AQA
Realising potential

# GCSE English Language Focus on:

## AO2

Build on your students' assessment performance using our self-guided, modular training pack

## Activities Booklet

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# ‘Big idea’ planning

## Activity 1

Open the June 2019 Paper 1 exam paper and turn to page 3 (Question 2). Read the extract from a short story by H E Bates, set in the 1930s.

### Task

How does the writer use language here to describe the Hartop family? You could include the writer’s choice of:

- words and phrases
- language features and techniques
- sentence forms.

Write a sentence in response to the question.

### Response

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## 1.2 The ‘Big idea’

Having been introduced to the ‘Big idea’ planning technique, try it out here. First, write your overview sentence or ‘Big idea’ in the lightbulb. Then select three quotations to support your idea.

# Connotation chains

## Activity 2

### 2.1 Three special words

Open the November 2018 Paper 1 exam paper and turn to page 3 (Question 2). Read the extract from a short story by H E Bates, set in the 1930s.

### Task

Choose three words from the extract which capture the essence of the T-Rex.

### Response

**1.**

**2.**

**3.**

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## 2.2 Connotation Links

Place your chosen quotation in the first link (bottom left). Write one connotation of this word in the second link. Then write a connotation of the word in your second link into the third link, and so on.

# Connotation chains

## Activity 3: Writing it up

Now you have created a ‘chain’ of connotations based on your chosen word, write it up into an analytical paragraph, focusing on your chosen word. Try using the following structure:

1. ‘Big idea’ statement – precise – ‘the writer uses language to create a feeling of…’
2. Insert quotation ‘….’
3. The effect of the word/verb/adjective on the reader is to highlight/create a feeling of…
4. Zoom in and analyse using connotation chain, for example:
   - this suggests that…
   - there is a sense of…
   - this may be associated with …
   - the ’word’ implies/conveys …
   - the reader may…

Read the start of the model answer below and then consider how it could be continued with the worked example you completed in Activity 2.

### Model answer

The writer used language to create an impression of how formidable the Tyrannosaurus Rex is, using a metaphor to describe how its ‘lower leg was a piston’. The effect of the noun ‘piston’ creates an impression of the dinosaur being like a machine. There is a sense of how powerful the T Rex is as it moves towards them …

### Answer:

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# Camera tracking

## Activity 4

Watch the clip provided in the presentation and record how the director draws attention to certain ideas, objects and characters at different points in order to create suitable effects. An example is provided for you.

| What is the camera directing our attention to? | Why now? |
|---|---|
| *We are first drawn to the vibrations on the ground in the large footprint.* | *We follow the gaze of the male character to the movement of the water in the puddle. Our attention is then drawn to the large footprint and the strange shape of it. It is at this point that we recognise that this has been left by an enormous animal of some sort, and not one we recognise.* |
| **First...** | |
| **Next...** | |
| **Then...** | |
| **Finally...** | |

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# Planning a response

## Activity 5

Read the extract on page 2 (Source A) of the November 2018 Paper 1 Insert document. Use the table below to record how the writer has structured the text to create effects on the reader. An example is provided for you.

| What? | Why now? |
|---|---|
| *The writer begins by describing the setting, including the atmosphere and sounds of the jungle.* | *The setting is calm, almost melodic in the sounds that are described. The reader is then surprised with the fact the sounds are made by pterodactyls, establishing a strange and other-worldly setting for the story.* |
| **First...** | |
| **Next...** | |
| **Then...** | |
| **Finally...** | |

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# Student responses

## Activity 6

The example student responses that follow correspond with Paper 2 Question 3 from the June 2019 exam paper (How does the writer use language to describe the power of the sea?).

Students are guided to lines 16 to 26 of the source, which is an extract from *The Crossing* (an autobiographical account of crossing the Atlantic, published in 2006).

A mark scheme is provided on page 9 in the *Handouts booklet* should you need to refer to it.

### 6.1 Student A

The writer uses language to describe the sea as overpowering the boat ‘a wall of white water towering over our tiny boat’, suggesting the ocean is going to come with much more force than the boat because of its humongous size.

The writer uses language to describe the sea by using this metaphor ‘a wall of white towering over out tiny boat’. The word ‘wall’ is there to show just how strong the massive waves are and that the boat stands no chance.

Then the writer uses language to describe the sea by using the simile ‘spun around like clothes in a washing machine’. The use of this technique suggests just how powerful the sea is; the word ‘machine’ suggests it is designed for this purpose.

**Level:**

**Why:**

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## 6.2 Student B

In this extract the writer uses personification to present the ocean's power as being engulfing. The word 'being' creates a parallel between the ocean and a living organism, more specifically a predator. This creates the sense that the first-person writer was being swallowed and eaten by the ocean. This arguably gives the impression that he is like its prey and is helpless in comparison to the power of the ocean. It also arguable creates the impression that the ocean acts deliberately and with intent, as though it is consciously using the power to engulf the rower. This makes the ocean's power seem far more threatening as it creates the impression that it is out to get the rowers.

Moreover, the writer uses language to convey the overwhelming size power of the ocean, which dwarfs any human being, and this gives the impression of powerlessness in comparison to the ocean. The writer uses adjectives such as 'vast' and verbs such as 'towering', to convey the almighty scale and size of the ocean's power. This effect is achieved as it belittles the rowers and makes them feel minute, this presenting the ocean to be far more powerful, to an overwhelming extent. The writer adds to this sense of being overwhelmed by describing the ocean as 'bottomless'. This alluding to the infinite ocean suggests we cannot grasp the size and scale of the ocean. This adds to the sense of being overwhelmed by the ocean's power.

### Level:

### Why:

### Improvements:

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# Further student responses

## Activity 7

Below are four further student responses. Student C and E provided responses to Paper 2 Question 3 (June 2019) and Student D and F provided responses to Paper 1 Question 2 (June 2019).

The mark schemes are provided on pages 4-10 in the *Handouts booklet* should you need to refer to them.

### Student C

Primarily in this extract the sea is personified to evoke its sheer power. ‘ A wall of white towering over out tiny boat’, this use of the personification implies the vast size of the waves through the contrast of ‘towering’ and ‘tiny’. It evokes the sheer brutality of the sea as it has the ability to ‘tower which evokes fear within the reader because the sea has power over this boat and the people within it and it is displayed as brutal.

### Level:

### Student D

The writer describes Hartop as weak. This is evident through the adjective ‘thin’ which suggests that Hartop is physically frail and vulnerable.

The writer presents the girl as diminutive and fragile. This is observable through ‘arms flat as though ironed against her side’. This simile shows the girls is small and it hints that she is defenceless. The Hartop family are described boring. This is clear through ‘The Hartops’ faces seemed moulded in clay’. This metaphor shows that the Hartop family are dull and dismal.

### Level:

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## Student E

In source A, the writer describes the power of the sea by saying ‘water towering over our little boat’, the wave was too big. This implies that the current and waves were that powerful it didn’t only hit the boat and give Ben and James a little splash, but the waves were that angry it made them look up to it like soldiers.

Another quote that describes the power of the sea is ‘the stern of the boat, I felt it lift, I felt myself falling backwards’. This suggests that not only have the waves been powerful to make the heavy boat rise from the unstable water, but has also made Ben fall backwards.

## Level:

## Student F

The writer uses the metaphor of the Hartops’ faces being ‘moulded in clay’. The use of this metaphor describes a stoic, dull family reflected in the ‘clay’ mould they have been shaped from; much like the dullness and texture of clay, the features of the family are lifeless and unchanged. This description displays to the reader the impression of defined features on a dull, colourless palette, showing a boring rigidity to the family.

The colour imagery from the clay is continued as a ‘flat swede-colour’ is reflected on the faces. The adjective ‘flat’ displays a shapeless object emphasising the normality of the family whilst also referring to a ‘flat’ drink. The reader can associate this family as lacking ‘fizz’ of life and are almost inanimate. The adjective ‘swede-colour’ is a tinged yellow with reference to the tasteless vegetable of a swede. The reader is left with an image of a pasty-looking family.

## Level:

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# Post-session reflection

Reflecting on what you've covered in this training session, evaluate the comments you made beforehand and whether anything has changed. Consider the following when responding:

- Has your level of confidence improved in certain aspects?
- Do you feel you have consolidated knowledge of areas in which you already had confidence?
- Which areas of AO2 do you still feel need further consideration?
- At least one action/idea you will take moving forward.

| Paper | I'm feeling more confident about... | I still need to focus on ... |
|---|---|---|
| Teaching analysis of language (in preparation for Paper 1 Q2 and Paper 2 Q3) | | |
| Teaching analysis of structure (in preparation for Paper 1 Question 3) | | |
| Next steps: | | |

# Notes

# Notes

# Contact us

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