

# 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 a novel by F Scott Fitzgerald. In this section the narrator describes the extravagant parties held by his rich neighbour.

### *The Great Gatsby*

1 There was music from my neighbor's house through the summer nights. In his blue gardens men and girls  
2 came and went like moths among the whisperings and the champagne and the stars. At high tide in the  
3 afternoon I watched his guests diving from the tower of his raft or taking the sun on the hot sand of his  
4 beach while his two motor-boats slit the waters of the Sound, drawing aquaplanes over cataracts of foam.  
5 On week-ends his Rolls-Royce became an omnibus, bearing parties to and from the city, between nine in  
6 the morning and long past midnight, while his station wagon\* scampered like a brisk yellow bug to meet all  
7 trains. And on Mondays eight servants including an extra gardener toiled all day with mops and scrubbing-  
8 brushes and hammers and garden-shears, repairing the ravages of the night before.

9 Every Friday five crates of oranges and lemons arrived from a fruiterer in New York—every Monday these  
10 same oranges and lemons left his back door in a pyramid of pulpless halves. There was a machine in the  
11 kitchen which could extract the juice of two hundred oranges in half an hour, if a little button was pressed  
12 two hundred times by a butler's thumb.

13 At least once a fortnight a corps of caterers came down with several hundred feet of canvas and enough  
14 colored lights to make a Christmas tree of Gatsby's enormous garden. On buffet tables, garnished with  
15 glistening hors-d'oeuvre\*, spiced baked hams crowded against salads of harlequin designs and pastry pigs  
16 and turkeys bewitched to a dark gold. In the main hall a bar with a real brass rail was set up, and stocked  
17 with gins and liquors and with cordials so long forgotten that most of his female guests were too young to  
18 know one from another.

19 By seven o'clock the orchestra has arrived—no thin five-piece affair but a whole pitful of oboes and  
20 trombones and saxophones and viols and cornets and piccolos and low and high drums. The last swimmers  
21 have come in from the beach now and are dressing upstairs; the cars from New York are parked five deep  
22 in the drive, and already the halls and salons and verandas are gaudy with primary colors and hair shorn in  
23 strange new ways and shawls beyond the dreams of Castile. The bar is in full swing and floating rounds of  
24 cocktails permeate the garden outside until the air is alive with chatter and laughter and casual innuendo  
25 and introductions forgotten on the spot and enthusiastic meetings between women who never knew each  
26 other's names.

27 The lights grow brighter as the earth lurches away from the sun and now the orchestra is playing yellow  
28 cocktail music and the opera of voices pitches a key higher. Laughter is easier, minute by minute, spilled  
29 with prodigality\*, tipped out at a cheerful word. The groups change more swiftly, swell with new arrivals,  
30 dissolve and form in the same breath—already there are wanderers, confident girls who weave here and  
31 there among the stouter and more stable, become for a sharp, joyous moment the center of a group and  
32 then excited with triumph glide on through the sea-change of faces and voices and color under the  
33 constantly changing light.

34 Suddenly one of these gypsies in trembling opal, seizes a cocktail out of the air, dumps it down for courage  
35 and moving her hands like Frisco dances out alone on the canvas platform. A momentary hush; the  
36 orchestra leader varies his rhythm obligingly for her and there is a burst of chatter as the erroneous news  
37 goes around that she is Gilda Gray's understudy from the "Follies." The party has begun.

### \*Glossary

station wagon = an estate car

hors-d'oeuvre = a small portion of food served as an appetizer before a main meal

prodigality = wasteful luxury

## 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 8**.

List **four** things from this part of the text about what goes on at the neighbour's house.

**[4 marks]**

**Q2.** Look in detail at this extract from **lines 1 to 18** of the Source:

There was music from my neighbor's house through the summer nights. In his blue gardens men and girls came and went like moths among the whisperings and the champagne and the stars. At high tide in the afternoon I watched his guests diving from the tower of his raft or taking the sun on the hot sand of his beach while his two motor-boats slit the waters of the Sound, drawing aquaplanes over cataracts of foam. On week-ends his Rolls-Royce became an omnibus, bearing parties to and from the city, between nine in the morning and long past midnight, while his station wagon scampered like a brisk yellow bug to meet all trains. And on Mondays eight servants including an extra gardener toiled all day with mops and scrubbing-brushes and hammers and garden-shears, repairing the ravages of the night before.

Every Friday five crates of oranges and lemons arrived from a fruiterer in New York—every Monday these same oranges and lemons left his back door in a pyramid of pulpless halves. There was a machine in the kitchen which could extract the juice of two hundred oranges in half an hour, if a little button was pressed two hundred times by a butler's thumb.

At least once a fortnight a corps of caterers came down with several hundred feet of canvas and enough colored lights to make a Christmas tree of Gatsby's enormous garden. On buffet tables, garnished with glistening hors-d'oeuvre, spiced baked hams crowded against salads of harlequin designs and pastry pigs and turkeys bewitched to a dark gold. In the main hall a bar with a real brass rail was set up, and stocked with gins and liquors and with cordials so long forgotten that most of his female guests were too young to know one from another.

How does the writer use language here to describe the extravagance of the parties?

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 comes at the beginning of a chapter.

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 19 to the end**.

A student, having read this section of the text, said: 'The writer brings the parties to life for the reader. It is as if you are there.'

To what extent do you agree?

In your response, you could:

- write about your own impressions of the parties
- 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. Either:** Write a description suggested by this picture:



**Or:** Write a story opening for a genre of your choice. Set the scene vividly.

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

**[40 marks]**