

# AQA Sample Paper: GCSE English Language

## Paper 1: Explorations in creative reading and writing

**Time allowed: 1 hour 45 minutes**

- The marks for questions are shown in brackets.
- The maximum mark for this paper is 80.
- There are 40 marks for Section A and 40 marks for Section B.
- You are reminded of the need for good English and clear presentation in your answers.
- You will be assessed on the quality of your reading in Section A.
- You will be assessed on the quality of your writing in Section B.

You are advised to spend about 15 minutes reading through the **Source** and **all five questions** you have to answer. You should make sure you leave sufficient time to check your answers.

## Source A

This extract is from the opening of a novel by Robert Galbraith (JK Rowling).

### *The Cuckoo's Calling*

1 The buzz in the street was like the humming of flies. Photographers stood massed behind barriers  
2 patrolled by police, their long-snouted cameras poised, their breath rising like steam. Snow fell  
3 steadily on to hats and shoulders; gloved fingers wiped lenses clear. From time to time there came  
4 outbreaks of desultory\* clicking, as the watchers filled the waiting time by snapping the white  
5 canvas tent in the middle of the road, the entrance to the tall red-brick apartment block behind it,  
6 and the balcony on the top floor from which the body had fallen.

7 Behind the tightly packed paparazzi stood white vans with enormous satellite dishes on the roofs,  
8 and journalists talking, some in foreign languages, while soundmen in headphones hovered.

9 Between recordings, the reporters stamped their feet and warmed their hands on hot beakers of  
10 coffee from the teeming café a few streets away. To fill the time, the woolly-hatted cameramen  
11 filmed the backs of the photographers, the balcony, the tent concealing the body, then  
12 repositioned themselves for wide shots that encompassed the chaos that had exploded inside the  
13 sedate and snowy Mayfair street, with its lines of glossy black doors framed by white stone  
14 porticos and flanked by topiary shrubs. The entrance to number 18 was bounded with tape. Police  
15 officials, some of them white-clothed forensic experts, could be glimpsed in the hallway beyond.

16 The television stations had already had the news for several hours. Members of the public were  
17 crowding at either end of the road, held at bay by more police; some had come, on purpose, to  
18 look, others had paused on their way to work. Many held mobile telephones aloft to take pictures  
19 before moving on. One young man, not knowing which was the crucial balcony, photographed  
20 each of them in turn, even though the middle one was packed with a row of shrubs, three neat,  
21 leafy orbs, which barely left room for a human being.

22 A group of young girls had brought flowers, and were filmed handing them to the police, who as  
23 yet had not decided on a place for them, but laid them self-consciously in the back of the police  
24 van, aware of camera lenses following their every move.

25 The correspondents sent by twenty-four-hour news channels kept up a steady stream of comment  
26 and speculation around the few sensational facts they knew.

27 "...from her penthouse apartment at around two o'clock this morning. Police were alerted by the  
28 building's security guard..."

29 "...no sign yet that they are moving the body, which has led some to speculate..."

30 "...no word on whether she was alone when she fell..."

31 "...teams have entered the building and will be conducting a thorough search."

### \*Glossary

desultory = aimless, half-hearted

## Section A: Reading

Answer **all** questions in this section.

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

**Q1.** Read again the first part of the Source from **lines 1 to 6**.

List **four** things from this part of the text about the scene in the street.

**[4 marks]**

**Q2.** Look in detail at this extract from **lines 9 to 24** of the Source:

Between recordings, the reporters stamped their feet and warmed their hands on hot beakers of coffee from the teeming café a few streets away. To fill the time, the woolly-hatted cameramen filmed the backs of the photographers, the balcony, the tent concealing the body, then repositioned themselves for wide shots that encompassed the chaos that had exploded inside the sedate and snowy Mayfair street, with its lines of glossy black doors framed by white stone porticos and flanked by topiary shrubs. The entrance to number 18 was bounded with tape. Police officials, some of them white-clothed forensic experts, could be glimpsed in the hallway beyond.

The television stations had already had the news for several hours. Members of the public were crowding at either end of the road, held at bay by more police; some had come, on purpose, to look, others had paused on their way to work. Many held mobile telephones aloft to take pictures before moving on. One young man, not knowing which was the crucial balcony, photographed each of them in turn, even though the middle one was packed with a row of shrubs, three neat, leafy orbs, which barely left room for a human being.

A group of young girls had brought flowers, and were filmed handing them to the police, who as yet had not decided on a place for them, but laid them self-consciously in the back of the police van, aware of camera lenses following their every move.

How does the writer use language here to give a sense of different people's reactions to the crime scene?

You could include the writer's choice of:

- words and phrases
- language features and techniques
- sentence forms

**[8 marks]**

**Q3.** You now need to think about the **whole** of the Source.

This extract is from the opening of the novel.

How has the writer structured the text to interest you as a reader?

You could write about:

- what the writer focuses your attention on at the beginning
- how and why the writer changes this focus as the Source develops
- any other structural features that interest you

**[8 marks]**

**Q4.** Focus this part of your answer on the second part of the Source from **line 16 to the end**.

A student, having read this section of the text, said: 'The writer makes the reader feel just as confused as the people in the scene.'

To what extent do you agree?

In your response, you could:

- write about your own impressions of what is happening in this section
- evaluate how the writer has created these impressions
- support your opinions with references to the text

**[20 marks]**

## Section B: Writing

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

Write in full sentences.

You are reminded of the need to plan your answer.

You should leave enough time to check your work at the end.

**Q5.** 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:



**Or:** Write the opening of a crime or mystery story.

(24 marks for content and organisation  
16 marks for technical accuracy)

**[40 marks]**