



REDHILL SCHOOL

English Department



This booklet is designed as a first port-of-call for parents, for use at home with your child. It provides suggestions, activities and ideas for how best to support your child in their learning within English. These activities and suggestions dovetail with in-class learning, in order to assist students in making the maximum progress possible, both in and outside of lessons.

Home Support Booklet

English Language Paper 1

The most important advice we can give is to encourage your child to read widely. Lots of different texts, lots of different authors; lots of different styles—including challenging texts, and those from as far back as the 19th century. This will form an excellent basis upon which to build in English lessons.

Background on the paper

This paper consists of 2 sections: reading and writing, on fictional texts. Section A is made up of 4 questions on reading; section B is 1 question testing creative writing skills. The whole paper is worth 80 marks and lasts 1 hour 45 minutes.

The paper will start with an extract from a fiction text. This could be from the 19th, 20th or 21st century and will about 1 –1 1/2 sides long. Pupils should read this text once they have read the questions on the paper through. Please be aware that the questions increase in difficulty as the paper progresses – some pupils might struggle to even access the later questions.

For this booklet, we have used different texts for most questions. In the exam, they would all be centred around the same extract.

The following pages break the paper down into each of the questions and provide some ideas and activities for how to support your child’s in-class learning at home.

Question One

This question is a comprehension question and is worth 4 marks.

Suggestions to support learning:

- Read different fiction extracts from books and:
 - * write down 4 things they have learnt from the extract.
 - * Ask and answer questions about specific elements of the extract.
- Check understanding of what has been read through discussion.

Example Activity:

Read the extract below and then answer the exam-style questions over the page.

About a Boy – Nick Hornby (prose fiction, 1998)

12-year-old Marcus’s mother and father separated four years ago. Marcus has recently moved from Cambridge to London with his mother. It is his second day at his new school and he has arrived early and gone to the form room to try and avoid some students that have been giving him a hard time.

There were a couple of girls in the room, but they ignored him, unless the snort of laughter he heard while he was getting his reading book out had anything to do with him.

What was there to laugh at? Not much, really, unless you were the kind of person who was on permanent lookout for something to laugh at. Unfortunately, that was exactly the kind of person most kids were, in his experience. They patrolled up and down school corridors like sharks, except that what they were on the lookout for wasn’t flesh but the wrong trousers, or the wrong t-shirt, or the wrong haircut, or the wrong shoes, any or all of which sent them wild with excitement. As he was usually wearing the wrong shoes or the wrong trousers, and his haircut was wrong all the time, every day of the week, he didn’t have to do very much to send them all demented.

Marcus knew he was weird, and he knew that part of the reason he was weird was because his mum was weird. She just didn’t get this, any of it. She was always telling him

About a Boy continued – Nick Hornby

that only shallow people made judgements on the basis of clothes or hair; she didn't want him to watch rubbish television, or listen to rubbish music, or play rubbish computer games (she thought they were all rubbish), which meant that if he wanted to do anything that any of the other kids spent their time doing he had to argue with her for hours. He usually lost, and she was so good at arguing that he felt good about losing. She could explain why listening to Joni Mitchell and Bob Marley (who happened to be her two favourite singers) was much better for him than listening to Snoop Doggy Dogg, and why it was more important to read books than to play on the Gameboy his dad had given him. But he couldn't pass any of this on to the kids at school. If he tried to tell Lee Hartley - the biggest and loudest and nastiest of the kids he'd met yesterday - that he didn't approve of Snoop Doggy Dogg because Snoop Doggy Dogg had a bad attitude to women, Lee Hartley would thump him, or call him something that he didn't want to be called. It wasn't so bad in Cambridge, because there were loads of kids who weren't right for school, and loads of mums who had made them that way, but in London it was different.

Questions: Read paragraph 2 again.

List 4 things that the other children thought were 'wrong' with Marcus. OR

Read paragraph 3 again.

List 4 things Marcus' mum didn't want him to do. OR

List 4 reasons why Marcus found school difficult. OR

(from the whole source)

List 4 reasons why Marcus thinks he is 'weird'.

Question Two

This question is a language analysis question and is worth 8 marks.

Suggestions to support learning:

- Read different fiction extracts from books and:
 - * Think about the language used—why did the writer make these choices?
 - * See if they can spot language devices (see below).
 - * Comment on the effect of the language devices on the reader—what do they do to the reader? What do they make us think of or feel?
 - * Try continuing the extract in the style that the author uses, thinking carefully about the decisions you make when selecting words.
 - * Also consider sentence structures and how they contribute to the effect.
 - * Practise writing PEEZL paragraphs to answer a question. E.g. how does the writer use language to show...? Point—your answer to the question. Evidence—your quote. Explanation —comments on effect. Zoom—which word most stands out, and why. Link—return to the question.

Example Activity:

Read the extract and then answer the exam-style question below.

Home: The story of everyone who ever lived in our house

– Julie Myerson (literary non-fiction, 2004)

The narrator, Julie Myerson, has discovered that in 1881 a writer and journalist called Henry Hayward lived in her house with his wife Charlotte and their three children. In this extract Myerson, her husband Jonathan and their three children, Jake, Raphael and Chloe, are stripping the wallpaper from the walls of the house.

And the layers of paper curled and rolled off and dropped onto the floor – and, quite perfectly preserved, half a dozen different patterns were revealed: imitation wood grain (the sixties?), brown zigzags (the fifties?) – then a bold Art Deco style in cobalt and scarlet (the twenties?). Under that, large Morris-style chocolate ferns and flowers, and beneath that a solid layer of thick custard-coloured paint. Each layer – imperfectly glued, faded, merged — revealed another.

‘What smells so horrible?’ said Jake, wrinkling his nose.

‘The glue, I think,’ Jonathan said. ‘Probably made from bones.’

‘Wicked!’ said Raphael and then, frowning, ‘But would vegetarians have used it?’

‘Weren’t really any vegetarians then.’

‘Just think,’ I said, as another William Morris-style lily showed us its black, almost funereally rimmed edges, ‘how long since anyone saw these patterns? I wonder when each one was covered up.’

Question: How does the writer use language to describe the wallpaper?

Pupils would have around 10-15 minutes to answer this question in the exam and should aim to write around 1-2 sides. They should use a PEEZL structure in their response (see previous page).

Comments on effect are typically the most challenging for pupils, and so it might be helpful for them to consider the following:

- What does the language/ word remind the reader of? E.g. “thick custard coloured paint” - reminds the reader of unpleasant, gloopy school puddings, slopped on the wall
- What does the language/ word make the reader feel? E.g. “thick custard coloured paint” - makes the reader feel disgusted, and as if no care has been taken over the decorating
- Why might the writer have chosen these specific words/ phrasing? E.g. - the writer might have made this comparison as custard is quite a distinctive, vibrant colour—not really one we would expect to see on a tastefully decorated wall!

It is also a good idea to look for techniques that the writer might have used and mention these in their response. For instance:

* simile * metaphor * alliteration * personification * adjectives * imagery * onomatopoeia * assonance
* pathetic fallacy * verbs * adverbs * repetition * connectives * hyperbole * oxymoron * paradox *
Imperatives * modals * euphemism * tone * colloquial language * sibilance * fricative * plosive *

Question Three

This question is a structure analysis question and is worth 8 marks.

Suggestions to support learning:

- Read different fiction extracts from books and:
 - * Work out, paragraph by paragraph, what is happening in the text. How does it start? What happens next? How does it end?
 - * Look at the text in 3 different ways: 1) in the whole text, what journey does the writer take us on? We go from what....to what? 2) Within paragraphs, how is the text structured? Are there paragraphs with lots of long, complex sentences? Is there a mix of complex and simple, short sentences? Why might this be? 3) Within sentences, have we got any notable punctuation? Do we have any single sentence or single word paragraphs? Why?
 - * Find out about structural techniques that a writer can use in fiction. Here's some to start them off: End focus, repetition, pivotal moment, chronological order...
 - * For everything they consider about structure, they need to think carefully about the effect on the reader, and why the writer made those decisions.

Example Activity:

Read again the extract for question 2 (wallpaper), and answer the exam-style question below.

Question: How has the writer structured the text to interest the reader?

Pupils would have around 10-15 minutes to answer this question in the exam and should aim to write around 1-2 sides.

This whole question is generally quite challenging, and many pupils struggle with the concept. It is useful to remember the following things:

- At every step of the way, write about WHY the writer has structured the text in this way, and the EFFECT on the reader (how does it make them feel; what does it make them think of).
- They still need to give quotes in this answer, but they do not need to talk about language as they did in question 2.
- Write a brief introduction about the whole of the source—how is it structured, and why?
- Continue by talking about how the source opens. Does it start in the middle of the action (in media res), or is it chronological? Maybe it's a flashback?
- Find a pivotal moment in the source—a moment where something seems to change, or the reader has a realisation. Why is it at that point?
- What happens after the pivotal moment? What journey is the writer taking us on, and why?

- How does the source end? Is this similar or totally different to the beginning?
 - Examiners also look favourably upon comments about sentence structure and the effect of this. They also expect to see terminology in answers (this includes the examples mentioned earlier).
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Question Four

This question is an opinion based question and is worth 20 marks. It is about being a critical reader, and developing opinions on a text that you can support with evidence.

Suggestions to support learning:

- Read different fiction extracts from books and:
 - * Consider what a reader might say about the extract as a whole—how it makes them feel, what it reminds them of; what they think the writer is trying to do. Then create a table of evidence, supporting (or refuting) these statements, using proof from the text.
 - * Look at some past exam papers (or sample papers online). CGP and other publishers offer ‘exam style’ questions with mark schemes that can form excellent practice for this sort of thing.
 - * Visit Youtube and watch videos on how to tackle this question. Search ‘Redhill English’ for lots of playlists linking to the best videos to support learning.
 - * Practise developing a dialogue about books. Ask your child questions about their thoughts on what they are reading, and ask them to justify their ideas with proof.
 - * Practise writing for extended periods with your child. 20 marks is a vast amount, and some pupils struggle with the sheer idea of writing for such a long time. This writing needn’t be related to the exam—they could simply be writing about their day at school, for instance.
 - * Encourage your child to learn about the authors that have written the texts they are reading or have read. Contextual knowledge is also important and supports their understanding of fictional texts. Time periods are also important—for instance, understanding the life of a Victorian pauper can help gain better insight into Dickens’ *Oliver Twist*, for example.

Example Activity:

Read the new extract over the page, and answer the exam-style question below.

Question: After reading this extract, a pupil said: “the writer makes it really clear how it feels to be inside the carriage. I almost believe I am right there with the characters.” How far do you agree with this statement?

The few passengers huddled together for warmth, exclaiming in unison when the coach sank into a heavier rut than usual, and one old fellow, who had kept up a constant complaint ever since he had joined the coach at Truro, rose from his seat in a fury; and, fumbling with the window-sash, let the window down with a crash, bringing a shower of rain upon himself and his fellow-passengers. He thrust his head out and shouted up to the driver, cursing him in a high petulant voice for a rogue and a murderer; that they would all be dead before they reached Bodmin if he persisted in driving at breakneck speed; they had no breath left in their bodies as it was, and he for one would never travel by coach again. Whether the driver heard him or not was uncertain: it seemed more likely that the stream of reproaches was carried away in the wind, for the old fellow, after waiting a moment, put up the window again, having thoroughly chilled the interior of the coach, and, settling himself once more in his corner, wrapped his blanket about his knees and muttered in his beard. His nearest neighbour, a jovial, red-faced woman in a blue cloak, sighed heavily, in sympathy, and, with a wink to anyone who might be looking and a jerk of her head towards the old man, she remarked for at least the twentieth time that it was the dirtiest night she ever remembered, and she had known some; that it was proper old weather and no mistaking it for summer this time; and, burrowing into the depths of a large basket, she brought out a great hunk of cake and plunged into it with strong white teeth.

Mary Yellan sat in the opposite corner, where the trickle of rain oozed through the crack in the roof. Sometimes a cold drip of moisture fell upon her shoulder, which she brushed away with impatient fingers. She sat with her chin cupped in her hands, her eyes fixed on the window splashed with mud and rain, hoping with a sort of desperate interest that some ray of light would break the heavy blanket of sky, and but a momentary trace of that lost blue heaven that had mantled Helford yesterday shine for an instant as a forerunner of fortune.

Pupils would have around 30-35 minutes to answer this question in the exam and should aim to write around 2-4 sides.

This whole question is again quite challenging, and many pupils struggle with the concept. It is useful to remember the following things:

- Ideas from Q2 and Q3 can be re-used here.
- Follow the PEEZL structure—the mark scheme of this question still relies on the same principle as question 2.
- Write an introduction explaining their response to the statement. It is much easier to agree and the exam papers tend to point pupils in this direction; but a more able pupil should be thinking about interrogating the statement.
- Pupils should consider language and structure and how the writer's choices help support the overall effect on the reader.
- A conclusion is also important, where all of the loose ends are brought together.

Question Five

This question is a writing question and is worth the same amount of marks as the whole of questions 1-4 put together! Pupils are marked on their content and organisation (24 marks) and their technical accuracy (16 marks).

Question Five—continued

Suggestions to support learning:

- Encourage your child to practice writing in a fictional style. This could be :
 - * Narrative (narrating action)
 - * Description (focused on one or two things; not necessarily part of a story)
 - * Story (they will usually specify the start/ end)

See the following link for more information:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iaEJ-HVpl9g>