Achieving a Grade7+ AQA English Language

📝 GCSE English Language Paper 1 Breakdown

📖 Section A – Reading (1 Extract)

🔢 1. **Multiple Choice Questions** → Test your understanding of key ideas and details
🧠 2. **Analyse Language** → Zoom in on words, imagery, tone & techniques
🏗️ 3. **Analyse Structure** → Track shifts, openings, endings, paragraphing
🎯 4. **Evaluate** → Make a judgment: how effective is the writer's craft?
💡 *Top Tip: Use short quotes and link your analysis to the question focus.*

✍️ Section B – Writing (Q5)

🖊️ 5. **Narrative or Descriptive Writing** → Choose one: tell a story or paint a vivid scene
🎨 Use sensory detail, figurative language & varied sentence structure
🧱 Plan your structure: beginning, development, climax, resolution
🔍 Focus on clarity, originality, and technical accuracy
💡 *Top Tip: Show, don't tell. Make the reader feel immersed.*

📘 GCSE English Language Paper 2 Breakdown

Section A – Reading (2 Extracts)

✅ 1. True or False 🔍 Identify 4 accurate statements from Source A

🔗 2. Summarise Similarities or Differences 📄 Compare Source A & B on a specific topic

🖊️ 3. Analyse Language 💬 Zoom in on words, imagery, tone & techniques

🧠 *Tip: Explain effect on the reader, not just name the device*

🔁 4. Compare Writers' Perspectives 🧭 Explore attitudes, methods, and viewpoints

✍️ **Section B – Writing (Q5) 📢 Transactional (Non-Fiction) Writing**

📝 5. Write to argue, persuade, inform, or explain

🎯 Purpose | 👥 Audience | 📐 Form (e.g. article, letter, speech)

💡 Top Tips:

Plan before you write 🧱 Use rhetorical devices 🎯 Vary sentence structure ✂️ Proofread for SPaG ✅

Why Reading Widely Matters at GCSE

🔍 What Does "Reading Widely" Mean?

- Exploring **different genres**: fiction, non-fiction, poetry, drama
- Choosing texts that **challenge your thinking**
- Reading for **fun**, not just for school

🎯 Why It's Important

- **Boosts GCSE performance**: A reading age of 15+ is needed to access most exam papers
- **Improves vocabulary & comprehension** across all subjects—even maths and science
- **Develops empathy & critical thinking** by exposing you to diverse perspectives

💡 Top Tips to Read More

- Try **audiobooks** or graphic novels
- Set a **daily reading goal** (even 10 minutes counts!)
- Explore the library

✍️ Writing Regularly: Your Secret Weapon for Grade 7+

🌟 Why It Matters

- Builds **confidence and fluency** in expressing ideas
- Sharpens your **voice, tone, and style**—key for top marks in Paper 1 & 2
- Encourages **risk-taking** with language: metaphors, structure, narrative twists

🧠 What Top Students Do

- Write **beyond the classroom**: blogs, short stories, opinion pieces
- Experiment with **different topics**

💡 Try This

- Write under timed conditions aiming for focused writing of 1 to 2 sides of A4 paper.

The writing section of both papers is worth 50% of your overall GCSE mark.

- These two writing questions are worth 40 marks each.
- Here is your opportunity to have a big impact.

Paper 1 Section B Question 5 Writing Example

- Worth 50% of the overall GCSE Grade.
- 40 mark question
- 45 minute writing task.

Either: Write a description suggested by this picture:



Or: Write the opening part of a story about a place that is severely affected by the weather.

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

Top Tips for writing in Paper 1

🎬 **Start in Media Res - Begin at a pivotal moment — drop the reader straight into the action or emotion.**

Example: “The ice cracked beneath her boots as the lake swallowed the silence.”

👤 **Create an Authentic Character**

Use specific, meaningful details — not just what they look like, but how they move, think, and react. Avoid clichés like “he was tall, dark and mysterious.”

Instead: “His coat hung like a burden, stitched with years of wear and quiet defiance.”

🚫 **Avoid Clichés No “it was a dark and stormy night.” Be fresh, original, and precise. Think like a writer, not a copycat.**

👁️ **Show, Don’t Tell** Let the reader infer emotions and atmosphere through actions, imagery, and setting.

Telling: “She was scared.” Showing: “Her fingers trembled as she reached for the latch, breath snagging in her throat.”

🧠 **Use Section A Techniques**

Apply what you’ve learned from the reading section: Zoom in on detail Vary sentence structure Use figurative language Create tension or mood

🔕 **Minimise Dialogue -** Use it sparingly and purposefully. Let description do the heavy lifting.

⏳ **Timing: End Strong** : Plan your ending. A powerful final image or twist leaves a lasting impression.

Example: “The photograph fluttered to the floor, its edges curling like secrets.”

✅ **Technical Accuracy (16 Marks)Spelling, punctuation, grammar**

Paragraphing Sentence variety Consistent tense and tone

🚀 **Be Ambitious & Original -**Take risks. Be bold with your imagery, structure, and ideas.

Don’t just describe a storm — describe how it feels to be inside one.

🧱 **Plan & Craft -** Spend 5–10 minutes planning:What’s the central moment? What’s the emotional journey? How will it end?

What does the mark scheme say?

- Sustained conscious crafting

The standard is maintained.

Every word and sentence is carefully considered and chosen with care.

The writing carefully builds to a planned conclusion.
The writing is complete and checked.

One and a half to two sides of writing can achieve this.

Example 1:
What does full marks (40 / 40) look like?

The bus careered through the Soho area of London, its chunky tyres straining under the weight of the passengers' high expectations. A fear clung onto nightclub goers, the glinting yellow bars, swinging like undeveloped chimps attempting to pull off a slow dance. Clunk. We stopped. A man emerged from the underground station, dripping with sweat and pulled along by the armada of people dispensing from the contemporary cavern. Spotted. He sprinted along the gum-cladded paving slabs, his Samsonite suitcase dancing in the ruts.

Example 2
What does full marks (40/40) look like?

The bus rocketed through the labyrinth of city roads, the wheels screaming as the driver alternated rapidly between braking and accelerating. The engine groaned audibly, with a degree of reluctance to continue; the groans radiated throughout the cold, metal cage of the bus, making the windows flux inwards and outwards, over and over, to the point where they seemed as if they were about to break. A fly, gently hovering above the abyss-like asphalt, attracted to some unworldly stench, met the windshield, and was obliterated.

Paper 2 Section B Question 5 Writing Example

- Worth 50% of the overall GCSE Grade.
- 40 mark question
- 45 minute writing task.

TASK

‘Choosing a future career should be based on helping others and making a positive contribution to society, not achieving status or making lots of money.’

Write an article for your school or college magazine in which you argue your point of view on this statement.

📢 GCSE English Language Paper 2 – Q5 Writing Guide

🧭 Know Your Purpose, Audience & Form
The question will tell you:
•**Purpose**: Argue, persuade, explain, inform
•**Audience**: Teen magazine, newspaper readers, local MP, etc.
•**Form**: Article 📰, letter ✉️, speech 🎤, essay 📄
🧠 *Tip: Tailor your tone and structure to match the form. A letter needs a greeting and sign-off; an article might need a headline.*

💬 Respond to the Statement
You'll be given a **provocative or controversial statement**. Your job: **express your viewpoint clearly and convincingly**.
Example: "Homework has no value. Students should be relaxing in their free time."
🎯 *Tip: You don't have to agree — just argue your case with clarity and evidence.*

🧠 AO5 – Content & Organisation (24 marks)
•Structure your ideas logically 🧱
•Use **paragraphs**, **connectives**, and **rhetorical devices**
•Vary tone and style to suit your audience
•Include **anecdotes**, **facts**, **opinions**, and **examples**
✨ *Be engaging, persuasive, and well-organised.*

✅ AO6 – Technical Accuracy (16 marks)
•Use a **range of vocabulary**
•Vary **sentence structures**
•Check **spelling, punctuation, grammar**
•Proofread carefully 👮‍♀️
🧠 *Tip: Leave 5 minutes at the end to edit and polish.*

🔥 Top Tips for Grade 7+
• 📌 Plan before you write — jot down key points and structure
• 🎨 Use rhetorical questions, emotive language, and repetition for impact
• 🚫 Avoid clichés and vague generalisations
• 🧠 Be original, confident, and clear in your viewpoint
• 🕒 Time your response — aim for 5–6 paragraphs in 45 minutes

Example 1 – What does full marks for Paper 2 Section B look like? (40 marks)

TASK

‘Choosing a future career should be based on helping others and making a positive contribution to society, not achieving status or making lots of money.’

Write an article for your school or college magazine in which you argue your point of view on this statement.

To be Self-Sacrificial is to suffer

Once, when I was younger, I had gotten myself into an insignificant accident, somehow still managing to end up at the nearest A&E. Although the accident itself is of little importance to me now, the memory of that day will forever be etched into my brain. I can still vividly recall that scene at the A&E; all those people, sitting lined up against the wall in rows, impatiently waiting their turn as the hours passed. I can still recall their faces, morphed into desperation and suffering, clutching their injured body part tightly to them or clasping their hands together to distract from their pain. I saw all the doctors frantically running up and down, barely able to catch their breaths as they tried to treat as many patients as possible but finding themselves spread too thinly. Their faces looked worse than their patients – as if they were suffering some eternal pain that had no end in sight. That scene in the A&E is forever etched in my brain.

I've often debated on the issue at hand with others, always finding myself confronted with the same, unavoidable arguments: ‘the greater good is the most important’, ‘helping others brings people joy’, ‘it is our duty to help better society’. To me, all these arguments could not be more ridiculous. It's very easy to proclaim such things when you have parents to support you, a comfortable home to live in, a fancy car to drive in. It's very easy to say that we must work not for money but to help when you have money, but what about those who don’t?

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