Grade 9

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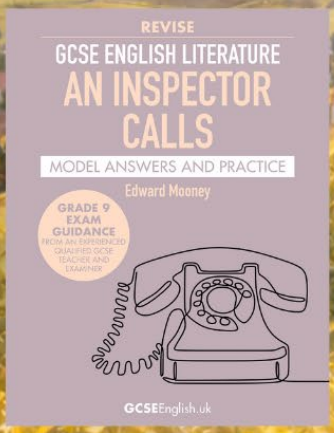

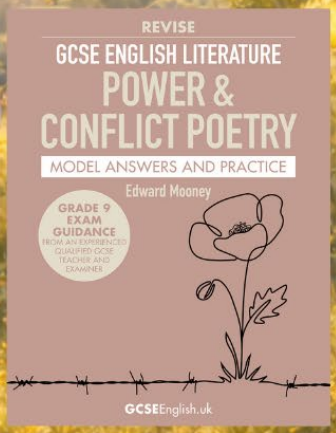

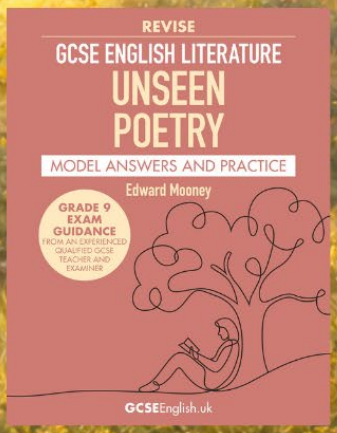

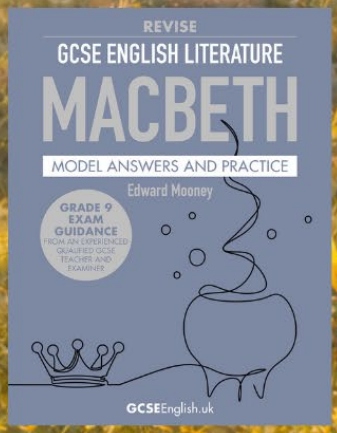

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Contents

GCSE English Literature essay task on *Macbeth*: ambition **4**

GCSE English Literature essay task on *A Christmas Carol*: Scrooge as an outsider..... **9**

GCSE English Literature essay task on *Jekyll and Hyde*: Mr Hyde as a frightening outsider **14**

GCSE English Literature essay task on *An Inspector Calls*: Mrs Birling as an unlikeable character **20**

GCSE English Literature essay task on *Power and Conflict Poetry*: the effects of war **25**

GCSE English Literature essay task on *Love and Relationships Poetry*: strong connections between people..... **30**

GCSE English Literature essay task on *Unseen Poetry*: growing up **35**

GCSE English Language Creative Story writing task: a story set by the sea **41**

GCSE English Language Description writing task: a journey by bus **47**

GCSE English Language Non-Fiction writing task: an article about homework **52**

Edexcel International GCSE English Language Specification A P1 Q4 Task..... **57**

GCSE English Literature essay task on *Macbeth*: ambition

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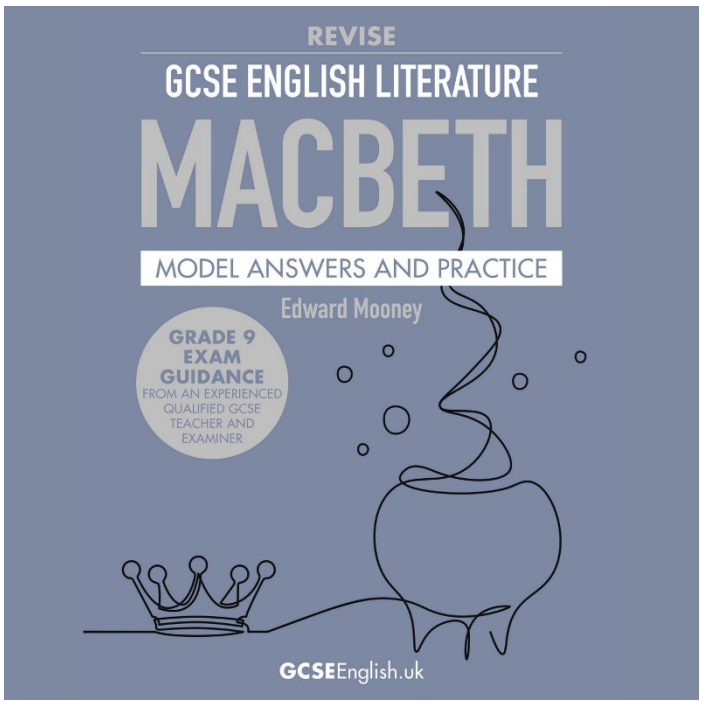

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Read the following extract from Act 1 Scene 5 of *Macbeth* and then answer the question that follows.

At this point in the play, Lady Macbeth is speaking. She has just read Macbeth's letter telling her about his meeting with the three witches.

LADY MACBETH
Glamis thou art, and Cawdor, and shalt be
What thou art promis'd; yet do I fear thy nature,
It is too full o'th'milk of human kindness
To catch the nearest way. Thou wouldst be great,
Art not without ambition, but without
The illness should attend it. What thou wouldst highly,
That wouldst thou holily; wouldst not play false,
And yet wouldst wrongly win. Thou'dst have, great Glamis,
That which cries, 'Thus thou must do' if thou have it;
And that which rather thou dost fear to do,
Than wishest should be undone. Hie thee hither,
That I may pour my spirits in thine ear
And chastise with the valour of my tongue
All that impedes thee from the golden round,
Which fate and metaphysical aid doth seem
To have thee crown'd withal.

Starting with this speech, explore how Shakespeare presents ambition in *Macbeth*.

Write about:

- how Shakespeare presents ambition in this speech
- how Shakespeare presents ambition in the play as a whole.

[34 marks]

Full model *Macbeth* essay on ambition

In *Macbeth*, Shakespeare presents ambition as the tragic flaw that causes Macbeth's downfall. In the extract, Lady Macbeth questions Macbeth's *lack* of ambition and she resolves to persuade him to seize the throne. Later, Shakespeare shows how Macbeth's ambition is encouraged by the Witches' prophecies and by his own desire for power as we see him transformed from a loyal subject, to a murderous tyrant, to a defeated usurper. Performed before King James VI and I in 1606, the play suggests, presumably to the satisfaction of the king, that ambitious rebels against divinely appointed kings should expect gruesome punishment.

In Lady Macbeth's soliloquy, Shakespeare presents ambition as something that Macbeth lacks, suggesting that Lady Macbeth aims to manipulate Macbeth to take action. Alone, Lady Macbeth speaks her true thoughts aloud, fearing that Macbeth is "too full o'th'milk of human kindness to catch the nearest way" to the throne (1.5.16-17). The milk symbolism is an insult, suggesting that Lady Macbeth feels that her husband is too feminine. Ambition, here, is clearly linked to ideas about masculinity and the original audience may well have been shocked to see a female character transgressing traditional stereotypes of female behaviour. Lady Macbeth then argues that ambition requires "illness", in order to bear fruit (1.5.19). She appears to believe that masculine cruelty is necessary to be great and, indeed, later calls on supernatural power to "unsex" (1.5.40) her and make her cruel. This is perhaps an echo of Machiavelli's notorious advice to princes that vice should be used in order to get and retain power. Lady Macbeth concludes by resolving to give Macbeth her qualities through the power of her rhetoric: "I may pour my spirits in thine ear." (1.5.25) The metaphor presents persuasion as a fluid, filling Macbeth's head with something unnatural and deadly.

Although Lady Macbeth dismisses Macbeth's lack of ambition, Shakespeare presents ambition as an important motivation for Macbeth. Soon after meeting the Witches, Banquo notices that Macbeth is "rapt" (1.3.55 and 1.3.141). Macbeth seems to be already imagining his royal future. Later, when Duncan proclaims Malcom as his heir, Macbeth reveals his "black and deep desires" (1.4.51). Whispering to himself, he uses imagery of darkness to emphasise how disturbing his ambition is and to reveal his plan to "overleap" (1.4.48-49) Malcolm. This access to Macbeth's thoughts sets up a dramatically ironic scene where Macbeth simultaneously proclaims his loyalty and signals his treachery. However, Macbeth is never firm in his resolve and almost abandons the murder noting that his "vaulting ambition o'erleaps itself." (1.7.27-28) Here he imagines ambition as a horse failing to jump a fence. This wavering is ended

by Lady Macbeth's mockery ("Wouldst thou…live a coward?" [1.7.41-43]) and we see that, without her ambition, Macbeth's ambition may have withered away. This reflects the source, *The Chronicles of Scotland*, in which the killing of Duncan is a product of both Macbeth's ambition and Lady Macbeth's "unquenchable desire" to be queen (p102).

Shakespeare later presents ambition as a character flaw that causes Macbeth's downfall. Upon becoming king, Macbeth mourns his "fruitless crown." (3.1.62). This ambition to father a dynasty, expressed using metaphors of infertility, causes him to plot to have Banquo and his son Fleance, prophesied by the witches to "get kings" (1.3.65), killed. Their continued existence eats away at Macbeth and he exclaims: "full of scorpions is my mind." (3.2.36) This metaphor suggests that Macbeth is poisoned by his ambition and that it is causing him pain and indeed, when Macbeth learns that Fleance has escaped he cries out: "then comes my fit again." (3.4.21) This is the beginning of Macbeth's downfall. Later, as the army advances, Macbeth reaches a moment of nihilistic realisation proclaiming that life is "a tale told by an idiot…signifying nothing." (5.5.25-27) Shakespeare shows that ambition leads only to destruction and meaninglessness. The arrival of the rightful heir represents a return to the correct "measure, time and place," (5.9.40) and perhaps reflects contemporary discussions about the Divine Right of Kings; Macbeth's ambition causes him to outrage God and he receives his just punishment.

Thus, in *Macbeth*, Shakespeare presents ambition as a disruptive force that undermines duty and loyalty, usurps legitimate leaders and leads, ultimately, to the just death of the usurper. Moreover, ambition is presented as an illness and as a character flaw that brings about the tragic hero's destruction. Then, as in many other tragedies, a new equilibrium of peace and good order dawns. Though twenty-first century audiences may have a more positive view of ambition, the play still resonates as a powerful depiction of how *excessive* ambition and absolute power can corrupt previously virtuous people.

Macbeth Essay Writing Checklist

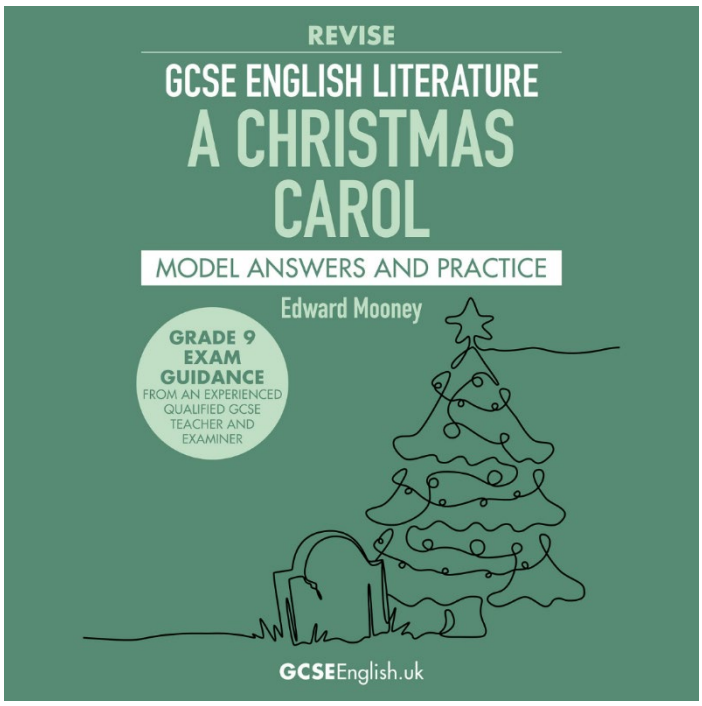
As you read, check how many of the recommendations below are followed by the essay. Then, use the checklist to help you write your own essay.

Remember that these are *recommendations* from an experienced teacher, not *requirements*. Allow them to help and guide you, but don't allow them to trap you; if you have a different idea and feel confident about it, then give it a go!

- ☐ Use wording of question in answer – "Shakespeare presents."
- ☐ Use Intro and Conclusion to help structure essay as argument.
- ☐ Use topic sentences to open each main paragraph.
- ☐ Close focus on extract.
- ☐ Focus on elsewhere in the play.
- ☐ Use short, precise quotations to support interpretations.
- ☐ Close analysis of language, especially aspects of poetry.
- ☐ Close analysis of form, especially aspects of performance.
- ☐ Close analysis of text structure, especially aspects of tragedy.
- ☐ Refer to effect on audience.
- ☐ Use relevant subject terminology.
- ☐ Connect to context when text was written, where relevant: Jacobean era.
- ☐ Connect to context when text is set, where relevant: early medieval Scotland.
- ☐ Connect to literary context, where relevant: history of the genre of tragedy.
- ☐ Connect to original and 21st century audience context, where relevant.
- ☐ Focus on minor character(s), where relevant.
- ☐ Use accurate spelling, punctuation and grammar.
- ☐ Write c450-c750 words.

GCSE English Literature essay task on *A Christmas Carol*: Scrooge as an outsider

Please find below a Grade 9 model essay on *A Christmas Carol*, just one of the many in the complete book available now on GCSEEnglish.uk and Amazon.



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Read the following extract from Chapter 1 of *A Christmas Carol* and then answer the question that follows.

In this extract, Scrooge is being introduced to the reader.

External heat and cold had little influence on Scrooge. No warmth could warm, no wintry weather chill him. No wind that blew was bitterer than he, no falling snow was more intent upon its purpose, no pelting rain less open to entreaty. Foul weather didn't know where to have him. The heaviest rain, and snow, and hail, and sleet, could boast of the advantage over him in only one respect. They often "came down" handsomely, and Scrooge never did.

Nobody ever stopped him in the street to say, with gladsome looks, "My dear Scrooge, how are you? When will you come to see me?" No beggars implored him to bestow a trifle, no children asked him what it was o'clock, no man or woman ever once in all his life inquired the way to such and such a place, of Scrooge. Even the blind men's dogs appeared to know him; and when they saw him coming on, would tug their owners into doorways and up courts; and then would wag their tails as though they said, "No eye at all is better than an evil eye, dark master!"

But what did Scrooge care! It was the very thing he liked. To edge his way along the crowded paths of life, warning all human sympathy to keep its distance, was what the knowing ones call "nuts" to Scrooge.

Starting with this extract, how does Dickens present Scrooge as an outsider to society?

Write about:

- how Dickens presents Scrooge in this extract
- how Dickens presents Scrooge as an outsider to society in the novel as a whole.

[30 marks]

Full model *A Christmas Carol* essay on Scrooge as an outsider

In A Christmas Carol, Dickens presents Scrooge as an outsider who has prioritised love of money over love for friends and family. As a result, Scrooge lives a life completely detached from society. Dickens shows how ghostly intervention reveals to Scrooge how his isolation and greed will lead to eternal punishment, and the end of the novel presents him seeking out family and friends, no longer an outsider. As an allegory of Christian sin and redemption, Dickens emphasises the importance of love and connection with wider society, rejecting the cold grasping individualism of Victorian London.

In the extract, Dickens presents Scrooge as proudly choosing to be an outsider. His body is somehow inhuman, unaffected by changes in external temperature and "bitterer" and "less open" (p34) than the harshest weather. This imagery, emphasised by anaphora, the repetition of "no," (p34) suggests that Scrooge is machine-like, a force stronger than winter, eclipsing the power of extreme weather conditions in his single-minded pursuit of wealth. Dickens then goes on to show how even animals recoil from Scrooge, further emphasising his position as an outsider. A guide dog is imagined addressing Scrooge as "dark master" with an "evil eye." (p34) This implies that Scrooge is seen by others as a powerful devil creature motivated by evil. The dog drags his owner away, suggesting that wider society needs to be protected from this malevolent outsider. Dickens' original readers, many reading this as a family on Christmas Eve, would similarly recoil from this devil outsider, preferring instead the love and conviviality of Christmas. Subsequently, Dickens shows that Scrooge takes perverse joy in being rejected by society, shunning "the crowded paths of life." (p35) The metaphor presents life as an exciting journey with companions. Scrooge, by comparison, is presented as choosing to lurk at the edges, an outsider sticking to the shadows.

Later, Dickens shows how Scrooge's outsider status causes him to be unloved. The first spirit shows Scrooge "his poor forgotten self," (p58) alone at school over Christmas, causing a dramatic reaction: "Scrooge…wept." (p58) This imagery shows how quickly Scrooge is learning the Ghost's lesson, as he responds with genuine emotion when confronted with the isolation his younger self endured. Dickens shows that this earlier isolation was not Scrooge's choice but, later, Dickens presents Scrooge making a decision that further entrenches his isolation. His fiancée is shown

breaking off their engagement due to her fears that she has been displaced by a "golden" "idol." (p65) This alludes to the Bible story of the Israelites' rejection of God in favour of worshipping a golden calf. Victorian readers would have well understood the implication: Scrooge's decision to pursue money rather than love is as grotesque a sin as the decision to break God's Commandments, deserving of extreme punishment. Later, Dickens shows the final spirit confronting Scrooge with the reactions of his business acquaintances to his death. They call him "Old Scratch," (p97) a euphemism for the devil, before immediately changing the subject to the weather. This conversation suggests that Scrooge's decision to be an outsider to society means he will be un-mourned after death if he does not change his ways.

By the end of the novel, however, Dickens shows how Scrooge sheds his outsider status to re-connect with friends and family. Upon waking, Scrooge cries out festive greetings, "giddy as a drunken man." (p111) The simile shows how changed Scrooge is, suggesting that his new happiness and desire to connect with others is an intoxication. Next, Dickens presents Scrooge's plan to gift a turkey to the Cratchits, showing how Scrooge repeatedly "chuckle[s]" (p113) as the plan unfolds. Dickens regularly uses laughter in the novel as a sign of good will and the fact that Scrooge is now laughing heartily shows that he is no longer a hated outsider. The novel climaxes with Scrooge's decision to accept the previously rejected invitation to celebrate Christmas with his nephew. Dickens presents the "wonderful games, wonderful unanimity, won-der-ful happiness!" (p115) The anaphora in this exclamation emphasises the Christmas joy the family feels and shows that Scrooge has rejected his outsider isolation in favour of love and a sense of togetherness. Versions of this scene are evident across Dickens' Christmas writings, showing that Dickens sought to encourage a revival of traditional Christmas celebrations based on community and togetherness rather than the atomised lives led by wealthy, greedy people like Scrooge.

Thus, Dickens portrays Scrooge as a miserly outsider who rejects people and is rejected by them. His outsider status, exacerbated by his misanthropy and greed, is presented as being responsible for the suffering of others. However, Dickens presents a journey of redemption: the old sinner is reformed and vows to lead a better life. Readers, then, are encouraged to consider our relationships with others and to aim to be true to the convivial, benevolent spirit of Christmas.

A Christmas Carol Essay Writing Checklist

As you read, check how many of the recommendations below are followed by the essay. Then, use the checklist to help you write your own essay.

Remember that these are *recommendations* from an experienced teacher, not *requirements*. Allow them to help and guide you, but don't allow them to restrict you; if you have a different idea and feel confident about it, then give it a go!

- ☐ Use wording of question in answer – "Dickens presents."
- ☐ Use Intro and Conclusion to help structure essay as argument.
- ☐ Use topic sentences to open each main paragraph.
- ☐ Close focus on extract.
- ☐ Focus on elsewhere in the novel.
- ☐ Use short, precise quotations to support interpretations.
- ☐ Close analysis of language.
- ☐ Close analysis of form.
- ☐ Close analysis of text structure.
- ☐ Refer to effect on reader.
- ☐ Use relevant subject terminology.
- ☐ Connect to context when text was written: early Victorian era.
- ☐ Connect to context when text is set: early Victorian era.
- ☐ Connect to literary context: history of the Christmas ghost story genre.
- ☐ Connect to original and 21st century audience context.
- ☐ Focus on minor character(s).
- ☐ Use accurate spelling, punctuation and grammar.
- ☐ Write c450-c750 words.

GCSE English Literature essay task on *Jekyll and Hyde*: Mr Hyde as a frightening outsider

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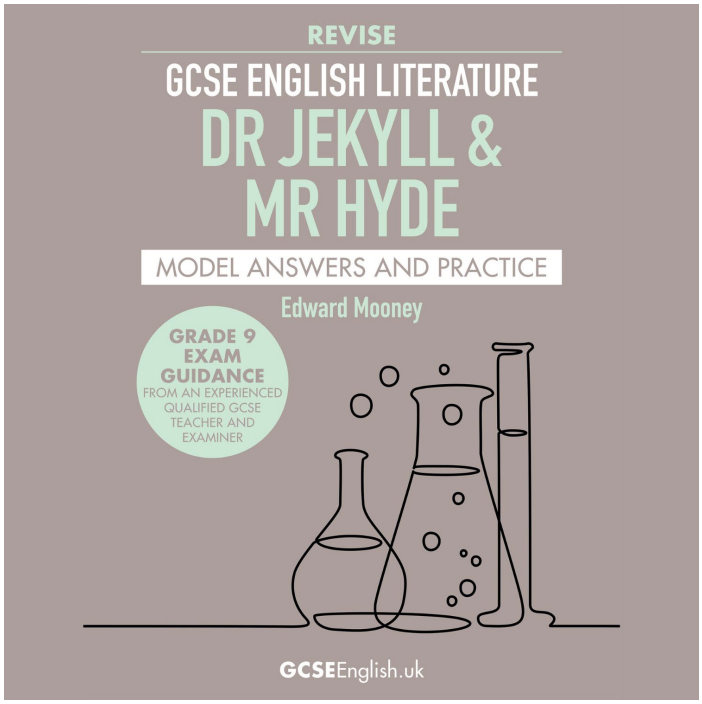

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Read the following extract from Chapter 2 (Search for Mr Hyde) of *The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* and then answer the question that follows.

In this extract Mr Utterson has just met Mr Hyde for the first time.

"We have common friends," said Mr Utterson.

"Common friends!" echoed Mr Hyde, a little hoarsely. "Who are they?"

"Jekyll, for instance," said the lawyer.

"He never told you," cried Mr Hyde, with a flush of anger. "I did not think you would have lied.'"

"Come," said Mr Utterson, "that is not fitting language."

The other snarled aloud into a savage laugh; and the next moment, with extraordinary quickness, he had unlocked the door and disappeared into the house.

The lawyer stood awhile when Mr Hyde had left him, the picture of disquietude. Then he began slowly to mount the street, pausing every step or two and putting his hand to his brow like a man in mental perplexity. The problem he was thus debating as he walked was one of a class that is rarely solved. Mr Hyde was pale and dwarfish; he gave an impression of deformity without any nameable malformation, he had a displeasing smile, he had borne himself to the lawyer with a sort of murderous mixture of timidity and boldness, and he spoke with a husky whispering and somewhat broken voice, – all these were points against him; but not all of these together could explain the hitherto unknown disgust, loathing and fear with which Mr Utterson regarded him. "There must be something else," said the perplexed gentleman. "There is something more, if I could find a name for it. God bless me, the man seems hardly human! Something troglodytic, shall we say? Or can it be the old story of Dr Fell? Or is it the mere radiance of a foul soul that thus transpires through, and transfigures, its clay continent? The last, I think; for, O my poor old Harry Jekyll, if ever I read Satan's signature upon a face, it is on that of your new friend!"

Starting with this extract, how does Stevenson present Mr Hyde as a frightening outsider?

Write about:

- how Stevenson presents Mr Hyde in this extract
- how Stevenson presents Mr Hyde as a frightening outsider in the novel as a whole.

[30 marks]

Full model *Jekyll and Hyde* essay on Mr Hyde as a frightening outsider

In *Jekyll and Hyde*, Stevenson shows how Hyde's immoral behaviour leads those he encounters to reject him as a frightening outsider. Utterson, in particular, is repulsed by Hyde but struggles to understand exactly why. His choice of language betrays his disgust and shows that he feels Hyde is an outsider, taking advantage, he believes, of that pillar of the establishment, Dr Jekyll. Ultimately, we learn that Hyde is in fact Dr Jekyll and is, therefore, an 'insider', leaving us with the troubling sense that even ostensibly respectable people may hide shocking secrets.

In the extract, Stevenson presents Utterson reacting with fright and disgust at his first meeting with Hyde. Their meeting ends with Hyde "snarl[ing]…a savage laugh," (p11) a sneering response to Utterson's condemnation of Hyde's 'un-gentlemanly' attitude. The metaphor suggests that Hyde is a wild animal and also echoes Victorian prejudices about Indigenous peoples, who were dismissed as 'uncivilised' 'savages'. After the encounter, Utterson strives to understand his viscerally negative reaction to Hyde, who he feels is "deform[ed]." (p12) Utterson's use of pseudo-scientific terminology shows that he believes Hyde must be disabled somehow, again betraying his prejudices, leading him to use a tricolon to emphasise his "disgust, loathing and fear." (p12) Stevenson then shows Utterson's ruminations continuing as he bombards himself with questions, wondering if Hyde is variously "hardly human," "troglodytic," or a "foul soul" marked by "Satan." (p12) Utterson is grasping desperately for an explanation, wondering if Hyde is inhuman, or an 'unevolved' cave-dweller, or a servant of the devil. All show that Utterson comprehensively rejects Hyde, believing him to be a sinful outsider who cannot be tolerated in 'civilised' society.

Earlier in the novel, Stevenson presents Enfield's shocked testimony which immediately positions Hyde as an outsider figure. Enfield narrates Hyde, "like some damned Juggernaut," (p5) trampling over a young girl. The simile others Hyde, associating him with a Hindu festival and suggesting that he is somehow exotic and dangerous, a non-Christian outsider in a generally Christian society. As with Utterson, Enfield's Euro-centric prejudices, widespread in the Victorian era at the height of European imperialism, are clear, and he continues to display them when he describes Hyde's "black sneering coolness" (p5) and contrasts him with Dr Jekyll who is "the very pink of the proprieties." (p6) The colour imagery sets up a pattern of dark and light contrasts in the novel and also suggests that Enfield reacts to Hyde as a racial inferior, someone to be feared and condemned. Moreover, Stevenson uses the

setting of Victorian London to emphasise Hyde's outsider status. Enfield remarks that the location of Hyde's crime is "sinister" and "sordid." (p4) Later, Hyde's dwelling is presented, through a dirty London fog, as a "blackguardly" (p17) slum. The fearful atmosphere echoes the traditions of Gothic literature, placing Hyde alongside Frankenstein's creature, both of whom are man-made frightening outsiders, despised and feared by their creators.

Stevenson eventually reveals that Hyde is simultaneously a frightening outsider *and* the respected 'insider', Dr Jekyll. Hyde is presented as killing "with ape-like fury" (p16) the "beautiful" (p15) Sir Danvers Carew MP. The simile again presents Hyde as an unevolved human, reflecting the late-Victorian fascination with Darwin's theory of evolution, suggesting that Hyde is more 'primitive' than 'civilised' humans. Moreover, the contrast of Hyde with an MP emphasises how Hyde's behaviour, previously affecting only impoverished outsiders, is now threatening people at the pinnacle of Victorian society – the outsider is closing in on the 'insiders'. Stevenson then presents Dr Lanyon's witnessing of Hyde's transformation into Dr Jekyll. Hyde calls the transformation an act to "stagger the unbelief of Satan." (p40) Again, the devil is invoked, suggesting Hyde's activities are evil. Indeed, Hyde seems to believe he is more powerful than Satan and revels in his unholy powers. Dr Jekyll later reveals the frightening truth – that he sought to escape the life of a "discontented doctor" (p49) and experience the "liberty" and "glee" (p49) of "depravity." (p46) Though he attempts to give a veneer of scientific respectability to his 'research', we realise that Dr Jekyll seems simply to be driven by a desire to 'go wild'. Perhaps, the truly frightening revelation, then, is that Dr Jekyll chose, *repeatedly*, to be the outsider Hyde, despite knowing the terrible truth of Hyde's actions.

Thus, Stevenson presents a wealthy establishment man taking on the guise of a frightening outsider in order to satisfy his taste for criminal pleasures. The novel, therefore, condemns the hypocrisy of those who use their riches to indulge in behaviour they would otherwise denounce as immoral. Ultimately, perhaps the most frightening aspect of the novel is the suggestion that we will always struggle to know for sure who anyone really is, behind the smiles and the carefully curated public exterior.

Jekyll and Hyde Essay Writing Checklist

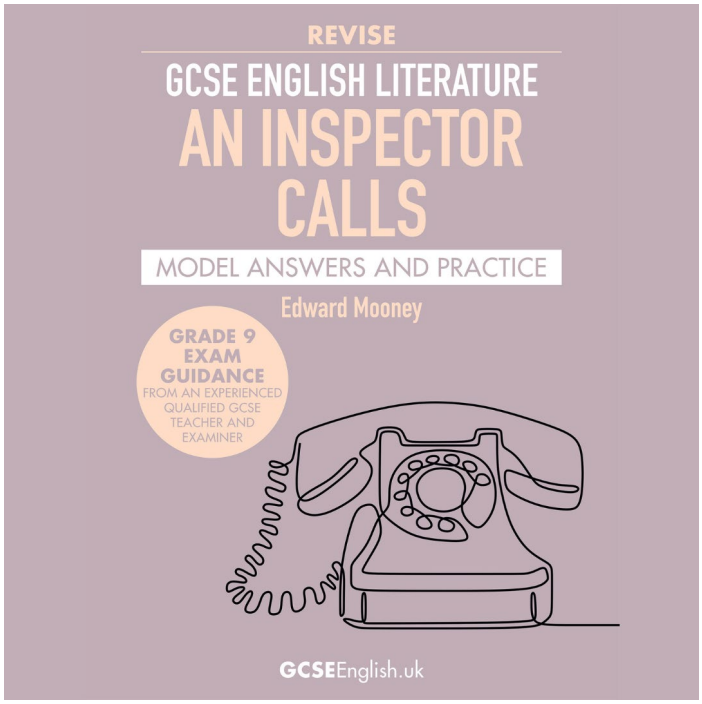
As you read, check how many of the recommendations below are followed by the essay. Then, use the checklist to help you write your own essay.

Remember that these are *recommendations* from an experienced teacher, not *requirements*. Allow them to help and guide you, but don't allow them to restrict you; if you have a different idea and feel confident about it, then give it a go!

- ☐ Use wording of question in answer – "Stevenson presents."
- ☐ Use Intro and Conclusion to help structure essay as argument.
- ☐ Use topic sentences to open each main paragraph.
- ☐ Close focus on extract.
- ☐ Focus on elsewhere in the novel.
- ☐ Use short, precise quotations to support interpretations.
- ☐ Close analysis of language.
- ☐ Close analysis of form.
- ☐ Close analysis of text structure.
- ☐ Refer to effect on reader.
- ☐ Use relevant subject terminology.
- ☐ Connect to context when text was written, where relevant: late-Victorian era.
- ☐ Connect to context when text is set, where relevant: late-Victorian era.
- ☐ Connect to literary context, where relevant: history of the Gothic genre.
- ☐ Connect to original and 21st century audience context, where relevant.
- ☐ Focus on minor character(s), where relevant.
- ☐ Use accurate spelling, punctuation and grammar.
- ☐ Write c450-c750 words.

GCSE English Literature essay task on *An Inspector Calls*: Mrs Birling as an unlikeable character

Please find below a Grade 9 model essay on *An Inspector Calls*, just one of the many in the complete book available now on GCSEEnglish.uk and Amazon.



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How far does Priestley present Mrs Birling as an unlikeable character?

Write about:

- what Mrs Birling says and does in the play
- how Priestley presents her by the ways he writes.

[34 marks]

Full model *An Inspector Calls* essay on Mrs Birling as an unlikeable character

In *An Inspector Calls*, Priestley presents Mrs Birling as an intensely unlikeable character. She is cold-hearted and snobbish and refuses to accept any blame her for her role in Eva Smith's death. Her eager reaction to the possibility that the Inspector may not exist shows how ready she is to reject his message and continue living her life as before. Priestley presents her as an archetypal wealthy Edwardian woman who chooses to ignore the exploitation that enables her to live a life of leisure.

Early in the play, Priestley creates a first impression of Mrs Birling as that of a cold, unlikeable snob. As the dinner party progresses, we see her demonstrating her sense of superiority. She speaks "reproachfully" (p2) to her socially inferior husband, reminding him of the correct etiquette she expects of him, while also giving instructions to Edna, the parlourmaid, and being referred to as "Ma'am" (p2) by her. This honorific demonstrates the strict hierarchy of the Birlings' household and shows that Mrs Birling works to police it, and to maintain her position at its pinnacle. Priestley then shows Mrs Birling's cold-hearted advice to her daughter, as she patronisingly chides her for having high expectations of her fiancé: "men with important work… spend nearly all their time… on their business." (p3) Mrs Birling feels that Sheila should passively accept that her future husband will pay her little attention because, she believes, a man's role is primarily one of business. The audience, on the other hand, may instead correctly interpret the revelation that Gerald was absent for a long period as a sign that he is not to be trusted.

Later in the play, Priestley further emphasises Mrs Birling's unlikability through her adamant refusal to accept any blame for Eva Smith's death. Initially, Mrs Birling dismisses Eva's suicide as something expected of "girls of that class–." (p30) Sheila's interruption saves Mrs Birling from fully revealing the depths of her contempt for lower-class people but the audience can infer that Mrs Birling believes herself to be better, morally and intellectually, than people like Eva. Priestley then presents Mrs Birling's stubborn reaction to the Inspector's accusation that she instructed the committee to refuse Eva charity. She reacts with a "stung" (p44) tone and boldly declares "I've done nothing wrong." (p44) Mrs Birling is correct in a legal sense – she has broken no law. However, her refusal to accept any moral responsibility shows her cold-hearted nature. Later, Priestley shows how the Inspector adroitly leads the unwitting Mrs Birling to denounce her son as she agrees with the Inspector that the father of the unborn child, her grandchild, would "be entirely responsible." (p48) Her need to pin all the blame on someone who, she assumes, is a lower-class nobody

shows how uncaring she is and demonstrates that distancing the family from scandal is more important to her than improving the lives of people in distress.

Finally, Priestley confirms Mrs Birling's unlikability by showing how unwilling she is to change. After the Inspector's exit, Priestley presents Mrs Birling's alacrity in welcoming the possibility that the Inspector might not be real, dismissing Sheila and Eric's misgivings as "childish." (p59) Here, Mrs Birling emphasises the family hierarchy and rejects her children's remorse, noting, correctly, that they seem to be on the Inspector's side rather than their own parents. Priestley then presents Mrs Birling attempting to find a way to cover up "this business quietly and sensibly" (p63) implying that, for Mrs Birling, a 'sensible' approach is the one that best exonerates them. Priestley then shows how completely Mrs Birling is willing to wash her hands of Eva. She sneeringly calls Sheila and Eric "over-tired," (p71) opining that "in the morning they'll be as amused as we are." (p71) Again, she uses infantilising language about her adult children, suggesting they are naïve. Mrs Birling clearly hopes the play will end with laughter all round, but the telephone call, we can imagine, turns her laughter to despair and the audience realises that this unlikeable character may be getting her comeuppance after all.

Thus, Priestley shows that the unlikeable Mrs Birling does not progress as a character, choosing instead to remain loyal to her husband and his view of the way the world works. Like him, she does not accept that she has any responsibility to her wider community and looks out only for herself and her family, even going so far as to use her so-called charity work as a vehicle for maintaining her status and punishing those she deems undeserving. Priestley suggests that she, and other similarly selfish people, were deservedly punished by the Great War and subsequent upheavals, paving the way for the younger generation to enact radical change for the better.

An Inspector Calls Essay Writing Checklist

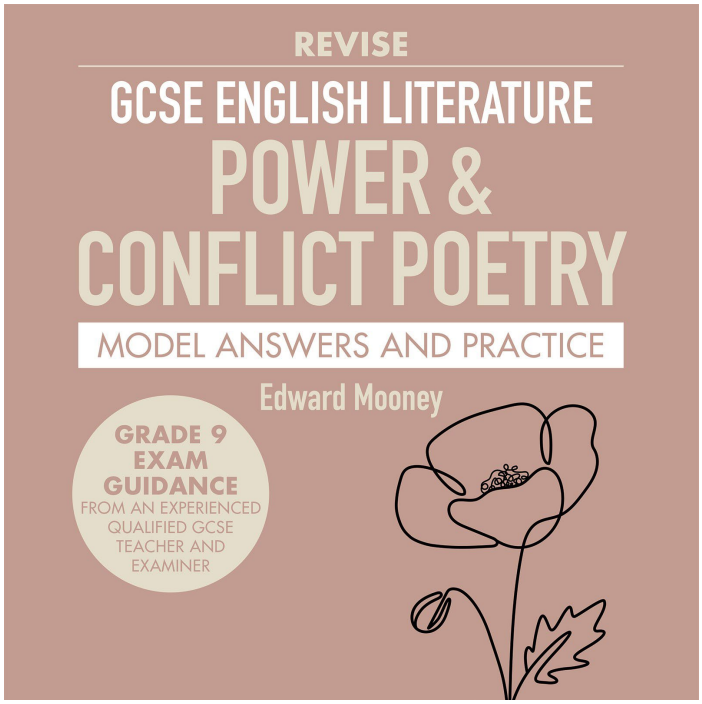
As you read, check how many of the recommendations below are followed in the essay. Then, use the checklist to help you write your own essay.

Remember that these are *recommendations* from an experienced teacher, not *requirements*. Allow them to help and guide you, but don't allow them to restrict you; if you have a different idea and feel confident about it, give it a go!

- ☐ Use wording of question in answer – "Priestley presents."
- ☐ Use Intro and Conclusion to help structure essay as argument.
- ☐ Use topic sentences to open each main paragraph.
- ☐ Close focus on early parts of the play.
- ☐ Close focus on ending of the play.
- ☐ Use short, precise quotations to support interpretations.
- ☐ Close analysis of language.
- ☐ Close analysis of form, especially aspects of performance.
- ☐ Close analysis of text structure, especially the role of the ending.
- ☐ Refer to effect on audience.
- ☐ Use relevant subject terminology.
- ☐ Connect to context when text was written, where relevant: 1945.
- ☐ Connect to context when text is set, where relevant: 1912.
- ☐ Connect to literary context, where relevant: well-made play.
- ☐ Connect to original and 21st century audience context, where relevant.
- ☐ Focus on minor character(s), where relevant.
- ☐ Use accurate spelling, punctuation and grammar.
- ☐ Write c450-c750 words.

GCSE English Literature essay task on *Power and Conflict Poetry*: the effects of war

Please find below a Grade 9 model essay on *Power and Conflict* poetry, just one of the many in the complete book available to buy now on GCSEEnglish.uk and Amazon.



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Compare how poets present the effects of war in 'Bayonet Charge' and in **one** other poem from 'Power and conflict'.

[30 marks]

Possible pairings:

- 'The Charge of the Light Brigade'
- 'Exposure'
- 'Storm on the Island'
- 'Remains'
- 'Poppies'
- 'War Photographer'
- 'Tissue'
- 'The Émigrée'
- 'Kamikaze'

Full model *Power and Conflict Poetry* essay on the effects of war

In 'Bayonet Charge' and in 'The Émigrée,' Hughes and Rumens present lives changed utterly by war. Hughes portrays a soldier undergoing a crisis of conscience, suddenly questioning his reasons for fighting. Rumens portrays not a perpetrator of war but a victim, someone exiled from their now-defunct homeland by the chaos of revolution. Both poets aim to show how war can affect body and mind and leave wounds that last long beyond the armistice.

Hughes shows the brutalising effects of war. An infantryman awakes "suddenly" to find himself "stumbling...towards a green hedge that dazzled with rifle fire." The *in medias res* opening emphasises the soldier's shock and disorientation as he runs towards a faceless enemy. The third-person soldier is unnamed, distancing us from him but also allowing him to represent every soldier struggling to survive the Great War. By comparison, Rumens presents the effects of war on a civilian. The speaker, speaking in the first-person, creating a sense of immediacy and intimacy, speaks of her "sunlight-clear" memories of the country she fled as a child. Though memories usually fade, for this speaker the memories seem to burn bright. The country is not named which creates a sense of universality; the *émigrée* perhaps represents the experiences of all people displaced by war.

Hughes then shows the effects of how war is often justified. The soldier's motivation is symbolised by a "patriotic tear." However, the tear "had brimmed", and now there is "sweating like molten iron" in his chest. The simile replaces the abstraction of patriotism with liquid metal, suggesting that king and country, used in wartime recruitment efforts, have been replaced by pain and fear. By contrast, Rumens presents the *émigrée's* love for her country remaining strong in exile. The speaker is "branded by an impression of sunlight," suggesting the memory is physically marked on her body, rendering ephemeral memory permanent. Moreover, the extension of the earlier sunlight imagery creates a contrast between the dark present and the happier memories of youth, perhaps suggesting the importance of patriotism for keeping hope alive among *émigrés* forced from war-damaged cities.

Hughes then presents war causing a crisis of conscience. The soldier slows to ponder his place in the "cold clockwork of the stars and the nations." This moment leads to the end of the poem's extended first sentence, the created caesura emphasising the soldier's bewilderment. The metaphor presents war as a device controlled by national leaders, exploiting soldiers as cogs in the war machine, perhaps reflecting

the 'domino effect' of ultimatums that led to war in 1914. Similarly, Rumens shows how war affects the minds and identities of its victims. Defiantly, the speaker celebrates her now-banned language: "I can't get it off my tongue. It tastes of sunlight." Again, the speaker juxtaposes imagery of sunlight with the forces of state repression. The language is all she retains of her home country, and she savours it like a delicious cultural delicacy just as is common among *émigré* communities where language is a centripetal force that holds the exiles together.

As the poems climax, the poets show how war leads to life-changing realisations. Hughes' soldier, startled by a hare, the only other living creature in no man's land, runs; as he runs, he replaces traditional motivations for war, echoes of Great War propaganda, with his own desperate need to survive: "King, honour, human dignity, etcetera dropped like luxuries." The simile suggests these motivations are weights holding the soldier back, an un-ending list of frivolous items that must be discarded in the leap for survival. Similarly, Rumens shows the émigrée realising that she can never go back: "they accuse…they circle…they mutter." The repetition presents the speaker hounded by "they", malevolent informers who seek to destroy her identity. However, completing the extended sunshine metaphor, in an emphatic extra final line, the speaker says her "shadow falls as evidence of sunlight." Though the speaker has been overshadowed, the fact she can still cast a shadow, can survive into an extra line, suggests that she lives to bear witness to what once was, and ends the poem on a glimmer of hope.

Both poems, then, present a critique of the effects of war. War is presented as mechanised, hateful and destructive. Hughes' soldier needs to discard old ideas in order to have some hope of survival. His chances, we know, are low but perhaps he can make it through to the armistice and return home with eyes opened to the horrors war. Rumens' *émigrée* keeps the memory of her war-ravaged homeland alive in her heart and on her tongue, just as *émigré* communities continue to do, maintaining contact with religions, languages, food and music of the world left behind, building a new life but always living in hope, one day, of being able to return.

Power and Conflict Poetry Essay Writing Checklist

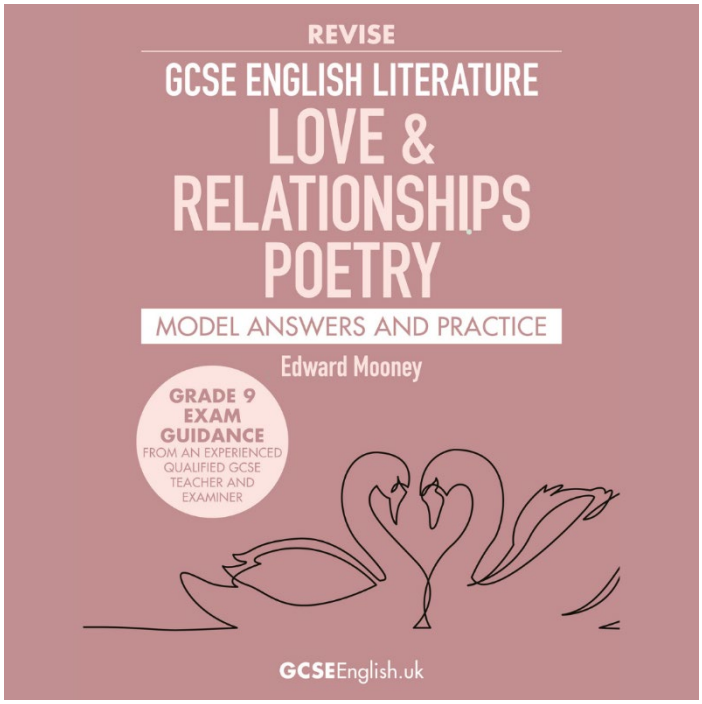
As you read, check how many of the recommendations below are followed by the essay. Then, use the checklist to help you write your own essay.

Remember that these are *recommendations* from an experienced teacher, not *requirements*. Allow them to help and guide you, but don't allow them to restrict you; if you have a different idea and feel confident about it, then give it a go!

- ☐ Use wording of question in answer – "The poet presents."
- ☐ Use Intro and Conclusion to help structure essay as argument.
- ☐ Use topic sentences to open each main paragraph.
- ☐ Close focus on named poem.
- ☐ Close focus on the second poem.
- ☐ Use short, precise quotations to support interpretations.
- ☐ Close analysis of poetic language.
- ☐ Close analysis of poetic form.
- ☐ Close analysis of poetic structure.
- ☐ Refer to effect on readers.
- ☐ Use relevant subject terminology.
- ☐ Connect to context when text was written, where relevant.
- ☐ Connect to context when text is set, where relevant.
- ☐ Connect to literary context, where relevant.
- ☐ Connect to original and 21st century reader context, where relevant.
- ☐ Aim for c50% of the essay to be about each poem.
- ☐ Use accurate spelling, punctuation and grammar.
- ☐ Write c450-c750 words.

GCSE English Literature essay task on *Love and Relationships Poetry*: strong connections between people

Please find below a Grade 9 model essay on *Love and Relationships* poetry, just one of the many in the complete book available to buy now on GCSEEnglish.uk and Amazon.



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Compare how poets present strong connections between people in 'Letters from Yorkshire' and in **one** other poem from 'Love and Relationships'.

[30 marks]

Possible second poem, with the poem I selected in bold:

- 'When We Two Parted'
- 'Love's Philosophy'
- 'Porphyria's Lover'
- 'Sonnet 29'
- 'Neutral Tones'
- 'The Farmer's Bride'
- 'Walking Away'
- 'Eden Rock'
- 'Follower'
- 'Mother, any distance'
- 'Before You Were Mine'
- 'Winter Swans'
- 'Singh Song!'
- **'Climbing My Grandfather'**

Full model *Love and Relationships Poetry* essay on strong connections between people

In 'Letters from Yorkshire' and in 'Climbing My Grandfather,' Dooley and Waterhouse present people exploring their strong connections to others in search of love, support and meaning. Dooley's speaker cherishes the letters that connect her to her distant correspondent, reminding her, amid the noise of urban life, of a rural upbringing. Waterhouse's speaker explores his grandfather's body, seeking connection and love. Both poets suggest that strong connections to others can enable us to survive the disruption wrought by the modern world.

Dooley, in 'Letters from Yorkshire,' presents people whose shared fascination with the natural world enables the creation of a strong connection. The speaker reveals how a correspondent, inspired by the return of the "first lapwings," immediately writes a letter to her. The nature imagery shows how the return of migratory birds heralds the beginning of spring, an event the letter-writer feels a need to celebrate, sharing his joy with his distant reader. Similarly, in 'Climbing My Grandfather,' Waterhouse shows how nature can enable strong interpersonal connections. The speaker crafts an extended metaphor whereby his grandfather is a mountain to climb "free, without a rope or net." This presents his grandfather as something simultaneously majestic yet forbidding, suggesting that the grandson feels distanced from his relative. The decision to climb without safety equipment implies that this could be a risky journey and indeed the pattern of disruptive enjambment that follows creates fragile line endings that feel like crumbling sharp edges and nervous slips on teetering precipices; yet, the strong connection means that the intrepid climber keeps going, in spite of the danger.

As her poem progresses, Dooley presents how a strong long-distance connection creates fruitful debate about life choices. The speaker wonders if her correspondent's active rural life is "more real," contrasting it with the apparent emptiness of her job "feeding words into a blank screen." The metaphor suggests a repetitive job, a worker chained passively to a devouring machine to whom letters bring hopeful news of another, more creative life. This perhaps reflects Dooley's own experience of moving from Yorkshire to work in London, suggesting that she misses rural life. By contrast, Waterhouse shows how strong connections between people may contain mysteries. The climber discovers "the glassy ridge of a scar" on his grandfather's arm. The metaphor suggests fragility; the scar might easily be shattered. Moreover, it seems to have been hidden yet we never learn what caused

the injury. The grandfather is being discovered but, Waterhouse implies, some things about his life remain unknown.

Subsequently, Dooley shows how communication across distance can draw people closer. The speaker shifts from the impersonal third person to the second person, now addressing her correspondent as "you" who "pour[s] air and light into an envelope." The pronoun shift creates a more personal tone, and the metaphor suggests that the letters deliver beauty, fresh air and a sense of freedom to the speaker who, by implication, feels trapped in the city. Similarly, Waterhouse shows how strong connections between people from different generations can be nourishing. The speaker is "refreshed" after "drink[ing] among teeth." The metaphor echoes the actions of a climber stooping to sup from a rocky tarn, reflecting Waterhouse's real experience of rock climbing. Moreover, the metaphor suggests that the grandfather selflessly offers his body to provide care and protection for his grandchild.

Finally, Dooley shows how strong connections can be profoundly important. The speaker ends in first person declaring that "our souls" communicate. The distance between these people is collapsed and they are united, perhaps for eternity if we allow a religious interpretation of the concept of the soul. That Dooley never resolves the ambiguity about the exact relationship between these two people suggests that we are encouraged to see them as representing a range of different relationships, disrupted by the vicissitudes of life yet remaining strong. Waterhouse too ends by emphasising the profound importance of cultivating strong connections with loved ones. The exhausted climber lies atop his grandfather's head, watching the sky and sensing his grandfather's "slow pulse." The final image of the extended metaphor simultaneously suggests freedom and connectedness: the speaker gazes out into the open sky but remains rooted to the living earth, to his grandfather.

Thus, both poems show that strong connections between people are vital for our happiness. Connections with friends, with family across distance or across generations are presented as sources of wisdom and love. Both Dooley and Waterhouse depict the dislocation that many feel as a result of the modern world and show that maintaining relationships that risk being broken brings meaning into otherwise empty lives.

Love and Relationships Poetry Essay Writing Checklist

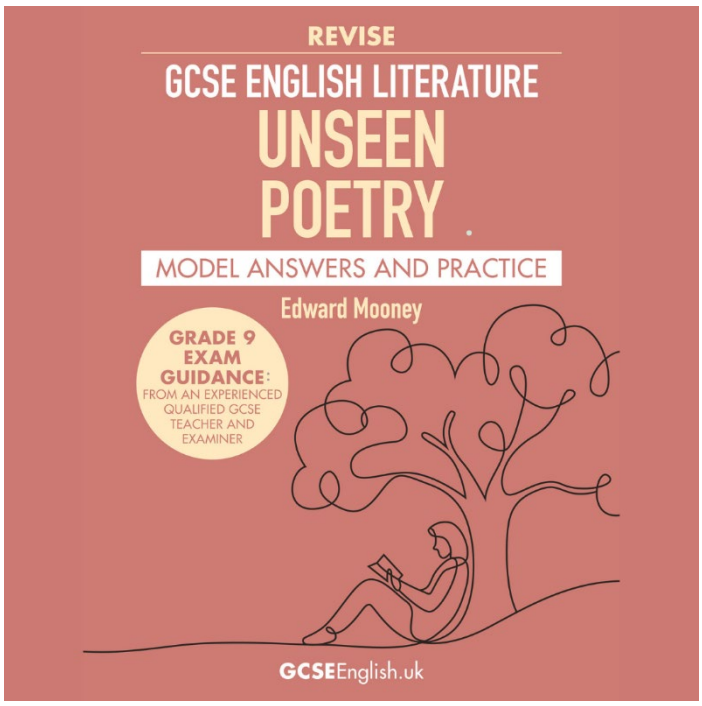
As you read, check how many of the recommendations below are followed by the essay. Then, use the checklist to help you write your own essay.

Remember that these are *recommendations* from an experienced teacher, not *requirements*. Allow them to help and guide you, but don't allow them to restrict you; if you have a different idea and feel confident about it, then give it a go!

- ☐ Use wording of question in answer – "The poet presents."
- ☐ Use Intro and Conclusion to help structure essay as argument.
- ☐ Use topic sentences to open each main paragraph.
- ☐ Close focus on named poem.
- ☐ Close focus on the second poem.
- ☐ Use short, precise quotations to support interpretations.
- ☐ Close analysis of poetic language.
- ☐ Close analysis of poetic form.
- ☐ Close analysis of poetic structure.
- ☐ Refer to effect on readers.
- ☐ Use relevant subject terminology.
- ☐ Connect to context when text was written, where relevant.
- ☐ Connect to context when text is set, where relevant.
- ☐ Connect to literary context, where relevant.
- ☐ Connect to original and 21st century reader context, where relevant.
- ☐ Aim for c50% of the essay to be about each poem.
- ☐ Use accurate spelling, punctuation and grammar.
- ☐ Write c450-c750 words.

GCSE English Literature essay task on *Unseen Poetry*: growing up

Please find below a full set of Grade 9 model answers on *Unseen Poetry*, just one of the many in the complete book available to buy now on GCSEEnglish.uk and Amazon.



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Answer **both** questions in this section.

Amazing Grace

Too young.

You will forget this.
The midnight ferry,
the scramble for passports
and sensible shoes.

You will forget this.
The heaving shoulders,
the defiant eulogy*,
the handfuls of earth.

You will forget this.
The cold meats,
the silence,
the regret.

May you remember:
the happy stories,
the single sweet hymn,
and the dew-dropped honeysuckle*

you placed on her grave.

* eulogy: a speech given at a funeral praising the person who has died
* honeysuckle: a plant with a sweet-scented flower that grows wild in hedgerows

Ern Browne

Q27.1 In 'Amazing Grace', how does the poet present ideas about how growing up can be painful?

[24 marks]

To A Lark Ascending

After your final exam
comes the surge
out into midsummer:
salt water and 99s*,
helter-skelter* and looping larks,
a book read slowly in a dappled glade,
where peace perfect peace
spreads across an unquiet world.

There will be more exams,
tests, assays*, judgements,
ordeals by fire and sword and pen.
And you will endure,
battle-hardened, clear-eyed and ready
to soar.

* 99: an ice cream cone with a chocolate Flake inserted into the ice cream
* helter-skelter: a tower at a fairground with a spiral slide
* assay: a test of the purity of precious metals

Maggie Hickling

Q27.2 In both 'To A Lark Ascending' and 'Amazing Grace', the speakers present ideas about growing up.

What are the similarities **and/or** differences between the methods the poets use to present these ideas?

[8 marks]

Grade 9 model answer to Q27.1

In 'Amazing Grace', Browne presents growing up as a painful process shaped by grief, disorientation and the struggle to hold on to meaningful memories. Through an evocative depiction of a funeral, the writer explores how childhood innocence can be confronted by adult realities, suggesting that, while suffering is inevitable, choosing what to remember becomes an important part of maturing.

Browne begins by highlighting how painful growing up can be when it is shaped by circumstances beyond one's control. The italicised declaration, "too young," presented alone in a short stanza, acts as an epigraph, setting the theme of the poem: innocence unprepared for the emotional weight of bereavement. The abruptness of the line mirrors the abruptness of loss, capturing the painful truth that children are often thrust into adult experiences prematurely. Moreover, the starkness of the statement suggests a sense of shock and vulnerability, implying that youth itself is a barrier to understanding.

Later, the repeated instruction "you will forget this" introduces a tension between memory and suppression. Browne's repetition functions as a structural refrain, mimicking both adult reassurance and a child's attempt to protect themselves by distancing painful events. Forgetting thus becomes a defence mechanism rather than a natural process. Browne's use of direct address places the reader inside the child's perspective, reinforcing how overwhelming experiences of death can be for someone still maturing.

Describing the funeral journey, Browne presents vivid, practical details such as "the scramble for passports / and sensible shoes." The lexical field of urgency contrasts sharply with the banality of "sensible shoes," creating a painful clash between the everyday and the life-changing. This juxtaposition captures a child's confusion when adult rituals seem both chaotic and dull. Browne uses enjambment to create a rushed pace that mirrors the frantic movement of the family, suggesting how growing up can feel like being swept along by forces one cannot fully understand.

The poet deepens the sense of emotional burden through a series of snapshots of events at the funeral. The physicality of "heaving shoulders" evokes uncontrollable grief, while "defiant eulogy" suggests an adult's attempt to impose meaning on loss. The final image, "handfuls of earth," symbolises the stark finality of burial. Browne uses a tricolon to intensify the cumulative weight of these experiences, emphasising how a young person absorbs the raw emotional reality of death.

Finally, Browne shifts to a more hopeful tone with "may you remember: the happy stories, the single sweet hymn." The modal "may" suggests a gentle wish rather than an instruction, marking a structural turn from forgetting to selective remembrance. This balancing of pain with tenderness reflects an adult perspective guiding the child towards healing. Browne's softer imagery, especially the "single sweet hymn," presumably the 'Amazing Grace' of the title, highlights the idea that maturity comes not from forgetting trauma but from choosing which memories offer comfort. The poem ends by suggesting that although growing up is painful, it also allows space for the preservation of love and beauty amid loss.

Grade 9 model answer to Q27.2

Both texts present growing up as a turbulent process. In Hickling's sonnet, youth is portrayed as a period of joyful freedom, particularly in the octave where references to "99s" and a "helter-skelter" evoke the carefree pleasures of summer. Alongside this, the gentle image of "a book read slowly in a dappled glade" conveys stillness and rest after a painful period of intense work. Browne, however, presents a childhood overshadowed by grief, implied when the speaker repeatedly hopes that the child "will forget" the emotional weight of bereavement. Browne's insistent repetition contrasts with Hickling's lyric stillness, suggesting a more painful, abrupt confrontation with maturity.

Both poems also present growing up as a form of preparation for the future. In Hickling's sonnet, the volta marks a shift towards challenge, with the tricolon "tests, assays, judgements" recasting adolescence as a series of trials that must be endured. The final image of being "battle-hardened…and ready to soar" frames maturity as hard-won strength and confidence. However, Browne adopts a more reflective tone, focusing on emotional survival rather than endurance. The hope that the child will remember the "dew-dropped honeysuckle" suggests that growing up involves learning which memories to treasure and which to leave behind. While Hickling emphasises resilience forged through ordeal, Browne foregrounds remembrance and forgetting as quieter, but equally necessary, aspects of maturity.

Unseen Poetry Essay Writing Checklist

As you read, check how many of the recommendations below are followed by the answers. Then, use the checklist to help you write your own answers.

Remember that these are *recommendations* from an experienced teacher, not *requirements*. Allow them to help and guide you, but don't allow them to restrict you; if you have a different idea and feel confident about it, then give it a go!

☐	Use key words from the question in your answer.	☐	Refer to effect on readers.
☐	Use topic sentences to open each paragraph.	☐	Use relevant subject terminology.
☐	Close focus on the poem(s).	☐	Differentiate between writer and speaker where relevant.
☐	Use short, precise quotations to support interpretations.	☐	Refer to the writer using their surname.
☐	Select quotations from across the full length of the poem.	☐	For Q27.2: clear 50/50 balance between both poems.
☐	Embed quotations where possible.	☐	For Q27.2: clear use of the language of comparison.
☐	Close analysis of poetic language.	☐	For Q27.2: clear use of the language of contrast.
☐	Close analysis of poetic form.	☐	Use a range of vocabulary.
☐	Close analysis of poetic structure.	☐	Use accurate spelling, punctuation and grammar.

GCSE English Language Creative Story writing task: a story set by the sea

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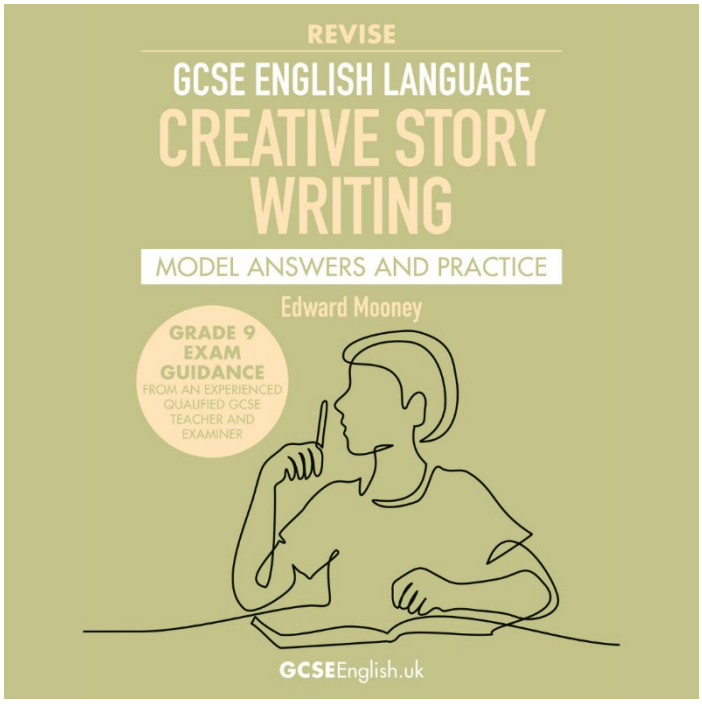

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You are advised to spend the correct amount of time on this section (check Appendix 1 for your exam board's time).
Write in full sentences.
You are reminded of the need to plan your answer.
You should leave enough time to check your work at the end.

You are going to enter a creative writing competition.

Your entry will be judged by a panel of people of your own age.

Write a story set by the sea.

[40 marks]

Full model story set by the sea

"You know I have to leave," said Cath, shivering into her coat as the snow fell softly into the sea. Music and laughter rang out from the bars along the seafront; everyone else was sensibly inside on this freezing New Year's Eve.

"Don't go," Onel said, turning to her. "There must be a job going for you round here?"

"I wish," said Cath. "I've been looking for ages." Two years since they'd left school and not a penny to show for it. Jobs were scarce out of season and you couldn't save up for a holiday, let alone a damp-riddled bedsit, on a candy floss seller's wage.

"Anyway, it's too good an opportunity Onel. The pay is off the scale. I *deserve* it." Best interview ever, her new boss had said.

"And," she continued, "you said yourself we've outgrown this town."

Onel kicked at the stones. It was true. He doubted if there were boarded up discount shops on Hollywood Boulevard. But it was home. "Yeah, except I love the place really. And…." He walked off, stumbling along the high tide line. The snow fell more thickly.

"Onel!" Cath tried to keep up.

"What if I leave too? The streets of London are paved with gold, right?" He spoke quickly, as the hasty decision formed in his mind. "Why don't I go and see for myself? I can…"

"Onel," said Cath, "don't do this. You know you can't leave your family. They need you."

"They need *you* too. It makes Mum's day when you come round. She hardly sees anyone since the operation."

Cath looked out over the bay, taking in the string of lights glittering along the promenade and the pier, magical now under a layer of snow. She sighed. It almost never snowed here by the sea.

"I won't forget this place. I won't forget you." She looked down. "Onel, what are you doing?" Onel was kneeling. She gasped, then laughed as the realisation sank in. She shook her head. "Onel...don't do anything you'll regret in the morning."

Onel looked up. "Cath. I should have done this years ago. Please, will you..."

"Onel!" Cath cried out and pointed down at the beach. She'd seen something. "Stop!"

"Please Cath... will you..." Onel tried again.

"Look!" Cath forced Onel to look down. He froze.

"Is that...?"

"Yes," she whispered. "Don't move."

Onel looked down at what his knees were resting on. He could just make out a lump of rusted metal, dented by years of being knocked around by thousands of tides, encrusted with limpets, a German inscription half visible under a kelp frond. It was unmistakeable.

Onel started to shiver. The bomb shifted on the shingle.

"What do we do Cath?"

"I don't know mate. But..." She looked at it, rusted and broken. "It's not going to go off is it? After all these years?" She was tempted to give it a kick.

"Do you want to take that chance?"

"Do we have any other option?" They were beginning to shiver uncontrollably now. "If we stay here any longer, we'll be dead anyway."

Onel nodded. He held his hand out to Cath. "On three?"

Cath nodded.

"One." Onel tensed. "Two." He breathed in and saw in a moment the beauty of the town blanketed in snow and darkness. "Three."

They ran for their lives, falling and stumbling then crawling up the steep shingle beach. Then rising again and running. As they ran, the darkness exploded into light and the night into colour. They sprinted, tasting blood in their mouths, lungs bursting, and collapsed onto the promenade.

“We made it!” shouted Onel.

“Yeah!” shouted Cath. “We’re going to live forever!” It was great to be alive. She looked back as the explosions continued and began to laugh as she realised what was happening.

Onel looked back too, in time to see the last of the New Year firework display. The bomb lay quietly on the beach, minding its own business, as it had done since it was dropped decades ago.

After a quick call to the police – “Yeah, this happens all the time” – they walked home arm in arm as dawn broke, laughing with relief, telling and retelling the night’s events, practising how they would recount this story for the rest of their lives, Onel swearing that he wasn’t just about to propose, honest.

And the sun rose over the snow dappled hills, the waking town, the grey rolling sea and the uncertain future beyond.

Creative Story Writing Checklist

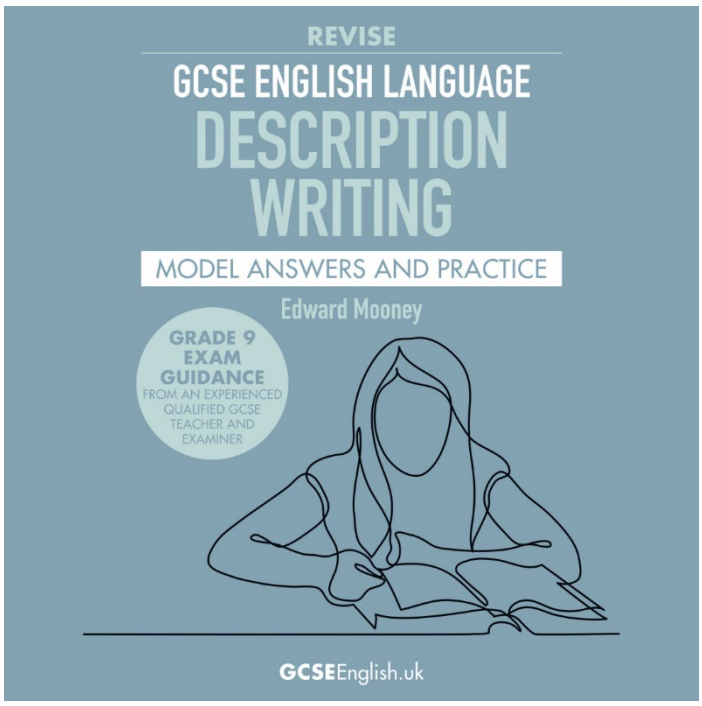
As you read, check how many of the recommendations below are followed by the story. Then, use the checklist to help you write your own story.

Remember that these are *recommendations* from an experienced teacher, not *requirements*. Allow them to help and guide you, but don't allow them to trap you; if you have a different idea and feel confident and excited about it, then give it a go!

- ☐ Two main characters.
- ☐ Characters have names.
- ☐ Characters' approximate ages are suggested/stated.
- ☐ Characters' personalities are presented.
- ☐ How the characters know each other is clear.
- ☐ Specific place.
- ☐ Specific time of year and day.
- ☐ Specific weather.
- ☐ Description/suggestion of colours.
- ☐ Description/suggestion of sounds.
- ☐ Description/suggestion of tastes/smells.
- ☐ Starts with dialogue.
- ☐ Starts with a dramatic event. Continues with dramatic events.
- ☐ Contains an emotional turning point.
- ☐ Timeline is short (under 24 hours).
- ☐ Contains: imagery, simile, metaphor, personification.
- ☐ Paragraphs and sentences are varied lengths.
- ☐ Spelling, punctuation and grammar are accurate.
- ☐ 450-750 words.
- ☐ Narrated using past tense.
- ☐ Third person (unless exam task requires First Person).
- ☐ 'Show, don't tell' technique used widely.

GCSE English Language Description writing task: a journey by bus

Please find below a Grade 9 GCSE English Language Description, just one of the many in the complete book available to buy now on GCSEEnglish.uk and Amazon.



Other model answer collections are also available for a wide range of GCSE English Language and GCSE English Literature tasks and texts. Find them now on GCSEEnglish.uk and Amazon.

You are advised to spend the correct amount of time on this section (check Appendix 1 for your exam board's time).
Write in full sentences.
You are reminded of the need to plan your answer.
You should leave enough time to check your work at the end.

You are going to enter a creative writing competition.

Your entry will be judged by a panel of people of your own age.

Describe a journey by bus as suggested by this picture:

[40 marks]

Photo by Melanie Brown (@itsmelb) on Unsplash.

Full model description of a journey by bus

The bus eases up to the kerb and stops with a hiss and a sigh. The doors flap open and the scrum of waiting passengers, faces grey and empty after a long day in the city, shuffles forward, eager to get out of the unforgiving November rain, to get home. Nervous eyes scan along the length of the bus, noting how full it already is. Some, at the back of the scrum, have already given up, resigned to waiting for the next one, their escape from the city delayed.

The doors swing shut and the bus pulls away into the night. The rear lights twinkle and refract in the driving rain. They gleam red, and are gone.

The rammed bus picks up speed as the driver skips a few stops. A shiver of hope passes through the crowd – home early tonight.

Each lurch of the vehicle, each bump, pothole, sleeping policeman, humpback bridge, each clunk of clutch and gear, sends the passengers' heads swaying in harmony, like wheat buffeted by a strong summer gale.

Then there's a shout and the bus screeches to a stop, toppling the standing passengers like skittles. The driver makes her feelings known in rather brusque language to the motorcyclist who, she argues, had the temerity to cut her up. The passengers right themselves, checking for blood and bruises, rolling their eyes and wishing for home.

But the incident has broken the vow of silence and now the passengers start chatting away.

"No need for that, was there?"

There is a hum of agreement.

"Honestly, she gets worse every day."

The journey drags on. A nurse, weak with fatigue, is falling asleep, her head against the window. The vibrating and juddering does not wake her. It's been a long shift.

A coffee shop worker, barista of the year, is reading. In the novel, earnest people lead powerfully meaningful lives in exciting locations. By contrast, from the bus window can be seen: roundabouts, traffic cones, prefab light industrial buildings, derelict

railway sidings, boarded up shops. The barista turns the page, preferring the balmy beaches and exquisite glamour of the fantasy world of the story.

The bus reaches the dual carriageway. Not far to go now. There are fields out there, somewhere in the darkness.

An old man, in a black suit almost as old as him, is lost in thought. The tie is black too and between his hands he holds an order of service. He looks down at the face on the front of the pamphlet, a photo taken in younger days of a man proud and happy, before the illness got to him. Another one gone. The man sighs. He measures out his life by funerals now, by bad sandwiches and muted conversations with grieving widows.

The rain is still beating down as the bus pulls into the market square and stops. The end of the line.

The final passengers walk across the slippery cobbles and disperse into the tiny lanes and alleys that lead off into the dark. Above them soar the two towers of the old church, floodlights picking out the buttery yellow of the ancient stone.

Unimpressed, the bus heads back to the city, ready to go again.

Description Writing Checklist

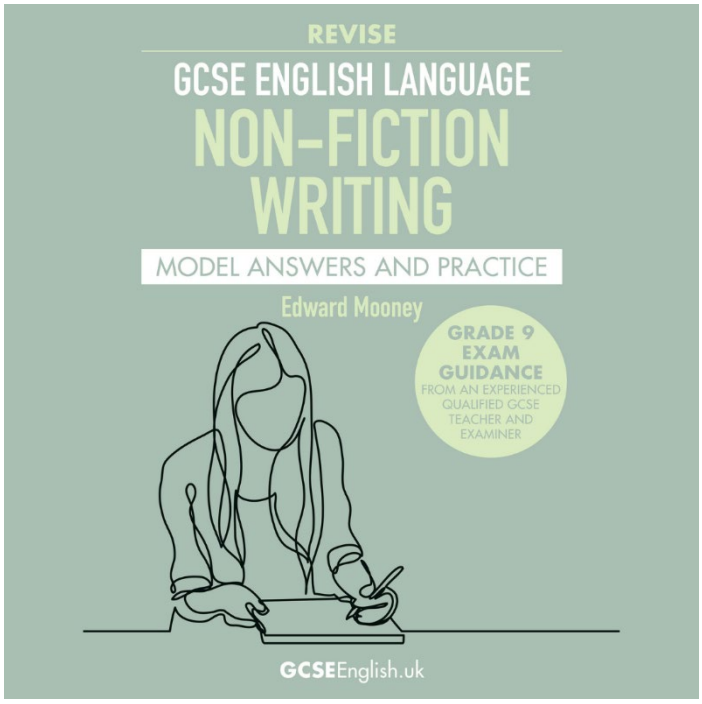
As you read, check how many of the recommendations below are followed by the description. Then, use the checklist to help you write your own description.

Remember that these are *recommendations* from an experienced teacher, not *requirements*. Allow them to help and guide you, but don't allow them to trap you; if you have a different idea and feel confident and excited about it, then give it a go!

- ☐ Create an emotional 'journey'.
- ☐ Structure by passing of time and/or by shifts in focus.
- ☐ Describe time of year and day.
- ☐ Describe weather.
- ☐ Describe colours.
- ☐ Describe sounds.
- ☐ Describe tastes, smells and touch sensations.
- ☐ Describe people.
- ☐ Describe/suggest their emotions.
- ☐ Use a small amount of direct speech.
- ☐ Use symbolism.
- ☐ Zoom in to tiny details.
- ☐ Zoom out to bird's-eye view.
- ☐ Speed pace up/slow pace down.
- ☐ Freeze time.
- ☐ Use present tense.
- ☐ Describe the past of the scene.
- ☐ Describe the future of the scene.
- ☐ Use imagery, simile, metaphor, personification.
- ☐ Use paragraphs and sentences of varied length.
- ☐ Use accurate spelling, punctuation and grammar.
- ☐ Write c450-c750 words.

GCSE English Language Non-Fiction writing task: an article about homework

Please find below a Grade 9 GCSE English Language Non-Fiction text, just one of the many in the complete book available to buy now on GCSEEnglish.uk and Amazon.



Other model answer collections are also available for a wide range of GCSE English Language and GCSE English Literature tasks and texts. Find them now on GCSEEnglish.uk and Amazon.

You are advised to spend the correct amount of time on this section (check Appendix 1 for your exam board's time).
Write in full sentences.
You are reminded of the need to plan your answer.
You should leave enough time to check your work at the end.

"Homework has no value. Some students get it done for them; some don't do it at all. Students should be relaxing in their free time."

Write an article for a broadsheet newspaper in which you explain your point of view on this statement.

[40 marks]

Full model article about homework

Homework is at crisis point. Teachers set too much or not enough whilst students either refuse to do it, do it badly or throw money at the problem by outsourcing their work to dark web essay cheats. We risk, therefore, losing sight of the purpose of homework: to broaden and deepen knowledge and to practise and perfect skills. Instead, it is seen by many as an anachronistic burden that gets in the way of rest and relaxation, detrimental to both mental and physical health. But does it have to be this way? With a little re-imagining, homework can be made fit for purpose, helping young people to be their best selves and to achieve their goals in an increasingly competitive global marketplace.

On average, students in the UK receive five hours of homework per week. However, this average rises significantly as exams approach. Including time spent in lessons and other school-related activities, an average student will spend close to 50 hours per week on their education.[1] This is far more than the 39 hours per week an average adult works.[2] No wonder then that OFSTED surveys show that homework is a major cause of stress.[3] It doesn't seem right that children are burdened with more work and more stress than adults. Something must change.

Yet, whilst complaining about homework has a long history, it remains stubbornly part of the education system. As far back as 1900, it was referred to as a "national crime" which "rob[s] a child of…playtime," by American campaigner Edward Bok. Nevertheless, homework flourished, driven at least partly by parents who argued in favour of heavy workloads. The Cold War also led to increased pressure as, especially in the USA, fears that millions of hardworking Soviet school children would soon outstrip the 'lazy' American student led teachers to fill playtime with ever more homework.[4] In the USA then, as elsewhere, parents, teachers and politicians can't seem to agree. Either homework is idealised, or it is demonised. Is there a solution to this impasse?

Perhaps we can learn from the experience of Janine, a school student from Swaffham. Two years ago, her exams fast approaching, her workload rising, she stopped doing homework set by teachers and instead decided to choose her own homework. She began learning Spanish on Duolingo, watching maths tutorials on

[1] Chris Morris and School Reporters, *BBC News*, 15 March 2018.
[2] Debra Leaker, *Office for National Statistics*, August 2020.
[3] Eleanor Busby, *The Independent*, 19 March 2018.
[4] Rebecca Onion, *Slate*, 24 October 2019.

YouTube and reading widely. Her teachers and parents despaired but they needn't have. Janine sat her exams better prepared and less stressed than many of her peers and consequently her grades were excellent; she even made it to the front page of the local paper. This solution might not work for all – it requires initiative, discipline and a strong desire to learn – but it worked for Janine so why not for others?

Some dismiss these suggestions as nonsense and contend that homework is key, pointing to the long hours of homework set by many private schools as evidence that hard graft leads to success. Indeed, the numbers appear to bear this out. A 2014 Department for Education report concluded that Year 9s who spend between two and three hours on homework per night are almost 10 times more likely to achieve five good GCSEs than students who did no homework at all.[5] The report, however, makes no reference to the quality of the work. Many students can point to homework tasks they believe to be a pointless time-fillers and ask how helpful those tasks are to their future exam success or, indeed, to their future lives.

Perhaps, then, the solution is not to ban homework, nor even to set less homework. Instead, teachers need to design better homework that feels meaningful, is clearly assessment focused and possibly even allows some independent choice. Moreover, teachers should leverage all the possibilities of the internet to connect their students to knowledge and to ways of learning unavailable to them in the classroom. After all, long gone are the days when the height of learning technology was a slate and a piece of chalk. Ultimately, if students feel that their homework is not just a confiscation of their free time but instead an opportunity to broaden their understanding and improve readiness for exams, and for life, then there will surely be more buy-in from today's busy, stressed teens.

[5] Chris Morris and School Reporters, *BBC News*, 15 March 2018.

Non-Fiction Writing Checklist

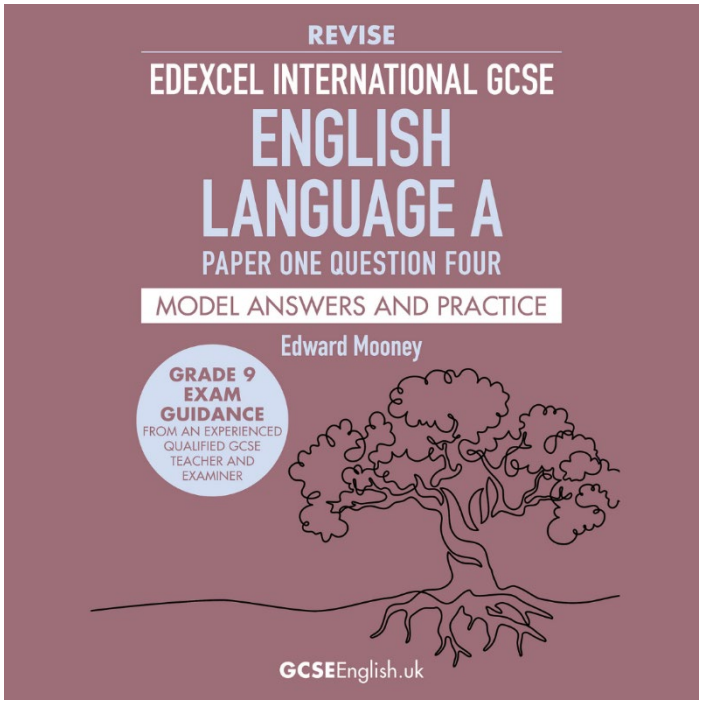
As you read, check how many of the recommendations below are followed by the text. Then, use the checklist to help you write your own text.

Remember that these are *recommendations* from an experienced teacher, not *requirements*. Allow them to help and guide you, but don't allow them to trap you; if you have a different idea and feel confident and excited about it, then give it a go!

- ☐ Clearly meets the purpose of the task.
- ☐ Clearly communicates to the audience of the task.
- ☐ Clearly meets the requested format of the task.
- ☐ Five to six main paragraphs.
- ☐ Structured to lead to a powerful 'call to action' closing.
- ☐ Range of different styles: descriptive, factual, emotive.
- ☐ Use of specific detail (avoiding vagueness and repetition).
- ☐ Five to seven sentences per paragraph.
- ☐ Sentences are varied lengths.
- ☐ Use of fronted adverbial.
- ☐ Use of extended noun phrase.
- ☐ Vocabulary is more formal than everyday language.
- ☐ Contains descriptive language.
- ☐ Contains facts.
- ☐ Contains statistics.
- ☐ Contains quotations.
- ☐ Contains a small number of rhetorical questions.
- ☐ No overuse or repetition of "I."
- ☐ Powerful, non-repetitive use of "we" and/or "you."
- ☐ Spelling, punctuation and grammar are accurate.
- ☐ Use of: colon, semi-colon, hyphen, dash.
- ☐ 450-750 words in total.

Edexcel International GCSE English Language Specification A P1 Q4 Task

Please find below a Grade 9 Edexcel International GCSE English Language Specification A Paper One Question Four Task on *The Danger of a Single Story*, just one of the many in the complete book available now on GCSEEnglish.uk and Amazon.



Other model answer collections are also available for a wide range of GCSE English Language and GCSE English Literature tasks and texts. Find them now on GCSEEnglish.uk and Amazon.

Remind yourself of the extract from '*The Danger of a Single Story*' (Text Two in the Extracts Booklet).

Q4

How does the writer, Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, use language and structure **in Text Two** to convey her thoughts and opinions?

You should support your answer with close reference to the extract, including **brief** quotations.

[12 marks]

Full model answer on: The Danger of a Single Story

In this speech, Adichie presents her views on the power of storytelling and the danger of seeing the world from a single viewpoint. In her short opening sentence, Adichie announces herself as a "storyteller" and goes on to directly address the audience as "you." This establishes Adichie's credentials to speak about the challenges of storytelling and involves the audience as being not just listeners to an informative speech, but to an intriguing and potentially dramatic personal story.

Adichie begins by using her personal experience of reading to outline her central thesis: consuming stories from one culture only is dangerous. She recounts how the characters in the stories she read as a child "played in the snow…ate apples, and…talked a lot about the weather." She follows up by noting that in Nigeria: "we didn't have snow, we ate mangoes, and we never talked about the weather." Juxtaposing these antithetical lists, crafted with parallel sentence structures, conveys the differences between British culture and Nigerian culture, suggesting that Adichie's experience of reading alienates her from her own culture.

Adichie then uses ethos to show how this alienation led her to be ignorant of her fellow Nigerian citizens. She relates the anecdote of her trip to Fide's village, revealing her ignorance of the creativity of the Nigerian and lower classes by being "startled" at the "beautifully patterned basket" made by Fide's brother. This candid admission of ignorance, shows that Adichie knows she is as guilty as anyone else of making false judgements based on a "single story." This increases our trust in Adichie as, rather than merely berating the audience for their ignorance and prejudice, she presents herself as equally part of the problem, thus giving credibility to her message and making the audience more likely to agree with her subsequent recommendations.

Adiche then turns her attention to how others' narrow-minded understanding of culture led to racist interactions when she lived in the USA. Adichie shows that her roommate's ignorance indicates that she only understood a "single story of Africa: a single story of catastrophe." This parallel construction deliberately links the two final words showing how, for many in developed countries, Africa is understood merely as a place of catastrophe. The audience, most of whom will be people very similar to Adichie's roommate, may well feel an uncomfortable pang of guilt here as we are encouraged to realise that we too may base our 'understanding' of an entire complex continent from a charity television advert.

Adichie then continues her personal *mea culpa* by recounting the ignorance she displayed when visiting Mexico. Expecting to see Mexicans "fleecing," "sneaking," and "being arrested," she is ashamed to realise that they are in fact going about their normal everyday lives. The verbs used in the asyndetic list emphasise the offensive stereotypes of Mexican people that Adichie realises she had unthinkingly believed, further showing how damaging single stories can be.

As the speech draws to its close, Adichie brings all the strands together to argue in favour of widening our cultural experience through actively choosing to read and encounter many stories, rather than one. The danger of the single story that can be "used to dispossess and to malign" is juxtaposed with the value of multifarious stories that "empower and humanize." Again, the parallel construction emphasises the antithesis, thus powerfully promoting the benefits of reading multiple stories.

Finally, Adichie looks ahead positively to a multicultural world of tolerance in which peoples of all cultures learn each other's stories and respect each other. Adichie uses a call to action – "reject the single story" – and ends by echoing another famous writer, Alice Walker, saying that, by seeking out many stories, we may "regain a kind of paradise." The allusion to The Fall suggests the possibility of humanity returning to a life of carefree innocence in the Garden of Eden, while evoking Walker is a use of logos that lends credence to Adichie's recommendation, suggesting that Adichie's ideas are shared by other, respected writers.

Edexcel International GCSE English Language Specification A Paper One Question Four Writing Checklist

As you read, check how many of the recommendations below are followed by the model answer. Then, use the checklist to help you write your own answer.

Remember that these are *recommendations* from an experienced teacher, not *requirements*. Allow them to help and guide you, but don't allow them to restrict you; if you have a different idea and feel confident about it, then give it a go!

- ☐ Choose quotations from across the entire text.
- ☐ Work through the text from top to bottom.
- ☐ Write PEA-style paragraphs.
- ☐ Use wording of question in answer – "The writer presents/shows/engages etc."
- ☐ Refer to the writer by their surname.
- ☐ Use topic sentences to open each PEA-style paragraph.
- ☐ Use short, precise quotations to support interpretations.
- ☐ Embed quotations fully into the flow of the answer.
- ☐ Write a close analysis of language.
- ☐ Write a close analysis of text structure.
- ☐ Write a close analysis of sentence structure.
- ☐ Use relevant subject terminology.
- ☐ Analyse effect on readers: what do we feel? How are we engaged?
- ☐ Analyse effect on readers: what do we learn?
- ☐ Use accurate spelling, punctuation and grammar.
- ☐ Write as many PEA-style paragraphs as you are able in the time available (c20-22 mins).