Revision for AQA GCSE English Language
Acknowledgements
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**Introduction**

The GCSE English Language examination is unusual in that it does not require any revision of content. Consequently, these ‘revision’ materials are designed to boost students’ abilities in tackling various aspects of the reading and writing sections of both papers.

It is worth bearing in mind the following when using these materials:

- Teachers can take students through the activities sequentially, or in any order they wish. They can also choose to omit certain activities and add in different ones of their own.
- Teachers can use the materials in conjunction with the sample texts and examination papers included, or with alternative texts of their own choice.
- The materials are designed to remind students about key aspects of their exams, but also to help them to engage with those aspects in ways that will improve their general understanding and confidence.
- The materials can be used in classrooms, or photocopied for students to use at home as part of their general revision.
- The materials can be shared across a school or college, with teachers and students, but cannot be disseminated more widely.
- The materials have been designed using sample materials freely available on the AQA website as models. They are not in any way endorsed by AQA and teachers should use them alongside any guidance available from the official awarding body.

### Reading (50%) Read and understand a range of texts to:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AO1</th>
<th>Identify and interpret explicit and implicit information and ideas</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Select and synthesise evidence from different texts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AO2</td>
<td>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</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AO3</td>
<td>Compare writers’ ideas and perspectives, as well as how these are conveyed, across two or more texts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AO4</td>
<td>Evaluate texts critically and support this with appropriate textual references</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Writing (50%)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AO5</th>
<th>Communicate clearly, effectively and imaginatively, selecting and adapting tone, style and register for different forms, purposes and audiences</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Organise information and ideas, using structural and grammatical features to support coherence and cohesion of texts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AO6</td>
<td>Candidates must use a range of vocabulary and sentence structures for clarity, purpose and effect, with accurate spelling and punctuation. (This requirement must constitute 20% of the marks for each specification as a whole.)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
SAMPLE PAPERS FOR AQA ENGLISH LANGUAGE GCSE (9-1)

- Paper 1: Explorations in creative reading and writing
- Paper 2: Writers’ viewpoints and perspectives

Paper 1: Explorations in Creative Reading and Writing

Time: 1 hour 45 minutes

[NB. These materials have been devised following the model offered by the awarding body in their sample materials. They have not been approved by the awarding body and teachers should use them in conjunction with their own understanding of the AB’s assessment criteria.]

Source A

From The Narrow Road to the Deep North, by Richard Flanagan

This passage is from a novel set in Tasmania, Australia. In this part of the story, set in the late 1940s, Dorrigo Evans and his family, trapped in a car, escape from a ferocious forest fire.

A fireball, the size of a trolley bus and as blue as gas flame, appeared as if by magic on the road and rolled towards them. As the Ford Mercury swerved around it and straightened back up, Dorrigo found he had no choice but to ignore the burning debris that appeared out of the smoke and hurtled at them – sticks, branches, palings – sometimes hitting and bouncing off the car. He grunted as he worked the column shift up and down, spinning the big steering wheel hard left and right, white-walled tyres squealing on bubbling black bitumen, the noise only occasionally audible in the cacophony of flame roar and wind shriek, the weird machine gun-like cracking of branches above exploding.

They came over a rise to see a huge burning tree falling across the road a hundred yards or so in front of them. Flames flared up high along the tree trunk as it bounced on landing, its burning crown settling in a neat front yard to create an instant bonfire that merged into a burning house. Wedging his knee into the door, Dorrigo pushed with all his strength on the brake pedal. The Ford Mercury went into a four-wheel slide, spinning sideways and skidding straight towards the tree, slewing to a halt only yards from the flaring tree trunk.

No one spoke.

Hands wet with sweat on the wheel, panting heavily, Dorrigo Evans weighed their options. They were all bad. The road out in either direction was now completely cut off – by the burning tree in front of them and the fire front behind them. He wiped his hands in turn on his shirt and trousers. They were trapped. He turned to his children in the back seat. He felt sick. They were holding each other, eyes white and large in their sooty faces.

Hold on, he said.

He slammed the car into reverse, backed up towards the fire front a short distance, then took off. He had enough speed up to smash down the picket fence in the garden where the burning tree crown had landed. They were heading straight into the bonfire. Yelling to the others to get down, he double-declutched the engine into first, let the clutch out and flattened the accelerator.
Section A: Reading

Answer all questions in this section.

You are advised to spend about 45 minutes on this section.

[N.B. Each question specifies the Assessment Objective it is being marked against. This does NOT happen in the awarding body sample materials.]

1. ■ Read again the first part of the Source from lines 1 to 9.
   ■ List four things from this part of the text about Dorrigo’s car.

   [4 marks, AO1]

2. ■ Look in detail at this extract from lines 10 to 24 of the Source:

   A fireball, the size of a trolley bus and as blue as gas flame, appeared as if by magic on the road and rolled towards them. As the Ford Mercury swerved around it and straightened back up, Dorrigo found he had no choice but to ignore the burning debris that appeared out of the smoke and hurtled at them – sticks, branches, palings – sometimes hitting and bouncing off the car. He grunted as he worked the column shift up and down, spinning the big steering wheel hard left and right, white-walled tyres squealing on bubbling black bitumen, the noise only occasionally audible in the cacophony of flame roar and wind shriek, the weird machine gun-like cracking of branches above exploding.

   They came over a rise to see a huge burning tree falling across the road a hundred yards or so in front of them. Flames flared up high along the tree trunk as it bounced on landing, its burning crown settling in a neat front yard to create an instant bonfire that merged into a burning house. Wedging his knee into the door, Dorrigo pushed with all his strength on the brake pedal. The Ford Mercury went into a four-wheel slide, spinning sideways and skidding straight towards the tree, slewing to a halt only yards from the flaring tree trunk.

   No one spoke.

   Hands wet with sweat on the wheel, panting heavily, Dorrigo Evans weighed their options. They were all bad. The road out in either direction was now completely cut off – by the burning tree in front of them and the fire front behind them. He wiped his hands in turn on his shirt and trousers. They were trapped. He turned to his children in the back seat. He felt sick. They were holding each other, eyes white and large in their sooty faces.

   Hold on, he said.

   ■ How does the writer use language here to describe the danger faced by Dorrigo and his family?

   You could include the writer’s choice of:
   - words and phrases
   - language features and techniques
   - sentence forms

   [8 marks, AO2]
Section A: Reading

Answer all questions in this section.

You are advised to spend about 45 minutes on this section.

[N.B. Each question specifies the Assessment Objective it is being marked against. This does NOT happen in the awarding body sample materials.]

1. Read again the first part of Source B from lines 1 to 11.

   Choose four statements below which are TRUE.

   Shade the boxes of the ones that you think are true. Choose a maximum of four statements.

   [4 marks, AO1]

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>It was unusual that the author agreed to play pool with her husband.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>The author is good at lots of sports.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>The author is determined to become a good pool player.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>The author is asking how to bring about change that makes people feel good.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>The author was not very good at pool when she started playing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>The author’s husband is a professional pool player.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G</td>
<td>The author is married to a sports journalist.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H</td>
<td>The author usually accepts a new challenge.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Writing About a Single Sentence

Sometimes you might focus on writing about the effect of a single sentence.

Here’s a particularly evocative sentence from *The Narrow Road to the Deep North*. (You will need to have read the whole of the extract to understand its context.)

As the Ford Mercury swerved around it and straightened back up, Dorrigo found he had no choice but to ignore the burning debris that appeared out of the smoke and hurtled at them – sticks, branches, palings – sometimes hitting and bouncing off the car.

Below are some notes about the sentence, some technical, some about its effect. Use the notes to write an answer to the question:

*How does the writer convey a sense of danger in this sentence?*

You do not have to use all of the notes if you think some of them are not particularly useful to your answer.

Next, find another sentence from the same extract that also conveys a sense of danger and write a response to the same question for that sentence.

- It is long and slithery, just like the path the car takes through the burning debris.
- Placing the car at the start of the sentence in an extended adverbial clause, gives the sense that the subject (Dorrigo) is not fully in control.
- Placing the objects that are hurtling at the car in parenthesis (‘– sticks, branches, palings –’) increases the impression that Dorrigo has no control over what is going on – they are outside the car, just as they are outside the main part of the sentence.
- It is a complex sentence.
- It uses lots of subordination.
- The car is foregrounded in the sentence.
- The sentence uses powerful verbs to do with force and movement.