

# GCSE ENGLISH LANGUAGE

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Post-16 reading support

Paper 1

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Version 2.1  
October 2023





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## Assessment objectives for Paper 1

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| AO1 | Identify and interpret explicit and implicit information and ideas. Select and synthesise from different texts.   |
| AO2 | Explain, comment on and analyse how writers use language and structure to achieve effects and influence readers, using relevant subject terminology to support their views. |
| AO4 | Evaluate texts critically and support this with appropriate textual references.   |

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# Introduction

Use this resource to help students interpret information and ideas, and understand the means by which they are presented. These skills are needed for the 'unseen' element of the exam.

Paper 1 requires engagement with unseen texts drawn from "*high quality, challenging literature*". We've provided relevant extracts from a diverse range of authors and time periods, specially selected to engage and interest post-16 students, and framed with questions that require the same thinking as an exam response.

Please note this resource purposefully contains extracts from 19th century texts – this will help build familiarity with the language used in early 20th century texts. Remember that Paper 2 includes 19th century texts, and none will be used on Paper 1.

Texts on Paper 1 will be drawn from either the 20th or 21st century. Section A of the paper involves reading a literature fiction text in order to consider how established writers use narrative and descriptive techniques to capture the interest of readers.

## How to get the best from this resource

- We recommend reading and appreciating the whole passage first, as this is good exam practice. This can be followed by close reading, analysis of the writer's craft and the production of an independent response. Students can then be asked for a more considered, evaluative response which they need to support with detailed reference and analysis of the text.
- For each extract, after a first response, there are possible related activities relating to skills needed for the exam.
- For each extract, there are some overarching things to think about, such as outlining 'what the extract is about', and 'what the writer is trying to suggest'. We then suggest concentrating on particular parts of the source, with activities which make some analysis of language. This provides practice for exam question 2.
- Note that in the exam, students would give an integrated interpretation of the language and the effects, and not be directed or assisted as in some of these activities.
- There are some activities which focus on structural analysis, providing practice for the kind of approach used in exam question 3.
- Finally, some evaluation tasks require critical consideration of the whole text: a helpful skill for exam question 4.

Please note that the sources in this reading booklet are not always typical of the length of the extracts used on live question papers. We've chosen these sources with the sole purpose of helping develop the skills that you will be required to show.

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# *Sharks in the Time of Saviours*

Kawai Strong Washburn (2020)

## Part 1 Deliverance

Malia 1995

Honoka'a

**In this extract a Hawaiian family treat themselves to a trip on a tourist boat off the coast near their home when disaster strikes. Malia tells the story of her son, Nainoa, falling overboard into a sea filled with sharks.**

Then we were out away from the dock of Kona, sitting in a plush jointed couch on the *Hawaiian Adventure*, a trimaran like the types we always see drifting in the haze of the Kona coast, especially at sunset, boats with slides off the back and lobster-colored tourists jabbering on the covered decks. But this one had a middle hull with thick glass in the bottom that let us look down into the ocean, and as the engines pushed a mellow vibration again and again across the deck, the water went from something green-blue to a deep, almost purple colour, and the coral grew up thick and knotted, in sections stuck out fingers or bloomed brains and the spiked red fans of sea anemones, swaying like the tide was a wind. I could smell the sun, the way it heated the old sea salt on the edges of the boat, and the sharp too-sweet fruity Malolo syrup in the fruit punch, and the sting of diesel fuels belching from the grinding engines.

Mostly we sat inside, all five of us in a row right down front in the plush stadium seating, looking through the glass bottom, me telling stories about which animal was which god, how they saved or fought the first Hawaiians your father cracking jokes about how his Filipino forefathers only eat dogfish or the black fish with long noses, and the sun slanted in under the ceiling, and the motor kept churning its hum up through our seats. I was somewhere warm and slow and Kauai was asleep in my arms when I woke without knowing why.

You and Dean and your father were gone, in fact, no one was in the viewing cabin. Voices were rising out on the deck. I shifted Kauai from my lap - she complained - and I stood. The voices were clipped into basic commands: We're going to make a turn, keep pointing, get the preserver. I remember feeling like the sounds were coming from the other side of a cavern, so far away and cotton stuffed in my head.

I grabbed Kauai's hand. She was still rubbing her eyes and complaining, but I was already bringing her with me as I climbed the stairs from the viewing cabin to the sundeck. Impossibly white. I had to shade my eyes and squint so hard I felt my lips and gums lift. People were gathered along the cabled rail of the slick white deck, looking into the ocean. Pointing.

I remember seeing your father and Dean. They were maybe thirty feet away from me and Kauai, and I was confused because your father was wrestling Dean back from the rail and Dean was screaming, Let go, and I can get him. One of the deckhands in a white polo shirt and baseball hat pitched a red life preserver into the air, and it wobbled and wheeled out into the sky with the rope whipping behind.

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Did I run then to your father? Had he pulled Dean off the rail? Was I gripping Kai's hand so hard it hurt her? I can assume, but I can't remember. I only remember that I was your father's side, then on the blazing white deck, rising and falling with the waves, and all our family was there, except for you.

Your head was bobbing like a coconut in the ocean. You were getting smaller and farther away and the water was hissing and spanking the boat. I don't remember anyone saying much of anything except the captain, calling out from upstairs: "Just keep pointing. We're turning. Just keep pointing."

Your head went under and the ocean was flat and clean again.

There was a song playing from the speakers. A tinny stupid-sweet Hawaiian cover of 'More Than Words,' which I still can't listen to, even though I liked it once. The engines churned. The captain was talking from the wheel upstairs, asking Terry to keep pointing. Terry was the one who'd thrown the life preserver that was floating empty in the waves, moving away from where I'd seen your head.

I was tired of being told to point, being told to wait, so I said something to Terry. He made a face. Then his mouth was moving under his moustache, words back at me. And the captain was calling again from above. Your father started in, too, all four of us saying things. I think I finished talking with something that made Terry start, so that his face flushed around his sunglasses. I saw myself in those mirrored lenses, me darker than I thought I was, which I remember made me happy, and my shoulders from basketball, and that I'd stopped squinting my eyes. Then my feet were up on the railing and Terry's eyebrows were raised and he started to open his mouth at me. He reached for me - I think your father did, too - But I leapt into the big empty ocean.

I hadn't been swimming long when the sharks passed under me. I remember them first as dark blurs, that the water told me the weight of those animals, a shove of wake against my legs and belly. They passed me and all four of their fins punched the surface, knives on the summit of dark swells, cutting for you. When they reached where your head had been, the sharks dove under. I started to swim after them, but the distance might as well have been to Japan. I dunked once to try and see. Underwater there was nothing but a vague darkness and froth where the sharks were. Other dark colours. Pink and chummy ropes rising from the froth - I knew those would be next.

I didn't have any more breath. I broke the surface and choked in oxygen. If there were sounds, if I yelled, if the boat was closer, I don't remember. I went back down. The water where you were was all churn. The shapes of the sharks were thrashing, diving, rising, something like a dance.

The next time I went for air you were at the surface, sideways, prone and ragdolling in the mouth of a shark. But the shark was holding you gently, do you understand? It was holding you like you were made of glass, like you were its child. They brought you straight at me, the shark that was holding you, carrying its head up, out of the water, like a dog. The faces of those things - I won't lie. I shut my eyes as they neared, when I was sure they were coming for me, too, and if everyone was yelling and crying out, as I imagine they were, and if I was

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thinking anything, I don't remember any of that except the black of my closed eyes and my prayers without a mouth.

The sharks never hit. They passed again below, around me. wake like a strong wind. And then I opened my eyes. You were there at the boat, clutched to a life preserver. Your father reaching down for you - I remember how angry I was at how slow he went, all the time in the world, and I wanted to say, Grab our child, our alive child – and you were coughing, which meant you were breathing, and there was no red cloud in the water.

This wasn't just one of those things.

Oh my son. Now we know that none of it was. And this was when I started to believe.

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## First response

1. Summarise what happens in the passage in your own words.
2. Pick out four key moments in the text. Why do you think these moments are important?
3. Now reread paragraph one. List four things you learn about the boat.

## Close reading

1. Now read the extract below. How does the writer use language to present the sharks in this section of the text? Try to comment on some of the words and phrases in bold.

I hadn't been swimming long when the sharks passed under me. I remember them first as **dark blurs**, that the water told me **the weight** of those animals, **a shove of wake against my legs and belly**. They passed me and all four of their fins **punched the surface, knives on the summit of dark swells, cutting for you**. When they reached where your head had been, the sharks dove under. I started to swim after them, but the distance might as well have been to Japan. I dunked once to try and see. Underwater **there was nothing but a vague darkness and froth** where the sharks were. Other **dark colours. Pink and chummy ropes rising from the froth – I knew those would be next**.

I didn't have any more breath. I broke the surface and choked in oxygen. If there were sounds, if I yelled, if the boat was closer, I don't remember. I went back down. The water where you were was all churn. The shapes of the sharks **were thrashing, diving, rising, something like a dance**.

## Developing a response

1. Now think about the language that is used to describe the sharks in the following section of the text:

The next time I went for air you were at the surface, sideways, prone and ragdolling in the mouth of a shark. But the shark was holding you gently, do you understand? It was holding you like you were made of glass, like you were its child. They brought you straight at me, the shark that was holding you, carrying its head up, out of the water, like a dog. The faces of those things - I won't lie. I shut my eyes as they neared, when I was sure they were coming for me, too, and if everyone was yelling and crying out, as I imagine they were, and if I was thinking anything, I don't remember any of that except the black of my closed eyes and my prayers without a mouth.

How does the writer use language to present the sharks in this section of the text? How does it differ from the language used in the previous extract?

2. The extract ends with Malia (the narrator) saying,

'This wasn't just one of those things.

Oh my son. Now we know that none of it was. And this was when I started to believe.'

What are the effects of ending the extract in this way?

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3. Why do you think the writer chose to have the narrator Malia addressing her son Nainoa directly? What are the possible effects?

### Concluding task

1. After reading this extract, a student said, 'this extract makes Malia's memory of the event seem like a blur or a dream.'

To what extent do you agree that this extract presents Malia's memory of the day on the boat seem like a blur or a dream?

You might begin by using the following quotation to support your response:

'I remember feeling like the sounds were coming from the other side of a cavern, so far away and cotton stuffed in my head'.

### Linked Q5 tasks

Write a story about a day out on a boat.

**or**

Write a story about something unexpected that happens at sea.

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# *The Guest List*

Lucy Foley (2021)

**The extract is taken from the start of a murder story. A wedding is taking place on a remote Irish island when the book starts.**

## Chapter 1

# NOW

## The Wedding Night

The lights go out.

In an instant, everything is in darkness. The band stop their playing. Inside the marquee the wedding guests squeal and clutch at one another. The light from the candles on the tables only adds to the confusion, sends shadows racing up the canvas walls. It's impossible to see where anyone is or hear what anyone is saying: above the guests' voices the wind rises in a frenzy.

Outside a storm is raging. It shrieks around them, it batters the marquee. At each assault the whole structure seems to flex and shudder with a loud groaning of metal; the guests cower in alarm. The doors have come free from their ties and flap at the entrance. The flames of the paraffin torches that illuminate the doorway snicker.

It feels personal, this storm. It feels as though it has saved all its fury for them.

This isn't the first time the electrics have shorted. But last time the lights snapped back on again within minutes. The guests returned to their dancing, their drinking, their pill-popping, their screwing, their eating, their laughing . . . and forgot it ever happened.

How long has it been now? In the dark it's difficult to tell. A few minutes? Fifteen? Twenty?

They're beginning to feel afraid. This darkness feels somehow ominous, intent. As though anything could be happening beneath its cover.

Finally, the bulbs flicker back on. Whoops and cheers from the guests. They're embarrassed now about how the lights find them: crouched as though ready to fend off an attack. They laugh it off. They almost manage to convince themselves that they weren't frightened.

The scene illuminated in the marquee's three adjoining tents should be one of celebration, but it looks more like one of devastation. In the main dining section, clots of wine spatter the laminate floor, a crimson stain spreads across white linen. Bottles of champagne cluster on every surface, testament to an evening of toasts and celebrations. A forlorn pair of silver sandals peeks from beneath a tablecloth.

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The Irish band begin to play again in the dance tent – a rousing ditty to restore the spirit of celebration. Many of the guests hurry in that direction, eager for some light relief. If you were to look closely at where they step you might see the marks where one barefoot guest has trodden in broken glass and left bloody footprints across the laminate, drying to a rusty stain. No one notices.

Other guests drift and gather in the corners of the main tent, nebulous as leftover cigarette smoke. Loath to stay, but also loath to step outside the sanctuary of the marquee while the storm still rages. And no one can leave the island. Not yet. The boats can't come until the wind dies down. In the centre of everything stands the huge cake. It has appeared whole and perfect before them for most of the day, its train of sugar foliage glittering beneath the lights. But only minutes before the lights went out the guests gathered around to watch its ceremonial disembowelling.

Now the deep red sponge gapes from within.

Then from outside comes a new sound. You might almost mistake it for the wind. But it rises in pitch and volume until it is unmistakable.

The guests freeze. They stare at one another. They are suddenly afraid again. More so than they were when the lights went out. They all know what they are hearing. It is a scream of terror.

The Guest List by Lucy Foley. Reprinted by permission of HarperCollins Publishers Ltd. © 2021 Lucy Foley

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## First response

1. Why do you think the setting of the island is effective for this murder story?
2. Read paragraph one. List four things that happen when the lights go out.

## Close reading

1. How does the writer use language to present the storm in this section of the text? Try to comment on some of the words and phrases in bold.

Outside a storm is **raging**. It **shrieks around them**, it **batters** the marquee. At each **assault** the whole structure seems to **flex and shudder** with a **loud groaning** of metal; the guests **cower** in alarm. The doors have come free from their ties and **flap** at the entrance. The flames of the paraffin torches that illuminate the doorway **snicker**.

**It feels personal, this storm. It feels as though it has saved all its fury for them.**

2. How does the writer use language to describe the wedding cake in the following paragraph?

In the centre of everything stands the huge cake. It has appeared whole and perfect before them for most of the day, its train of sugar foliage glittering beneath the lights. But only minutes before the lights went out the guests gathered around to watch its ceremonial disembowelling. Now the deep red sponge gapes from within.

## Developing a response

1. Draw a line graph with the main plot points of the story along the bottom and the tension created up the side.

You might want to use the following plot points:

1. The lights go out
2. The storm rages outside the marquee
3. The guests begin to feel afraid in the dark
4. The lights come back on
5. The Irish band begin to play again in the dance tent
6. The guests hear a scream of terror

Discuss your graph with a partner. Do your graphs follow the same pattern?

## Concluding tasks

1. Find examples of each of the following techniques used by the writer:
  - Setting
  - Contrasting descriptions of light and darkness
  - Present tense verbs
  - Sensory descriptions
  - Questions
  - The use of the colour red
2. Now choose three of these techniques. Explain why you think they help to build tension.

## Linked Q5 task

Write the opening chapter to a crime thriller.

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# Small Island

Andrea Levy (2004)

**This extract is narrated by Gilbert who was born in Jamaica but fought for Britain in World War Two. In this section, he has returned to London after the war.**

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Gilbert

You see, most of the boys were looking upwards. Their feet might have been stepping on London soil for the first time - their shaking sea legs wobbling them on the steadfast land- but it was wonder that lifted their eyes. They finally arrive in London Town. And, let me tell you, the Mother Country - this thought-I-knew-you place - was bewildering these Jamaican boys. See them pointing at the train that rumbles across a bridge. They looked shocked when billowing black smoke puffed its way round the white washing hung on drying lines- the sheets, the pants, the babies' bonnets. Come, they had never seen houses so tall, all the same. And what is that? A chimney? They have fire in their house in England? No! And why everything look so dowdy? Even the sunshine can find no colour but grey. Staring on people who were staring on them. Man, the women look so glum. Traffic turning their head this way and that. Steady there, boy - watch out. Look, you see a white man driving a bus? And over there, can you believe what the eye is telling? A white man sweeping the road.

But this old RAF volunteer had seen it all before, during the war. So I was looking down, unlike them big-eyed newcomer boys. I just arrive back in England and there on the pavement before me I spy a brooch. What a piece of good fortune, what a little bit of luck. Lying lost, this precious oval jewel shimmered the radiant iridescent green of a hummingbird caught by the sun. My auntie Corinne would have raised her hands to the heavens to call it a sign.

Now these were the thoughts that passed through my head in the three steps it took me to reach that brooch. One: perhaps it fall from a young woman's coat. Cha, so my blessing was another's misfortune. Two: it was an old woman that lose it from her purse; maybe the police station was the proper place to take it. And three: Hortense - this deep-green brooch would look so pretty on her. I conjured an image in me mind. See me take the sparkling brooch to pin it to her dress, near her neck, against her smooth nut-brown skin. And look, see her touch the pin and tilt her head to charm a smile on me.

So all this rumination is taking place as I move closer. I was about to bend my knee so that I could reach the brooch when hear this... it flew away. Black flecks suddenly pitting the air. That jewel was no more than a cluster of flies caught by the light, the radiant iridescent green the movement of their squabbling backs. My eyes no longer believed what they saw. For after the host of flies flew they left me with just the small piece of brown dog's shit they had all gathered on. Was this a sign? Maybe. For one of the big-eyed newcomer boys walk straight along and step right in the muck.

Small Island by Andrea Levy, Headline Publishing Group Limited © 2004. Reproduced with permission of the Licensor through PLSclear.

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## First response

1. Underline all the words and phrases that tell you how the Jamaicans feel on arrival in London in the first two paragraphs. Why do you think they have the feelings they do?
2. How does Gilbert feel in comparison with the other Jamaicans at the start of paragraph two?

## Close reading

1. How does Levy use language to describe the brooch when Gilbert initially sees it in the following section:

But this old RAF volunteer had seen it all before, during the war. So I was looking down, unlike them big-eyed newcomer boys. I just arrive back in England and there on the pavement before me I spy a brooch. What a piece of good fortune, what a little bit of luck. Lying lost, this precious oval jewel shimmered the radiant iridescent green of a hummingbird caught by the sun. My auntie Corinne would have raised her hands to the heavens to call it a sign.

## Developing a response

1. Now look at the end of the text:

So all this rumination is taking place as I move closer. I was about to bend my knee so that I could reach the brooch when hear this... it flew away. Black flecks suddenly pitting the air. That jewel was no more than a cluster of flies caught by the light, the radiant iridescent green the movement of their squabbling backs. My eyes no longer believed what they saw. For after the host of flies flew they left me with just the small piece of brown dog's shit they had all gathered on. Was this a sign? Maybe. For one of the big-eyed newcomer boys walk straight along and step right in the muck.

How does the writer use language to describe what the brooch really is? You might think about the colours that are used in this section, the way the flies are described, the harsh sounds used in this paragraph and anything else that interests you.

## Concluding tasks

1. Throughout the extract Levy uses many contrasting images and ideas. Identify as many contrasts as you can. What are the effects of these contrasting images and ideas?
2. Some people believed the streets of England were 'paved with gold' in the 1950s. What do you think the incident with the brooch tells us about this belief?

## Linked Q5 task

Write a story entitled 'The Lucky Find'.

**or**

Write a story about a moment of disappointment.

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# *The Time Machine*

HG Wells (1985)

**The story follows a Victorian scientist, who claims that he has invented a device that enables him to travel through time, and has visited the future. In this extract he describes the experience of travel in his machine.**

I am afraid I cannot convey the peculiar sensations of time travelling. They are excessively unpleasant. There is a feeling exactly like that one has upon a switchback—of a helpless headlong motion! I felt the same horrible anticipation, too, of an imminent smash. As I put on pace, night followed day like the flapping of a black wing. The dim suggestion of the laboratory seemed presently to fall away from me, and I saw the sun hopping swiftly across the sky, leaping it every minute, and every minute marking a day. I supposed the laboratory had been destroyed and I had come into the open air. I had a dim impression of scaffolding, but I was already going too fast to be conscious of any moving things. The slowest snail that ever crawled dashed by too fast for me. The twinkling succession of darkness and light was excessively painful to the eye. Then, in the intermittent darkneses, I saw the moon spinning swiftly through her quarters from new to full, and had a faint glimpse of the circling stars. Presently, as I went on, still gaining velocity, the palpitation of night and day merged into one continuous greyness; the sky took on a wonderful deepness of blue, a splendid luminous colour like that of early twilight; the jerking sun became a streak of fire, a brilliant arch, in space; the moon a fainter fluctuating band; and I could see nothing of the stars, save now and then a brighter circle flickering in the blue.

The landscape was misty and vague. I was still on the hill-side upon which this house now stands, and the shoulder rose above me grey and dim. I saw trees growing and changing like puffs of vapour, now brown, now green; they grew, spread, shivered, and passed away. I saw huge buildings rise up faint and fair, and pass like dreams. The whole surface of the earth seemed changed—melting and flowing under my eyes. The little hands upon the dials that registered my speed raced round faster and faster. Presently I noted that the sun belt swayed up and down, from solstice to solstice, in a minute or less, and that consequently my pace was over a year a minute; and minute by minute the white snow flashed across the world, and vanished, and was followed by the bright, brief green of spring.

The unpleasant sensations of the start were less poignant now. They merged at last into a kind of hysterical exhilaration. I remarked indeed a clumsy swaying of the machine, for which I was unable to account. But my mind was too confused to attend to it, so with a kind of madness growing upon me, I flung myself into futurity.



## First response

What is happening in the passage?

Look again at the first paragraph. Identify some of the things the narrator sees as he travels through time.

## Close reading

The table below is a quick exercise in language analysis. It has been partially completed.

Selected word/phrase	Language feature/technique	Meaning(s)/effect(s)
'Night followed day like the flapping of a black wing'	Simile	This suggests that day and night were alternating very quickly and that he is travelling at an incredibly high speed. It creates the impression that the darkness of the night is exchanging with the lighter sky at a rapid pace.
'The sun hopping swiftly'		This gives the impression that the sun is moving quickly up and down, and again helps the reader to visualise how fast he is moving.
'Crawled' 'Dashed'	Verb Contrast	
	Verbs Present tense	The reader gets a sense of the rapid and varying movements of the time machine. They suggest how unstable and unpredictable the machine is which adds to the overall excitement and tension of this dramatic scene.
'Trees growing and changing like puffs of vapour'		
	Alliteration Repetition	
'Clumsy' 'Jerking' 'Confused'	Adjectives	
		This suggests the extreme sense of excitement the narrator is feeling, and hints that what he's experiencing borders madness, unreality.

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## Developing a response

Questions could include:

- What do you think has happened before this extract in the novel?
- What sort of person do you think the narrator is? What clues are we given to suggest his character/personality?
- What are the feelings that the narrator experiences throughout the extract? Do these feelings and the overall mood change as the extract develops? If so, how can you tell?
- Look at the first and final paragraphs – how has the sensation of travelling through time changed?
- How do you think the story will unfold? What do you think will happen next?

## Concluding task

The narrator seems very confused and shaken by the experience. To what extent do you agree? Remember to support your views with references to the extract.

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# Kangaroo

DH Lawrence (1923)

**In this extract, the DH Lawrence is describing the Australian outback and his journey through it, describing the scenery he encounters in vivid detail and also his fears of what is lurking in the undergrowth.**

He was a man with an income of four hundred a year, and a writer of poems and essays. In Europe, he had made up his mind that everything was done for, played out, finished, and he must go to a new country. The newest country: young Australia. Now he had tried Western Australia, and had looked at Adelaide and Melbourne. And the vast, uninhabited land frightened him. It seemed so hoary and lost, so unapproachable. The sky was pure, crystal pure and blue, of a lovely pale blue colour: the air was wonderful, new and unbreathed: and there were great distances. But the bush, the grey, charred bush. It scared him. As a poet, he felt himself entitled to all kinds of emotions and sensations which an ordinary man would have repudiated. Therefore he let himself feel all sorts of things about the bush. It was so phantom-like, so ghostly, with its tall pale trees and many dead trees, like corpses, partly charred by bush fires: and then the foliage so dark, like grey-green iron. And then it was so deathly still. Even the few birds seemed to be swamped in silence. Waiting, waiting — the bush seemed to be hoarily waiting. And he could not penetrate into its secret. He couldn't get at it. Nobody could get at it. What was it waiting for?

And then one night at the time of the full moon he walked alone into the bush. A huge electric moon, huge, and the tree-trunks like naked pale aborigines among the dark-soaked foliage, in the moonlight. And not a sign of life — not a vestige.

Yet something. Something big and aware and hidden! He walked on, had walked a mile or so into the bush, and had just come to a clump of

tall, nude, dead trees, shining almost phosphorescent with the moon, when the terror of the bush overcame him. He had looked so long at the vivid moon, without thinking. And now, there was something among the trees, and his hair began to stir with terror, on his head. There was a presence. He looked at the weird, white, dead trees, and into the hollow distances of the bush. Nothing! Nothing at all. He turned to go home. And then immediately the hair on his scalp stirred and went icy cold with terror. What of? He knew quite well it was nothing. He knew quite well. But with his spine cold like ice, and the roots of his hair seeming to freeze, he walked on home, walked firmly and without haste. For he told himself he refused to be afraid, though he admitted the icy sensation of terror. But then to experience terror is not the same thing as to admit fear into the conscious soul. Therefore he refused to be afraid.

But the horrid thing in the bush! He schemed as to what it would be. It must be the spirit of the place. Something fully evoked to-night, perhaps provoked, by that unnatural West- Australian moon. Provoked by the moon, the roused spirit of the bush. He felt it was watching, and waiting. Following with certainty, just behind his back. It might have reached a long black arm and gripped him. But no, it wanted to wait. It was not tired of watching its victim. An alien people — a victim. It was biding its time with a terrible ageless watchfulness, waiting for a far-off end, watching the myriad intruding white men.

THE CAMBRIDGE EDITION OF THE WORKS OF DH LAWRENCE: TWILIGHT IN ITALY AND OTHER ESSAYS (1994) © Cambridge University Press 1994. Reproduced by permission of Paper Lion Ltd, The Estate of Frieda Lawrence Ravagli and Cambridge University Press

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## Definition

Hoary: Extremely old, or specifically having grey or white hair on account of age.

## First response

Considerations could include:

- Where is the passage set?
- What do we learn about the man who is the focus of the story?
- What are Lawrence's initial feelings towards this place?

## Close reading

Read the first paragraph again.

Look in detail at the way the writer describes the landscape. Identify words/phrases the writer uses to suggest that the Australian bush is a frightening place.

Explore the meanings and effects of these.

## Developing a response

Think about the structure of the whole source:

- Do you think this extract appears towards the beginning or the end of the novel? Give reasons for your answer.
- What is the focus of each of the paragraphs? How do the paragraphs link together?
- Pinpoint the pivotal change in the extract? Explain the effects of this shift in the narrative.
- How does the narrator intensify his feeling of fear throughout the extract? Look specifically at the third paragraph here.

## Concluding task

Consider the whole source. How does the writer portray the Australian bush as a scary place? Comment on the writer's use of language and structure, and the effects on the reader. Remember to support your views with references to the text.

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# *The Passion*

Jeanette Winterson (1998)

**The novel follows Henri, a young French soldier, and Villanelle, a vivacious Venetian, as they navigate war and love in early 19th-century Europe. In extract 1, Villanelle is walking the quiet pre-dawn streets of Venice brooding after a romantic dinner encounter with the “Queen of Spades”.**

## Extract 1

How is it that one day life is orderly and you are content, a little cynical perhaps but on the whole just so, and then without warning you find the solid floor is a trapdoor and you are now in another place whose geography is uncertain and whose customs are strange?

Travellers at least have a choice. Those who set sail know that things will not be the same as at home. Explorers are prepared. But for us, who travel to cities of the interior by chance, there is no preparation. We who are fluent find life is a foreign language. Somewhere between the swamp and the mountains. Somewhere between fear and sex. Somewhere between God and the Devil passion is and the way there is sudden and the way back worse.

## Extract 2

I didn't know what hate felt like, not the hate that comes after love. It's huge and desperate and it longs to be proved wrong. And every day it's proved right it grows a little more monstrous. If the love was passion, the hate will be obsession. A need to see the once-loved weak and cowed beneath pity. Disgust is close and dignity is far away. The hate is not only for the once loved, it's for yourself too; how could you ever have loved this?

Excerpt from 'The Passion' by Jeanette Winterson, reproduced by permission of Peters, Fraser & Dunlop on behalf of Jeanette Winterson.

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## First response

You could consider:

- What is the narrator experiencing in these extracts?
- What is she talking about?

## Close reading

Consider the following words and phrases taken from the extract:

- 'the solid floor is a trapdoor'
- 'life is a foreign language'
- 'it grows a little more monstrous'

Analyse the writer's use of language in the above quotations. What can you infer about the way the narrator is feeling?

## Developing a response

What's your impression of the main character based on these extracts?

Split the second extract into single sentences, and write/photocopy these onto separate slips of paper. Try moving the sentences into a different order. What effect does this have on your reading and understanding?

This exercise should start to get you thinking about the decisions writers make about structuring their writing.

## Concluding task

Consider both extracts.

How does the writer convey the negative experiences of the narrator? Remember to discuss the writer's use of language and support your response with references to the text.

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# *Travels With My Aunt*

Graham Greene (1969)

**Graham Greene talks about meeting his aunt for the first time in this extract and what was happening in his own life at the time. He is describing his family life and childhood memories.**

I met my Aunt Augusta for the first time in more than half a century at my mother's funeral. My mother was approaching eighty-six when she died, and my aunt was some eleven or twelve years younger. I had retired from the bank two years before with an adequate pension and a silver handshake. There had been a take-over by the Westminster and my branch was considered redundant. Everyone thought me lucky, but I found it difficult to occupy my time. I have never married, I have always lived quietly, and, apart from my interest in dahlias, I have no hobby. For those reasons I found myself agreeably excited by my mother's funeral.

My father had been dead for more than forty years. He was a building contractor of a lethargic disposition who used to take afternoon naps in all sorts of curious places. This irritated my mother, who was an energetic woman, and she used to seek him out to disturb him. As a child I remember going to the bathroom – we lived in Highgate then – and finding my father asleep in the bath in his clothes. I am rather short-sighted and I thought that my mother had been cleaning an overcoat, until I heard my father whisper, "Bolt the door on the inside when you go out". He was too lazy to get out of the bath and too sleepy, I suppose, to realize that his order was quite impossible to carry out. At another time, when he was responsible for a new block of flats in Lewisham, he would take his catnap in the cabin of the giant crane, and construction would be halted until he woke.

My mother, who had a good head for heights, would climb ladders to the highest scaffolding in the hope of discovering him, when as like as not he would have found a corner in what was to be the underground garage. I had always thought of them as reasonably happy together: their twin roles of the hunter and the hunted probably suited them, for my mother by the time I first remembered her had developed an alert poise of the head and a wary trotting pace which reminded me of a gun-dog. I must be forgiven these memories of the past: at a funeral they are apt to come unbidden, there is so much waiting about.

Not many people attended the service, which took place at a famous crematorium, but there was that slight stirring of excited expectation which is never experienced at a graveside. Will the oven doors open? Will the coffin stick on the way to the flames? I heard a voice behind me saying in very clear old accents, "I was present once at a premature cremation".

It was, as I recognized, with some difficulty, from a photograph in the family album, my Aunt Augusta, who had arrived late, dressed rather as the late Queen Mary of beloved memory might have dressed if she had still been with us and had adapted herself a little bit towards the present mode. I was surprised by her brilliant red hair, monumentally piled, and her two big front teeth which gave her a vital Neanderthal air. Somebody said, "Hush", and a clergyman began a prayer which I believe he must have composed himself.

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I had heard it at any other funeral service, and I have attended a great number in my time. A bank manager is expected to pay his last respects to every old client who is not as we say "in the red", and in any case I have a weakness for funerals.

People are generally seen at their best on these occasions, serious and sober, and optimistic on the subject of personal immortality.

The funeral of my mother went without a hitch. The flowers were moved economically from the coffin, which at a touch of a button slid away from us out of sight. Afterwards in the troubled sunlight, I shook hands with a number of nephews and nieces and cousins whom I hadn't seen for years and could not identify. It was understood that I had to wait for the ashes and wait I did, while the chimney of the crematorium gently smoked overhead.

"You must be Henry," Aunt Augusta said, gazing reflectively at me with her sea-deep blue eyes.

"Yes," I said, "and you must be Aunt Augusta."

Travels With My Aunt by Graham Greene. Penguin Classics, 1991. Permission granted via David Higham Associates Ltd



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## First response

Possible tasks include:

- What is happening in the passage?
- List some things we learn about Aunt Augusta.
- What are your first impressions of the narrator?

## Close reading

Look in detail from line 57 to the end of the extract. Three questions come to mind:

- What's your impression of Aunt Augusta?
- What can you infer about Aunt Augusta from the narrator's description of her?
- What can you infer about the narrator's feelings towards her?

Remember to identify specific words and phrases and comment on the writer's use of language.

## Developing a response

You could ask:

- How do we know that this is from the opening pages of the novel?
- What type of person do you think Henry is, based on his thoughts in the extract?
- What effect does the inclusion of dialogue have at the end of the extract?

## Concluding task

Consider the way the writer has structured the whole extract. How does the narrator's focus change throughout? What effect does this create on you as a reader?

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# The Beach

Alex Garland (1996)

**The extract is describing the character's experience of being in a beautiful location and describing his memories as he attempts to jump off a cliff into the water below.**

I lit up and crawled back to the cliff edge.

If, I reasoned, the waterfall had been pounding down into the pool below for a thousand years, then it was likely that a basin had been eroded into the rock. A basin deep enough to accommodate my leaping into it. But if the island had been created relatively recently, maybe the result of volcanic activity two hundred years ago, then there might not have been time for a deep enough pool to have formed.

'But what do I know?' I said, exhaling slowly, and Francoise looked up to see if I was talking to her.

The pebbles in the water were smooth. The trees below were tall and old.

'OK,' I whispered.

I stood up cautiously, one foot an inch from the cliff, the other set back at a stabilizing angle. A memory appeared of making Airfix aeroplanes, filling them with cotton wool, covering them in lighter fuel, setting fire to them, dropping them from the top window of my house.

'Are you jumping?' called Etienne nervously. 'Just taking a better look.'

As the planes fell, they would arc outwards, then appear to curve back towards the wall. The point where they landed, exploding into sticky, burning pieces, always seemed to be nearer to the edge of the house than I expected.

The distance was difficult to judge; the model planes always needed a harder shove than seemed necessary if they were to clear the doorstep, and the head of anyone coming to investigate the patches of flame around the yard.

I was turning this memory over when something happened. An overwhelming sensation washed over me, almost boredom, a strange listlessness. I was suddenly sick of how difficult this journey had become. There was too much effort, too many shocks and dilemmas to dissect. And this sickness had an effect. For a vital few seconds it liberated me from a fear of consequences. I'd had enough. I just wanted it over with.

So near and so far.

'So jump,' I heard my voice say.

I paused, wondering if I'd heard myself correctly, and then I did. I jumped.

From *The Beach* by Alex Garland published by Penguin. Copyright © Alex Garland, 1996. Reprinted by permission of Penguin Books Limited.

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## First response

- Where do you think the passage is set?
- What happens in this passage?

## Close reading

What do the following words/phrases suggest about the way the narrator is feeling at that moment in the passage?

- “I [...] crawled back to the cliff edge” (line 1).
- ‘exhaling slowly’ (line 12)
- ‘I stood up cautiously’ (line 18)

Consider the whole passage. How does the writer convey the narrator’s feelings as he builds himself up to jump off the cliff edge?

You could explore in detail the writer’s use of:

- Direct speech
- The significance of his memory of Airfix aeroplanes.
- The varying lengths of paragraphs.
- The description of the sensation seconds before he jumps.
- Any other words/phrases you find relevant/ interesting.

## Developing a response

Possible questions span:

- What is happening in each stage of this extract?
- How does the narrator’s focus shift during these moments?
- Why do you think the author included Françoise and Étienne’s comments?
- What is the purpose of the narrator’s flashback to his childhood when he made Airfix aeroplanes?
- How does the writer build suspense throughout the extract?
- Reading from “An overwhelming sensation washed over me” (line 38), to the end of the extract, two contrasting emotions seem to emerge. What are they and why does the writer include both of these states of mind?

## Concluding task

Consider the whole source. ‘The reader experiences the moments leading up to the jump almost as though in slow motion.’

To what extent do you agree with this interpretation?

Consider the writer’s use of structure and language. Remember to support your response with references to the text.

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