

Oxford Revise | AQA English Language | Answers

Paper 1: Question 1

Marking guidance for Question 1

- This question tests A01: Identify explicit information.
- Responses must be drawn only from the specific lines cited in the question.
- Responses may quote or paraphrase.

Example answer: Source 1 *Dawn at Woolacombe Sands* by Jez Neumann

This example answer is referred to on pages 68–69 of the revision guide.

Award 1 mark up to a maximum of 4 for any of the following:

- a narrow sandy path
- tall dune grasses
- a seabird
- something on the path
- the open grey sky
- a faint sun.

Practice 1: Source 2 *Millie* by Katherine Mansfield

You can find these practice questions on pages 70–71 of the revision guide.

Award 1 mark up to a maximum of 4 for any of the following:

- went back into the kitchen
- put some ashes on the stove
- sprinkled them with water
- sweated
- cleared away dinner
- went to the bedroom
- stared at herself
- thought about her feelings (may be phrased in various ways).

Practice 2: Source 3 *Facing the Light* by Adele Geras

You can find these practice questions on pages 70–71 of the revision guide.

Award 1 mark up to a maximum of 4 for any of the following:

- the white curtains
- the grass
- the sun
- the trees/their shadows
- the roses
- silvery water

- weeping willow leaves
- the lake.

Practice 3: Source 4 *The Bees* by Laline Paull

You can find these practice questions on pages 70–71 of the revision guide.

Award 1 mark up to a maximum of 4 for any of the following:

- squeezed
- the hot air
- her joints/body burning
- her head being pressed into her chest
- cramp
- the weakness of the wall.

Paper 1: Question 2

Marking guidance for Question 2

- This question tests A02: Explain, comment on, and analyse how writers use language to achieve effects and influence readers, using relevant subject terminology.
- This question is level-marked as per the grid below.
- Suggested content suggests some things that might be written about, but is not exhaustive.

Level	Skill descriptors
Level 4 Perceptive, detailed analysis 7–8 marks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • detailed and perceptive understanding of the effects of language features • well-chosen examples • accurate use of subject terminology
Level 3 Clear, relevant explanation 5–6 marks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • clear, logical comment of the effects of language features • appropriate examples • accurate use of subject terminology
Level 2 Some understanding and comment 3–4 marks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • some understanding of the effects of language features • some appropriate examples • mainly appropriate use of subject terminology

<p>Level 1</p> <p>Simple, limited comment</p> <p>1–2 marks</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● simple awareness of the effects of language features ● well-chosen examples ● accurate use of subject terminology
<p>Level 0</p> <p>No marks</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● nothing to reward

Example answer: Source 1 *Dawn at Woolacombe Sands* by Jez Neumann

The answer given below is a full, Level 4 answer. It is the complete answer of which an extract is given on page 75 of the revision guide.

The writer presents Woolacombe Sands as an enigmatic place. The setting is personified as one that seems friendly, as it is shown as ‘smiling’ which suggests that it is amiable and the type of place that visitors may feel at home in. Yet the adverb ‘emptily’ placed directly after ‘smiling’ undercuts things and makes the beach a little ominous, as if there’s something absent or slightly sinister about – as if it’s alive but also dead. The overall effect of this phrase is to present the beach as a mysterious place which appears superficially welcoming but also unknowable.

The further use of figurative language to describe the strange allure of the beach in ‘embraces you like a reluctant friend’ also presents the scene in a double-edged way. The association of ‘embrace’ with a warm gesture of love has implications of care and security, as if the beach is a welcoming place. Yet this is immediately undermined with the simile which suggests the accompanying feeling of reluctance, as if the embrace is not given willingly or sincerely. Taken together, the effect is disconcerting. It implies that the superficial charm of the beach can’t be trusted or that there’s something more troubling below the surface of what appears to be a scene of beauty.

Practice 1: Source 2 *Millie* by Katherine Mansfield

Suggested content has been given for each Exam Practice question. You can find these practice questions on pages 77–79 of the revision guide.

- The ominous description of the clock, the visual images of dark and light, its horror movie references.
- The figurative description of Millie’s fear as a spreading disease or sensation.
- The personification of the bulging, breathing furniture and its implication of threat/absurdity/Millie’s mental anguish.
- The dramatic verb choices – knocked, trembling, tiptoed, ducked, cried, darted – and their suggestion of movement, fear, and tension.
- The simile comparing her heart to a banging drum – its connotation of drama, volume, fear, and danger.

Practice 2: Source 2 *Facing the Light* by Adele Geras

Suggested content has been given for each Exam Practice question. You can find these practice questions on pages 77–79 of the revision guide.

- The visual images of darkness suggesting threat and danger.
- The adjective ‘twisted’ to describe the trees with suggestions of the corruption of nature, the horror film hallucinatory quality.
- The personification of the ‘thick stillness’, its threatening mysteriousness, the extending of this comparison.
- The personification of the paintings, the aural references to their screaming, the implied mental turmoil inspired by the setting.
- The verb choices suggesting the threat generated by the setting; e.g., flee, scream, jump.

Practice 3: Source 3 *The Bees* by Laline Paull

Suggested content has been given for each Exam Practice question. You can find these practice questions on pages 77–79 of the revision guide.

- The initial verb choices suggesting a terrifying, violent, and unusual experience; e.g., dragged, fell, roared.
- The figurative comparison of the static to a fierce animal, suggesting its power and control over Flora.
- The dramatic adjectival choices to imply the terrifying, consuming experience she undergoes; e.g., thunderous, thousand.
- The later verb choices to show the change in her experience to a more relaxed one; e.g., unlocked, calm.
- The various aural and olfactory images to suggest the extent and nature of her experience; e.g., roared, vibration, scents.

Paper 1: Question 3

Marking guidance for Question 3

- This question tests A02: Explain, comment on and analyse how writers use structural features to achieve effects and influence readers, using relevant subject terminology.
- This question is level-marked as per the grid below.
- Suggested content suggests some things that might be written about, but is not exhaustive.

Level	Skill descriptors
Level 4 Perceptive, detailed analysis 7–8 marks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • detailed and perceptive understanding of the effects of structural features • well-chosen examples • accurate use of subject terminology
Level 3 Clear, relevant explanation 5–6 marks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • clear, logical comment of the effects of structural features • appropriate examples • accurate use of subject terminology
Level 2 Some understanding and comment 3–4 marks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • some understanding of the effects of structural features • some appropriate examples • mainly appropriate use of subject terminology

Level 1 Simple, limited comment 1–2 marks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • simple awareness of the effects of structural features • well-chosen examples • accurate use of subject terminology
Level 0 No marks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • nothing to reward

Example answer: Source 1 *Dawn at Woolacombe Sands* by Jez Neumann

The answer given below is a full, Level 4 answer. It is the complete answer of which an extract is given on page 85 of the revision guide.

At the beginning of the story the writer briefly introduces character and setting, providing the reader with indirect clues as to the couple's relationship which make more sense by the end of the story. For instance, in the opening paragraph we learn of Amir's 'vague anticipation' which alerts readers to potential conflict further into the narrative and along with other details, such as the lonely sky, introduces an unsettling note. It becomes clearer as the story develops that there is something wrong with their relationship.

The first real sign of this occurs in the middle section where the writer uses dialogue to show Jane's displeasure at Amir, at which point the reader's impression of Jane becomes less sympathetic – the writer re-positions the characters at this point to paint Amir as a kind of victim figure. This creates some tension as the reader begins to sense that trouble may lie ahead, something which is confirmed by the devastating line placed at the very end of the story which acts as a terrible climax.

In the middle section of the story, the writer directs our focus to the internal thoughts of Amir. In choosing to present the story in this way, we are encouraged to side with Amir or at least develop some level of understanding towards the way he sees things. Here we learn of his prosaic view of the world and his desire to please Jane. By structuring the text in this way, the middle section colours our view of both characters, leaving us more likely to see Amir as a put-upon character who seems in mild fear of his wife. Therefore, by the end of the story, the effect of her cruel words is heightened because we have been allowed to see in the preceding part of the structure that Amir is a sympathetic figure. It also paints Jane and her words in a thoughtless light and manipulates the way we see her role as a villain figure in the narrative.

Practice 1: Source 2 *Millie* by Katherine Mansfield

Suggested content has been given for each Exam Practice question. You can find these practice questions on pages 87–91 of the revision guide.

- The opening section sets up Millie as a character who seems ill at ease, provoking the reader's anticipation of a situation where something bad may happen to the character.
- The introduction of the main problem in paragraph 2 – the heightening of the drama and threat towards Millie; the introduction of the second mysterious and threatening character.
- The climax in the centre of the story where Millie confronts the intruder, the emergence of her as a brave, violent character immediately followed by her horror at the situation.
- The ending section where Millie's maternal qualities emerge and the depiction of the intruder as a victim figure – the manipulation of both characters' roles by the end of the story.

Practice 2: Source 3 *Facing the Light* by Adele Geras

Suggested content has been given for each Exam Practice question. You can find these practice questions on pages 87–91 of the revision guide.

- The opening section which establishes character and setting – the increasingly mysterious quality which leads the reader to anticipate an otherworldly narrative.
- The middle section where Rilla flees, which adds tension to the narrative and changes the tone to one of horror; the speed of the events, which add to the hallucinatory qualities.
- The section which moves the setting outdoors and its sense of pace, which increases the excitement; the focus on Rilla's sensory feelings, which heightens an understanding of her predicament and experience.
- The final section with the horrific discovery and Rilla's reaction to it, which acts as a climax in the narrative; the withholding of precisely what she has discovered as a way to create intrigue.

Practice 3: Source 4 *The Bees* by Laline Paull

Suggested content has been given for each Exam Practice question. You can find these practice questions on pages 87–91 of the revision guide.

- The dramatic opening with its violent actions as a way to engage the reader via an *in media res* establishment or situation; the following calmer feelings that release the tension and help orient the reader to a degree.
- The explanatory passages in the middle of the narrative that give a better picture of character and situation, helping further orient the reader.
- The introduction of other characters in the middle section of the sequence and the brief conflict; the establishment of villain figures that sets up potential further conflict.
- The ending which ends the growing conflict and introduces Sister Sage as a saviour figure; Flora's final, unanswered question that creates a cliffhanger effect.

Paper 1: Question 4

Marking guidance for Question 4

- This question tests A04: Evaluate texts and support views with textual references.
- This question is level-marked as per the grid below.
- Suggested content suggests some things that might be written about, but is not exhaustive.

Level	Skill descriptors
Level 4 Perceptive, detailed analysis 16–20 marks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a clear response to the focus of the statement • clear and relevant evaluation • a clear understanding of the writer’s methods • a range of relevant references
Level 3 Clear, relevant explanation 11–15 marks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a convincing response to the focus of the statement • detailed and perceptive evaluation • a perceptive understanding of the writer’s methods • well-chosen references
Level 2 Some understanding and comment 6–10 marks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • some attempt at a response to the focus of the statement • some evaluative comment • some understanding of the writer’s methods • some appropriate references

Level 1 Simple, limited comment 1–5 marks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● a simple response to the focus of the statement ● limited evaluation ● limited understanding of the writer’s methods ● simple references
Level 0 No marks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● nothing to reward

Example answer: Source 1 *Dawn at Woolacombe Sands* by Jez Neumann

The answer given below is a full, Level 4 answer. It is the complete answer of which an extract is given on page 97 of the revision guide.

Although the story is written in third person, the writer allows us to see Amir’s point of view more clearly than Jane’s. As we are allowed access to his thoughts rather than Jane’s, we are likely to sympathise more with Amir because we can see that he doesn’t feel ‘part of the scene’ and learn that he wants to ‘make their marriage work properly’. Jane does have a different reaction to the beach, but I don’t feel much sympathy for her. The writer presents her as dismissive and self-interested, using verb choices such as ‘hissed’ to describe the way she talks to Amir, suggesting animalistic, aggressive qualities that make her appear unlikeable. The climactic part where she bluntly says to Amir that she ‘wants out’ makes any sympathy for her vanish. Although they do have different reactions, it seems to me that our sympathy lies more with Amir than Jane, and yet the writer does, in some ways, problematise our reaction to both characters: we are allowed to glimpse how Amir’s prosaic reaction to the location seems a little odd. In doing so, the writer invites the reader to see how faltering relationships are rarely one partner’s fault, and that the miscommunication is not just Jane’s problem.

The use of dialogue helps the reader understand the different reactions of the couple. The imperative used by Jane – ‘Don’t talk’ – show both her need for quiet to experience the beauty of the beach, but also her attitude towards her partner. Rather than increasing our sympathy, however, this abrupt instruction casts Jane in an unlikeable light, portraying her as domineering. Her subsequent interrogatives reinforce this impression, and the reader sees them less as genuine attempts to elicit Amir’s view and more as an attempt to belittle him. When Jane finally explains her reaction to the sands, the writer presents her as pretentious, making pronouncements about nature, time, and humanity that sound grandiose but ironically counterpoint her cruel manner, showing the reader that she is not only prissy but a hypocrite too.

Practice 1: Source 2 *Millie* by Katherine Mansfield

Suggested content has been given for each Exam Practice question. You can find these practice questions on pages 99–103 of the revision guide.

- Millie’s superficial aggressiveness gives way to a maternal care for the boy; the verb choice ‘stammered’ suggests her anxiety and worry at the situation.
- Her actions towards the injured boy suggest genuine desire to help, the verb choice to describe her fingers that ‘trembled’ reinforce the feeling of worry for him.
- The figurative reference to the strange feeling and its natural imagery suggests Millie’s deep-seated maternal qualities.
- The dialogue between Millie and the boy points to her reassuring manner.
- The view that Millie is foolish to assume the boy isn’t a threat; the speed with which she overlooks the previously threatening situation.
- The view that Millie is brave and kind rather than foolish – her ability to care for a previously dangerous boy and her natural maternal qualities are admirable rather than foolish.

Practice 2: Source 3 *Facing the Light* by Adele Geras

Suggested content has been given for each Exam Practice question. You can find these practice questions on pages 99–103 of the revision guide.

- The description of the darkness and mystery of object, which creates a creepy effect; the personification of the ‘skinny-finger leaves’ implies a dead human.
- The small details and references to human body parts create a feeling of horror; the tactile references create and sustain the creepy atmosphere.

- The adjectival choices, which draw attention to the horrific nature of the body – the ‘glassy’ eyes and paleish green skin’ create an otherworldly effect.
- The aural and tactile references describing Rilla’s experience form a climactic moment of horror.
- The view that the horrific features of the face are the most alarming part – the climactic reveal is the moment that causes Rilla to flee.
- The view that the aftermath to the reveal of the face is the most alarming given the utter subsequent terror and implied long-term effects on Rilla it evokes.

Practice 3: Source 4 *The Bees* by Laline Paull

Suggested content has been given for each Exam Practice question. You can find these practice questions on pages 99–103 of the revision guide.

- The number of harsh imperatives used towards the female bee suggests control and dominance; the society seems hierarchical and based on unfeeling authority.
- The aggressive dialogue reveals the power dynamic at the heart of bee society; the cruel exchange and accusatory words reveal the cruelty of the police.
- The violent actions of the police shown in the way they treat the female bee; the use of adjectives such as ‘sharp’ and ‘limp’ reveal the aggressiveness of their behaviour.
- The judgemental actions of the police; their measurement of Flora and the fearsome description of their appearance.
- The view that Sister Sage has the authority to dismiss the police suggests she is most powerful.
- Sister Sage’s inability and lack of willingness to intervene in the treatment of the female bee suggests limits to her power.

Paper 1: Question 5

Marking guidance for Question 5

- This question tests A05: Communicating clearly and imaginatively; organising and structuring writing in a coherent way.
- It also tests A06: Using a range of vocabulary and sentence structures; accurate spelling and punctuation.
- This question is level-marked as per the grid below.

A05

Level	Skill descriptors
Level 4 Compelling and convincing 19–24 marks	<p>22–24 marks:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • compelling and convincing to read in terms of content, purpose, and register • extensive and ambitious vocabulary • sustained crafting of linguistic devices • varied structural features and fluently linked paragraphs <p>19–21 marks:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • convincing and engaging to read in terms of content, purpose, and register • extensive vocabulary • conscious crafting of linguistic devices

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● varied structural features and consistently linked paragraphs
<p>Level 3</p> <p>Consistent and clear</p> <p>13–18 marks</p>	<p>16–18 marks:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● consistent and clear to read in terms of content, purpose, and register ● increasingly sophisticated vocabulary ● a range of successful linguistic devices ● coherent structural features and paragraphs <p>13–15 marks:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● generally consistent and clear to read in terms of content, purpose, and register ● vocabulary chosen for effect ● appropriate use of linguistic devices ● usually coherent structural features and paragraphs
<p>Level 2</p> <p>Some success</p> <p>7–12 marks</p>	<p>10–12 marks:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● some attempt to engage in terms of content, purpose, and register ● conscious use of vocabulary ● some use of linguistic devices ● some use of paragraphs and discourse markers

	<p>7–9 marks:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● an attempt to engage in terms of content, purpose, and register ● begins to vary vocabulary ● some use of linguistic devices ● attempts to write in paragraphs and use discourse markers, not always successfully
<p>Level 1</p> <p>Simple, limited comment</p> <p>1–6 marks</p>	<p>4–6 marks:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● simple attempt to engage in terms of content, purpose, and register ● simple vocabulary ● simple linguistic devices ● random paragraph structure <p>1–3 marks:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● occasional attempt to engage in terms of content, purpose, and register ● simple vocabulary ● no paragraphs and limited structural features
<p>Level 0</p> <p>No marks</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● nothing to reward

AO6

Level	Skill descriptors
Level 4 13–16 marks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● consistently accurate sentences ● wide range of accurate punctuation ● full range of sentence forms ● consistent use of Standard English ● high level of spelling accuracy ● extensive and ambitious vocabulary
Level 3 9–12 marks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● mostly accurate sentences ● range of mostly accurate punctuation ● variety of sentence forms ● mostly uses Standard English ● generally accurate spelling of complex words ● increasingly sophisticated vocabulary
Level 2 5–8 marks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● sometimes accurate sentences ● some control of punctuation ● attempts a variety of sentence forms ● some use of Standard English ● some accurate spelling of complex words ● varied vocabulary

<p>Level 1</p> <p>1–4 marks</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● occasionally accurate sentences ● some punctuation ● simple range of sentence forms ● occasional use of Standard English ● accurate basic spelling ● simple use of vocabulary
<p>Level 0</p> <p>No marks</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● nothing to reward

Question 5: Example answers

The answers given below are full, Level 4 answers. They are the complete answers of which extracts are given on page 111 and page 113 of the revision guide.

Descriptive option

In flickering light, my eyes traced the cracks on the ceiling. I was helplessly falling into sleep after a long day's travel. Somewhere downstairs, a monotonous clock, like a mother's gentle lullaby, was beckoning me to sleep. I'd soon surrender.

The wind outside played a melancholy air, the tune whistling through the ivy that adorned the front of the hotel. There was music in the night: the mowl of a fox somewhere in the hills; the rhythmic crunch of gravel (probably the night porter); the hushed tenor of a late-night arrival.

But hush.

Those hypnotic ceiling cracks drew me in.

Hush.

Earlier today, the sunlight had peered over the hills and touched the face of the hotel. It looked imperious, but the lush greenery softened its forbidding glare and once inside, I felt home. Day turned into evening and sleep awaited.

Hush.

The music of the night was drawing to a close: the gentle swish of curtains next door; the soft closing of a lock; the fading hum of air-conditioning.

Tomorrow, I'd travel onwards. But for now, I was safe. Cocooned in my highland hotel, caressed by cotton bedsheets, my limbs weary and my mind floating off into those hills that nestled on the horizon.

In flickering light, my eyes traced the cracks on the ceiling. I was helplessly falling into sleep.

I surrendered.

Narrative option

Amina and me on a crisp autumn day. Me driving and her in the back seat, smiling nervously. The low sunlight. I'll never forget that journey. In one sense, we knew where we were going. Hospital. In another sense, we had no idea how the journey would end.

By the time December arrived, I'd made the same journey every day for three long weeks. The features of the road had become totems; familiar things I'd acknowledge each time in a kind of superstitious hope that my daughter would live. Those totems will live long in my mind: the dilapidated garage on the bend; the mansion shrouded by increasingly bare trees; the sudden dip in the road just before the hospital entrance.

And the journeys down that long hospital corridor were tedious in their familiarity. Walking down them, I felt like I was in an airlock, suspended somewhere in space in an alternate reality where none of this was happening to the real me. The institutional smells of hospital food and medical concoctions would bring me back to reality. At the end of the corridor was the ward where Amina lay. Sometimes, I didn't want to enter it.

The worst thing was, as always, the waiting. And then one day, it was here. That day. The one where we'd find out what Amina's future held.

I was always good at play-acting; trying to be the strong parental figure holding the family together, but as I caught sight of the medical team at the bottom end of the ward, I felt the mask start to crumble. In the next hour, we'd know the shape of things to come. I could see Amina's consultant at the other end of the ward. She looked across but neither smiled nor acknowledged us. It seemed to me that time was slowing down, and the nurses all knew something.

Our last carefree summer holiday was now a distant memory: the blinding sunlight on the beach; the red-hot pavements; the melancholy of the final evening. It was magical. And now here we were, in a warm, claustrophobic room.

As the consultant sat down, I tried to read her body language. She perched uncomfortably on the edge of the bed. I couldn't focus on what she was saying. I felt like I was viewing her from the wrong end of the telescope.

And then she broke the news.

Amina and me on a crisp winter's day. Me driving and her in the back seat, smiling happily. The low sunlight. I'll never forget that journey.

We were going home.

Practices 1–3

These practice questions can be found on pages 115–117 of the revision guide.

Answers will vary.