will need you to look at both texts!

This needs you to show that you have read something, understood it and can reorganise it so that it answers the focus of the set question.

EG What do we find out about...

Eg Explain why...

Eg Explain how...

Eg Explain what we learn about...

Advice:

This is a simple ‘pick out and comment’ answer. Use full sentences and keep the question focus in mind.

Before you answer underline on both texts. Then keep it simple. Give an overview of text 1 linked to the focus and then pick things out of the text, commenting if

necessary. THEN use a connective [However/Likewise] and then give an overview of the second text. Then pick things out and comment on them.

**YOU MUST USE BOTH TEXTS TO GET ANY MARKS!**

## Compare – the last question!

**Make sure that you leave enough time to do a good job on this question.**

This question will need you to answer about both texts. If you write just about one text you will not get any marks at all! It makes sense as you cannot compare one text to itself!

Advice:

Carefully work out the focus of the question.

Underline key things in both texts that answer the set question.

ASK YOURSELF: are these texts making the same points or different ones. Make sure that you get this clearly in your head!

Read – think – plan – write!

Begin by writing an overview about both texts.

- ✓ Clearly make your first point. Then say how you know this point. [PO+ C+A] Use a connective [However/Likewise] and then make a point from the second text that shows that it is the same or different from your first point about text 1. Say how you know this!

PO+C+A – Connective –PO+C+A

- ✓ Repeat this process again and again!