

PART ONE: INTRODUCTION

How to use these papers

This book contains four York Notes example GCSE English Language practice test papers: there are two Paper 1s (fiction) and two Paper 2s (non-fiction). All these York Notes papers have been modelled on the ones that you will sit in your AQA GCSE 9–1 English Language exams.

There are lots of ways these papers can support your study and revision for the AQA GCSE 9–1 English Language exam. There is no 'right' way – choose the one or ones that suits your learning style best.

You could use them:

1 Alongside York Notes AQA English Language and Literature: Revision and Exam Practice

Do you have the York Notes *Revision and Exam Practice* guide for AQA GCSE English Language (and Literature)?

The papers in this book will allow you to try out the skills and techniques outlined in Chapters 1 to 6 of the guide. So you could:

- read a section of the guide dealing with one specific question type
- complete this question in one of the practice papers printed here.

2 As a stand-alone revision programme

Have you already mastered all of the skills needed for your exam?

Then you can keep your skills fresh by answering one or two questions from this book each day or week.

You could make a revision diary and allocate particular questions to particular times.

3 As a form of mock exam

Would you like to work under exam conditions?

You could put aside part of a day to work on a full paper in a quiet room. Set a stopwatch so that you can experience what it will be like in your real exam. If some of your friends have copies of this book then several of you could all do this together and discuss your answers afterwards.

4 As a combination of revision and exam practice

Would you like to do some revision and then try a mock exam?

Perhaps you could work through one set of papers slowly – question by question over a number of days – and then save the other set of papers to use as a mock nearer the exam.

How to use the answer sections

This book contains answer sections that will help you to understand what the examiners are looking for, and how your own responses compare against sample answers at a range of levels.

Sample answers show the key points and ideas you could have included.

Answers and model responses

Paper 1: Section A

1 (P1)

Any four or more answers from the following:

- The street was 'lively and busy'.
- There's 'a place of quiet houses'.
- The houses were 'standing behind the garden'.
- The house names were 'printed on the coloured placards'.
- The house names seemed 'Lazuli', 'The Captain' and 'Gargaris'.
- Gargaris had a turret 'crowned with a conical roof' which resembled a witch's hat.

2 (P2)

Possible answers

- The silence of the atmosphere is expressed by the adjective 'quiet'.
- The writer encourages readers to draw the reader's eye to the way that the writer uses a long sentence to reflect the way that the road 'curved to the right, ending in an open space through which passed a canal beneath a low arched bridge'.
- The adjective 'low' implies a sense of restriction.
- The writer uses it to draw our attention because the length of the sentence is 'ticking out the shape of the canal'.
- The word 'low' is often used as a metaphorical setting for similar events.
- The silence in the middle of the tale may be a symbol of isolation.
- This sense of isolation is reinforced when the writer states, 'I do not suppose I passed a single passer'. This implies that the streets were almost empty.
- The writer seems to use the word 'low' to suggest a sense of restriction or a lack of certainty.
- When the narrator states, 'The half light now, how deceiving!' the verb 'deceived' suggests irony about the reference to 'half light' in terms of the ghostly atmosphere.
- 'These silent streets' is an allusion to places which once again draw attention to the quietness that surrounds the narrator.
- The noun 'loneliness' the focus of the question is used directly in the text in the phrase 'turning

Paper 1: Answers and model responses

reinforce the silence again through 'lonely', and the fact that these houses were like places 'behind closed curtains' emphasises the quiet and mystery.

- The phrase 'half light now' reflects the sound of the whispering feet.
- The adjective 'lonely' suggests something isolated and ready to be, implying separability.
- The verb 'filled' has connotations of constraint or restriction.
- Since the sound of laughter is 'suddenly stifled' the narrator suggests that joy was inappropriate in the setting.
- The adjective 'lonely' in 'loneliness of a child' implies something unexpected which might shock the reader.
- The 'low of a street' suggests negative emotion such as sorrow or pain.

Sample student responses

Level	Skills descriptors
Higher	Shows detailed interpretative understanding of language. You select a very well-chosen range of details from the text. You analyse the effects of the writer's choice of language. You make explicit the use of accurate terminology.
Mid	Shows clear understanding of language. You select a relevant range of details from the text. You clearly explain the effects of the writer's choice of language. You use accurate terminology.
Lower	This student gives an accurate descriptive response. This is achieved by using simple words to become progressively involved in the narrator's journey along the road that 'curved to the right'. The adjective 'low' describing the 'arched bridge' implies a sense of restriction and isolation which is further reinforced by additional adjectives throughout the text, such as 'quiet', 'lonely', 'loneliness' and 'quiet'. Furthermore, the writer's reference to 'quiet houses' and 'quiet streets' suggests an atmosphere of quiet which reinforces the mood of the setting.

We know that it is nearly night because the 'half light' is 'ticking out the shape of the canal'. The verb 'deceived' used in 'The half light now, how deceiving!' has connotations of mystery or fear.

The marking criteria tell you what the examiners are looking for.

PART TWO: YORK NOTES PRACTICE TEST ONE

Mid Level

Focus on what details

Well structured

Only that morning, I ran to my bedroom window to see over the wall. A few faces looked on the glass and then they got down and disappeared behind the road.

Below me, the street looked empty. The pavement was like a sandy beach. A dog barked in the road behind the houses and he let out a long, low, low sound that was at a low, but not low.

Below me, the street looked empty. The pavement was like a sandy beach. A dog barked in the road behind the houses and he let out a long, low, low sound that was at a low, but not low.

Use of literary device (metonymy at 1)

Lower Level

Needs more variety in sentence forms so we have several sentences starting 'My'.

Incorrect grammar. This should be 'the year'.

The word 'lively' is a bit too informal. 'Lively' might be a better word choice.

Attempts to vary vocabulary.

Attempts to use simile but this is rather clumsy.

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Attempts to vary vocabulary.

Attempts to use simile but this is rather clumsy.

Slightly confused image, not developed.

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Sample responses at different levels show you the difference between Higher, Mid and Lower Level work.

Paper 1: Section B

5 (AO5) (AO6)

Level	Skills descriptors
Higher	<p>Content (AO5) Your writing is confidently matched to the purpose of the task. Your register is convincing and compelling to the audience. You use an extensive and ambitious vocabulary. Your work is well crafted. You make excellent use of linguistic devices.</p> <p>Organisation (AO5) Your writing is compelling. You make varied and inventive use of structural features. You include a range of convincing and complex ideas. Your paragraphs are linked fluently.</p> <p>Technical Accuracy (AO6) Your sentences are well defined and consistently accurate. You use a range of punctuation with a high level of accuracy. You use a full range of appropriate sentence forms for effect. You use Standard English consistently and appropriately. Your grammar is excellent. Your spelling is highly accurate, including the spelling of ambitious vocabulary.</p>
Mid	<p>Content (AO5) Your writing is generally well matched to the purpose of the task. Your register is generally matched to the audience. Your vocabulary is chosen for effect and you make some sophisticated word choices. You use linguistic devices successfully.</p> <p>Organisation (AO5) Your writing is engaging. You make effective use of structural features. You use a range of clear, connected ideas. Your paragraphs are well linked.</p> <p>Technical Accuracy (AO6) Your sentences are securely defined and mostly accurate. You use a range of punctuation, mostly with success. You use a variety of sentence forms for effect. You use Standard English appropriately. Your grammar is good. Your spelling is generally accurate, including the spelling of complex and irregular words.</p>

Lower	<p>Content (AO5) Your writing is sometimes matched to the purpose of the task. You try to match your register (level of formality) to the audience. You make an attempt to vary your vocabulary. You make some use of linguistic devices.</p> <p>Organisation (AO5) Some of your writing is clear. You use some structural features. You include a variety of linked and relevant ideas. You use paragraphs and make some use of discourse markers.</p> <p>Technical Accuracy (AO6) Most of your sentences are correctly defined. You show some control of a range of punctuation. You try to use a variety of sentence forms. You mostly use Standard English. Some of your grammar is correct. Your work includes some accurate spelling of more complex words.</p>
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Write a description suggested by the picture on page 17.

Sample student responses

Higher Level

Ghostly arms reach out at contorted angles, stiff knees and knuckles shift slightly in the breeze. These trees are watching ... their roots slipping slowly down banks, their claw-like feet creeping closer to the stranger. She skips along an uneven path oblivious to their enmity.

Beneath her feet, stones fly back. They launch spasmodic attacks at the roots. The girl never sees her enemy for she is focusing on the light that flickers close to the horizon.

The whispering sea of grass parts as she sails its channel, her black hood billowing behind her like a wind chute.

From somewhere far away a bird calls out. It is a cuckoo taking illegal possession of another bird's nest. It is stealing their space in the same way that these trees seek to do. The road ahead rises and leans to the right. The stranger trusts it; she allows it to guide her towards a clearing that lies around the corner.

Once she is gone, the trees will lose their power. For now they can suck up her brief burst of energy and, for a moment, relieve the agony of their ancient, aching limbs.

Ambitious vocabulary

Variety of sentence forms and range of punctuation

The 's' sounds here create sibilance

Use of the senses (sound)