

Candidate Style Answers

OCR GCSE English Language J355

A651 Imaginative Writing – Controlled Assessment Task

This Support Material booklet is designed to accompany the OCR GCSE English Language specification for teaching from September 2010.

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Introduction

OCR has produced these candidate style answers to support teachers in interpreting the assessment criteria for the new GCSE specifications and to bridge the gap between new specification release and availability of exemplar candidate work.

This content has been produced by subject experts, with the input of Chairs of Examiners, to illustrate how the sample assessment questions might be answered and provide some commentary on what factors contribute to an overall grading. The candidate style answers are not written in a way that is intended to replicate student work but to demonstrate what a “good” or “excellent” response might include, supported by examiner commentary and conclusions.

As these responses have not been through full moderation and do not replicate student work, they have not been graded and are instead, banded “middle” or “high” to give an indication of the level of each response.

Please note that this resource is provided for advice and guidance only and does not in any way constitute an indication of grade boundaries or endorsed answers.

A651 Imaginative Writing - Section A

Controlled Assessment Task

Candidate A

(a) Write about a time when you faced a challenge in your life.

There comes a time in our lives where we all have to face important decisions and challenges maybe taking examinations or starting a new job. For me, going to secondary school was my challenge.

This can be a stressful and nerve racking experience for any eleven year old, unlike most of the people that started my school I didn't know anyone from my previous primary school, so they already had foundations and memories and did not really have to make new friends as importantly as I did.

Before I knew it the six weeks holiday was over and the morning arrived with the new shoes and the shiny black blazer. Then I had to be walked to school by my Mum. I was reluctant to leave the comfort of knowing somebody but somehow found that extra confidence to walk into the school hall full of strangers. Luckily for me I attended a local dancing school on a Saturday morning and there was a girl from there. I straight away went and sat next to her and was very relieved. Little did I know we were sectioned off into four groups as they were the four houses our school put us in, Stratford, Coventry, Kenilworth and Warwick, and I had humiliated myself by walking into Kenilworth's turf instead of my own heroic Stratford house.

After having a sixth form girl come show me the correct way in front of everyone and show me to my rightful place, I found that people started to come and talk to me and one girl especially called Yasmin who was also alone, started making conversation. I thought I would be able to stick with her the rest of the day, especially when our names were called out together for being in the same form.

We spent the morning meeting our tutors and taking part in activities and games in order to get to know each other. As we were learning more and more about each other, I was fairly confident by lunch time I had made a friend in Yasmin, and got over being alone on my first day. Although, as I soon found out, Yasmin had got friends in other houses and forgetting me she soon ran off to go meet and play with them. I was too shy to go after her and introduce myself to a whole new group of people, instead I just stood against a wall by myself as I did not know what else to do or where to go. Looking back on this now I would never just stand against a wall by myself watching everybody making friends and enjoying their lunch time but at the time my shyness took over and that was it.

Time passed slowly and there was still half an hour to go before I could be in the comfort of the classroom with the people I recognised again. Then a girl suddenly came over to me and confidently said "Hi I'm Josie, do you want to play with us?" I was so relieved, and I immediately went with her and made friends with the other girls she was with. I continued to spend the rest of the day with them, and to this day I am still really good friends with all the girls I met.

Standing against that wall for half an hour by myself forced me to reflect on how you need to face your fears and challenges that happen, and not to wait for other people to come to you to break the silence. In future I decided, I would make the first move.

b ii) Write a report for a local newspaper about someone who faced a challenge in life.

School student gained new record from running!!

A local student from _____ Secondary School in _____ has succeeded in running straight for 24 hours for charity.

Tom Williams, 16, ran around the town centre with only 10 minute breaks every hour. The chosen charity cancer research, is personally important to Williams as his Mother died from breast cancer only one year ago after years of battling against the disease. In a recent interview, Williams stated "My mother died just after my 15th birthday, all our family knew there wasn't much time left, and I just wanted to do something to make her proud of me and show how much we all still care and miss her."

The student set off at 12pm on Tuesday 15th August and finished 12pm Wednesday. To ensure his safety a family member followed him around slightly behind him, also taking snippets of film and photographs for proof and memory. His uncle said, "I am so proud of my nephew, my sister was very special in my life, and we grew up together and were always very close. Tom is a good nephew and I treat him like he was my own, we are just really proud of him today."

Williams managed to raise £483.86p towards Cancer Research. Sponsors included family members, door to door fundraising and friends. As well as this, Williams managed to gain 500 fans on Facebook, and sold t-shirts being made from school friends for support.

We asked Williams how he thought of this idea and how he found the challenge, "My mother used to run as a young teenager my age so I thought it would be a good way to remember her by. I trained for months to try and be fit enough for the challenge; I didn't want to let anybody down after I had promised, especially to the charity. It took a lot of organisation and I was really pleased with everybody else's support at school and my football club, this spurred me on to succeed and to really do well." He continued to say, "Now that I have done this, I feel like I can face any challenge given to me, and I definitely would like to push myself further and do another charity event, maybe some swimming. It was hard work but the feeling afterwards felt really good and knowing that I had done this for a benefical course felt even more worth while."

After informing the charity of the youngsters effort, they personally went to congratulate and thank him. They commented, "We are very grateful that we have such a dedicated member to the cause, and this money will do a lot of good towards finding a cure. I am very sorry for his loss especially as he is so young. This is what makes this story even more amazing, to put him through that much extreme pain and pace at that age is brilliant. We can't thank him enough, he is a credit to his family and his mother would be proud."

This is a touching story and when asked how he will celebrate Tom answered modestly "We are having a family meal tonight and then back to school."

We are sure he will be a hero at his school as well as in his family's eyes. We wish him well and believe this is not the last we have heard of this young man.

Commentary

The candidate is generally competent in controlling the material and its effect on the audience. There is a sense of purpose and direction, with the opening, development and end appropriate to the form and purpose, although the use of third person plural is a little out of place. Paragraphs are used to organise ideas. Complex sentences are used and occasionally more adventurous vocabulary. Spelling and sentence punctuation are generally accurate with some inconsistency in the use of commas within sentences and apostrophes. A good middle response.

A651 Imaginative Writing – Section B

Controlled Assessment Task

Candidate B

2 (a) Write a story entitled 'Lost'

Lost

Lush hedges in front and beside me, azure sky above, and the gentle crunching of gravel beneath my feet. I am alone, away from it all.

But to me it's not the serenity it appears. I'm stuck here, and I'm wishing myself out of this world. It was fun for a while, when I started, but now... I'm just tired. I know that if I put my hand on one side I can find my way out, but I don't know which side. One will take me further into the maze, one will take me out, but I can't quite remember which one will do which. Not knowing is frustrating and frightening.

What is a person meant to do in this kind of situation? All I can think is that I have to take a chance. I won't get out by standing still; you can only get through a door by trying to open it, after all.

It isn't clear whether I'm deep inside or close to the edge of the maze; I'm quite disoriented, to tell the truth, and the sky is completely clear. No clouds to navigate by, no features in this bizarre prison of conspicuously placed wicker chairs and walls of green. There seem to be dead ends everywhere, and I have strange feelings of déjà-vu every time I turn a corner. Is that the same seat I passed a minute ago, offering brief respite in exchange for wasted time? Maybe. Maybe not.

Decision time, I suppose. If I go in one general direction and find a dead end, that's no problem. I can always try another direction. It isn't time wasted if I've at least tried, surely?

Trudging on. Hedge after hedge. Dead end after dead end.

It's been a while since I struck out and I have to say I'm not exactly overjoyed to realize I have made it to the middle! I passed a small group of people going in the opposite direction; they seemed to know what direction they wanted to go. I've always found it hard to understand that, really; how do you know you want to go somewhere without having been there first? Why do other people seem so purposeful?

"What path do you choose if you don't know where any of them lead?" I ask a man I suddenly come upon resting on one of the wicker chairs, a book open on his lap. He smiles faintly through a weathered, wrinkled face.

"The one you like the most, obviously." He said it with a look of someone who had seen the light at the end of the tunnel, and I realised that if he could see the light, it was already there. He opened

his book again, (there's been a change of tense from present to past here – is it deliberate?) apparently unconcerned about how far from the exit he was, so long as the sun bathed the world in warmth, and so long as his book had more pages to turn. I think to him it is just a ride. For him, coming across a dead end and a chair is an opportunity to rest, survey, read of other worlds. Not that scary at all, really. Just another way of looking at things. The setting sun suddenly seems to wrap me up in an orange glow and I am suffused with warmth, and a sudden understanding of what is happening to me.

I round another corner, and another, and another. Not focusing on the end makes things different. I've started to notice things I hadn't noticed before; patterns in the wickerwork of the chairs, textures in the plants, light rippling through gaps in the foliage, and the intimate kiss of the breeze on my face.

I'd like to get out in the end, but until then, I don't mind being here. If I'm *trying* to escape then that's enough; just because I haven't managed it yet doesn't mean I never will. It doesn't mean that I can't enjoy the ride, either.

2 b(i) Write a series of web pages that give visitors further information about the setting of the story

The Midlands AMAZING Maze!

Welcome to our website! - [Homepage](#) - [History](#) - [Events](#)

Homepage

The famous Midlands Maze will be open from July 10 till September 9 in 2010! After an incredibly successful year our gardeners are extending the maze to make it even more challenging to visit! We are also planning a range of additional attractions and events to make your day at the Midlands Maze complete.

Here are some comments from this year's visitors:

"We had such a giggle running round the maze, and when we finally got out it was wonderful to be greeted with refreshments and a barbecue! We certainly felt we had earned it!"

"Good fun for the kids, got rid of some of that surplus energy!"

"Made me reflect on life... great being outdoors.."

"I won free tickets to Alton Towers for escaping first!"

Make a date in your diary to spend the day with us! You will want to come again and again when you see the beautiful rolling hills, delightful gardens and the babbling brook, known locally as the 'Bubble Snake', because of the way it twists around the grounds!

History

The Midlands Maze was originally built in 1859 when the estate was the location for Earlsworth House, home to Lord and Lady Earlsworth. The designer, Harry Ziegfeld, was also an important philosopher in his day and believed that 'one had to lose oneself to find oneself'. His original Amazing Maze was the incorporation of that philosophy. Certainly it created a challenge for its visitors and became part of the summer festivities for the local gentry of the time.

Unfortunately the house was burnt down at the turn of the century and since then the estate has been used for the local community. The tradition of the annual maze has continued and the addition and devoted upkeep of the beautiful gardens became an added bonus for its regular visitors.

After some neglect during World War II Birmingham City Council took over the site and since then it has been cherished by locals and become a firm favourite with those further afield too.

Today the site hosts a number of activities through the year, many aimed at children and families. Schools also appreciate the diversity of nature available here and our resident nature experts. Day trips can be organized through our Education Officer. A number of events and special themed days take place over the year.

Events

Fancy Dress Maze Event - Nature Afternoon - Bonfire Spectacular!

23 July 2010 – Celebrate the beginning of the school holidays with our Fancy Dress Maze Event! Our guides will be dressed in Victorian clothing to get you in the mood and there will be various Victorian activities for you to try! A coconut stall, donkey rides, as well as the more sedate opportunity to try flower pressing and embroidery! Feel free to dress up yourself as there will be a prize for the best effort!

2 August 2010 – We have the nature expert Donald Steed with us to take small groups on rambles around the grounds. Please remember to book first and to bring a glass jam jar and lid to store all your discoveries!

31 August 2010 – Our family evening of fun Firework Extravaganza. Have a go round the maze, try our Hog Roast and end the evening with a spectacular display of fireworks.

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Commentary

Writing is accurate and well-structured, using paragraphs effectively and appropriately in both tasks. The writer shows confidence in controlling the material and the effect on the audience. Sometimes the writing is less controlled in the first task, but there is a sense of creative purpose and expression is coherent, with a very convincing and deliberate ending here. Some flair is shown in the use of extended metaphor and vocabulary is ambitious and conveys subtlety at times. The writing demonstrates some flair in style and form in the second task, with excellent awareness of audience and purpose. A good higher response.