AQA English Language Section B  **WRITING QUESTION 5**

Both papers have a writing section; **Paper 1** is Descriptive and Narrative writing and **Paper 2** is Nonfiction writing.

Let’s look at what you might be asked to do in **Paper 1**. Descriptive and Narrative. Here is a typical question:

You are going to enter a creative writing competition. Your entry will be judged by a panel of people of your own age.

**Either:** Write a description suggested by this picture:

![Ice climbing](image)

**Or:** Write a part of a story about a place in extreme cold.
(24 marks for content and organisation
16 marks for technical accuracy)

[40 marks]

You only need to do one question, Descriptive or Narrative. If you do both, only one will be marked.
The Rules

All pieces of writing should use the features on the right (and use them well) in order to achieve a good mark.

**Description**
Descriptions should focus on the image provided by the exam board. They should not contain any characters. They should not use anyone's point of view. Instead of saying “I could see clouds crawling past the glare of the sun”, you would write “The clouds were crawling past the glare of the sun.”

Try to zoom in on specific parts of the image and write in as much detail as you can about that section before moving onto describe another part.

**Narrative**
Narratives do not have to focus on the image provided; however, you could use the image as inspiration for your story. A narrative needs a narrator. It can be first person or third person (avoid using second person as it is hard to do it well). Do not get so carried away with your story and characters that you forget to include the features on the right.

- Sensory description (sight, sound, smell, taste, touch)
- Similes
- Metaphors
- Alliteration
- Repetition
- Description from different perspectives
- Specific details
- Effective adjectives
- Strong verbs

- Sentence starters
- A range of punctuation
- Paragraphs
- Variety of sentence types/lengths
- Standard English
- Accurate spelling
- Sophisticated vocabulary
Read the 3 responses below to the above picture and **write 2 sentences** saying what is good and not so good about each one. Think about the vocabulary, the types of sentences used and the spelling.
Toxic smoke invaded my lungs and pierced my eyes. It danced gingerly in a crooked line, accelerating from luminous flames. Sirens blared, car brakes screeched. Windows shattered. Anarchy.

A woman held tightly her frightened child in a desperate attempt for consolation. The powerless whimper held no answer. The roar of rioters echoed the streets. Rubble crashed beneath his feet. Trembling, I rubbed my clammy palms against my black jeans. Black. The atmosphere tonight was black. Anger, fear, a loss of hope.

Using this image I can see that an out-of-control fire has broken out in the center of what appears to be a London street. It's bright orange flames near aggressively as the surrounding jurors scream, their thought and ushering language to the oppressive apportion like a pack of hogs whining. I imagine that as the police and escort squad nears the open flames, they can feel the unearthly heat strike their faces as if they were climbing to the top of an erupting volcano. They could see the fire spitting out angrily as the crazed rioters around them.

There is also litter scattered all around the foreground of this image. This shows that the rioters do not care about the London street, or it is caused by the apportion which they are fighting desperately trying to fight. The litter makes this place look like a post-apocalyptic setting as everyone hates to have given up fighting but throwing the place into uncontrollable madness.
Over to you!

Write at least one paragraph of descriptive writing in response to the above picture:

This picture shows people in navy uniform with helmets and face shields. There is a fire, and a smoke cloud, it looks like a riot and everyone is annoyed. There's a cone and a wheelbarrow, which might of been used for carrying goods that they picked from shops. The nine police officers are in a line as if they were gonna charge up to the others but there probably too scared to. They look quite short really. So they might get overthrown like the people in riots are more angry so they might be able to dominate the nine officers. Powerful words.

Some took the picture so they were watching it. They might of been swearing.
You need to know what these words mean and then use lots of them in your writing.

Recap of word classes

**Noun:**
The name of a person, place or thing *(boy, Sarah, Wales or table).*

**Verb:**
A doing word *(run, think, create, etc ...).*

**Adjective:**
Describes a noun *(tall boy, Sarah was curious).*

**Adverb:**
Describes a verb *(running quickly, thinking carefully).*
Over to you! Write 3 similes (remember to use like or as) to describe: a fire, the sky, a tall building.

Write 3 metaphors to describe: an old house, a sunset, a fierce warrior.
Read the extract above.

Highlight the nouns and adjectives, verbs and adverbs, similes, metaphors in the extract using different colours.

Choose one of the images below and write a description of it. Aim for 3-5 paragraphs. Look at the checklist and the Question 5 guide to help you.
Use the following checklist to plan a vivid description:

- Time of day? Time of year?
- What were you doing?
- How did you feel? How did others feel?
- Where were you?
- Similes?
- Alliteration?
- Metaphors?
- Adjectives?
- Did the weather cause anything strange to happen?
- Verbs and adverbs?
Writing Task

Question 5 Guide

Marks: 40
Time: 45 mins
Need: 4-5 good paragraphs
Skill: Descriptive or story writing

Question 5 will ask you to describe an image or tell and narrate from a story. No matter whether you choose to describe the image or write a story, the following must be included:

- Accurate paragraphs when there’s a new time, topic, place or person
- Simple, compound, complex and short sentences
- Accurate spelling, especially of key words
- Sufficient depth and detail
- Lots of language techniques all the way through
- Original and different ideas for content
- Imagery, sensory language and showing not telling

If you decide to describe the picture, break your response up into 4 sections - moving increasingly closer in your focus as you move through the text:

Paragraph 1: Describe the scene from far away, describing all that can be seen across the scene.

Paragraph 2: Describe the scene close enough to see people and faces. Don’t worry now about the world around.

Paragraph 3: Step inside the person and explain the situation considering their thoughts and emotions.

Paragraph 4: Resolve the situation - what happened next?
If you want more practice at Descriptive writing tasks, ask me and I have some pictures you can use. I also have some examples of writing marked by the exam board that might be useful to look at.

Now let’s look at Narrative writing. Narrative writing means telling a story so you must decide WHO is telling the story. Use first person, I, or third person, he, she, they.

Read the example below which is in the first person and rewrite the paragraph in the third person.

Then, continue the story with at least one more paragraph.

A wisp of air swept across the snow. Although my feet were frozen and my hands trembling, I forced myself to continue. The only sound was my pounding heart as it thumped like a drum. Was I really going to do this?
Openings

Openings to stories are important so as to ‘hook’ the reader in. How you structure it is important. The most straightforward way is called, ‘chronological’, the order in which events occur. But a story can be much more interesting if you start at a different point. Read the notes below which are chronological sequence for basis of story:

*Boy and girl going out for a long time. Go to club- argue. He leaves- wanders around alone. Is attacked and badly wounded. She feels bad for arguing. Goes to look for him. Finds him dying on pavement.*

Look at following statements which show some starting points:

1- She walked through the blinding rain towards the huddled form.
2- ‘Well if you’re not happy, you know what you can do’! she screamed. He turned and walked away.
3- The knife sank deep into his side. His attacker fled into the silent, black night.

Which is best and why?
Write 2-3 sentences carrying on the story using either 1, 2 or 3.

Here are a few ways you could begin a story.
An important technique in narrative writing is to SHOW NOT TELL.

For example, you could write, ‘the man was nervous’ or you could show he was nervous. ‘The man looked round the room to check that he was not being watched. His hands rummaged in his pocket for the last cigarette but he realised he’d smoked the last one 5 minutes ago. He chewed a nicotine stained fingernail and waited, his heart thumping rapidly as each second slipped by.’

Write a sentence to show:

- She was happy
- He was tired
- It was cold
Write at least one more paragraph in the same tone, one positive, and one negative.

Positive Tone
Excited and fidgety, John ran straight from the hotel to the idyllic beach he had been dreaming about ever since he saw it in the brochure. The gentle lapping of the waves on the warm white sand was all he could hear. The sand warmed his toes as he threw down his towel and smiled a broad grin.

Negative Tone
Dark. So dark. John lifted his hand in front of his face but could not see a thing. A fierce wind battered his aching body. Where was he? He remembered waking up on the plane just as the screaming had begun...
Characters.

Read the short extract below:

“It’s the safest way to travel”, Frank repeatedly muttered to himself under his breath as he screwed his eyes tight shut like a child. He clutched the armrests with such intensity that he could feel the tips of his fingernails bending and cutting into his fingers. His face perspired as he looked dead ahead, unmoving, unflinching; and almost willing the plane to arrive safely. The young girl next to him took her headphones out, patted his hand and told him it would be okay. He smiled – perhaps unconvincingly – back to her and she went on listening to the tinny hum. The plane rocked from side to side, the way a cradle moves in a strong breeze. A strong vibration with an accompanying low, dull hum seemed to permeate the cabin. Frank stroked the wedding band upon his white knuckles.

What impression do you get of Frank and what details give you this impression?

Choose 2 of the following and write a short paragraph about each.
1) Write about a character who is being followed.
2) Write about a character being awoken from a dream or nightmare.
3) Write about a character receiving a letter that changes their life.
4) Write about a character who has just received some unpleasant news.
It’s probably best to have no more than 2-3 characters in a story; any more can just be a distraction.
**Sentence Variety**

Link the sentence type with the correct example and purpose.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Example</th>
<th>Purpose</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Simple sentence</td>
<td>Above the sleepy town, where the clouds crawled across the horizon and the minutes trickled by, the sky was grey and sombre.</td>
<td>Can be used to do things like expand on an initial statement, creating more detailed and interesting descriptions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Compound sentence</td>
<td>The sky was grey and sombre, and the rain lashed at our faces.</td>
<td>Can be used to build tension or to create a worried and confused tone.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Complex sentence</td>
<td>The sky was growing darker. I couldn’t see where I was going. I stumbled.</td>
<td>Can be used to add description or to give the impression of time dragging.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Extension - do you know what a fragment sentence is?

**Sentence Variety**

Using different colours, highlight the different sentence types in the passage.

This sentence has five words. Here are five more words. Five-word sentences are fine. But several together become monotonous. Listen to what is happening. The writing is getting boring. The sound of it drones. It's like a stuck record. The ear demands some variety. Now listen.

I vary the sentence length, and I create music. Music. The writing sings, it has a pleasant rhythm, a lilt, a harmony. I use short sentences. And I use sentences of medium length. And sometimes, when I am certain the reader is rested, I will engage him with a sentence of considerable length, a sentence that burns with energy and builds with all the impetus of a crescendo, the roll of the drums, the crash of the cymbals—sounds that say listen to this, it is important.
Mind map in the space below:
Now write at least one paragraph from the point of view your character experiencing that emotion.

Openings to stories are important so as to ‘hook’ the reader in. How you structure it is important. The most straightforward way is called, ‘chronological’, the order in which events occur. But a story can be much more interesting if you start at a different point. Read the notes below which are chronological sequence for basis of story:

Boy and girl going out for a long time. Go to club- argue. He leaves- wanders around alone. Is attacked and badly wounded. She feels bad for arguing. Goes to look for him. Finds him dying on pavement.

Look at following statements which show some starting points:

4- She walked through the blinding rain towards the huddled form.
5- ‘Well if you’re not happy, you know what you can do’! she screamed. He turned and walked away.
6- The knife sank deep into his side. His attacker fled into the silent, black night.

Which is best and why?
Writing Exercise

Choose one of the following emotions:

- HAPPINESS
- SADNESS
- LOVE
- ANGER
- HOPE
- FEAR
- BOREDOM
- HATRED
- DOUBT

You are going to write the opening to a narrative about a character in a city.

However, it must be written from the POV of a character feeling your chosen emotion. Remember, your aim is to convey your character’s emotion in an implicit, rather than explicit way.

Aim for 3-4 paragraphs.
When you have completed all the work in the booklet, choose one of the longer writing tasks below. This needs to be completed on A4 paper.
A magazine is running a creative writing competition for people your age.

Either: Write a description based on this image.
OR: Write the opening to a narrative about a natural disaster.

(24 marks for content and organisation, 16 marks for technical accuracy) [40 marks]

A magazine is running a creative writing competition for people your age.

Either: Write a description based on this image.
OR: Write the opening to a narrative about being lost in a strange city.

(24 marks for content and organisation, 16 marks for technical accuracy) [40 marks]
Finally, here is what you need to write a good piece of Descriptive or Narrative writing. How many of these things have you done in your writing?
Content:
- Engage the reader
- Tone and style match the PURPOSE and AUDIENCE of the task
- Features match to the FORM of the piece
- Wide and ambitious vocabulary
- Ambitious language devices (sensory description, alliteration, onomatopoeia, metaphor, simile, triples, rhetorical questions, personification)

Organisation:
- Effective structure (linked openings and closings)
- Ideas sequenced for impact (e.g., enigmatic opening, build up of tension)
- Effective use of paragraph lengths and types (short, one sentence, one word)

Technical Accuracy:
- Secure standard English
- Accurate sentence demarcation
- Effective range of punctuation
- Sentence forms for effect (simple, compound, complex, interrogative, exclamatory)
- Sentence length for effect (short, one word)
- Accurate spelling of complex vocabulary
- Ambitious use of vocabulary