

Year 11 English Language Practice Questions

(work through these as part of your 15 week plan)

Question 1 (Week 15)

This week you are looking at ANALYSIS. Read the short extract below and write one paragraph in response to the question.

(In this extract from *Hard Times* by Charles Dickens, a rich banker named Mr Bounderby is described)

He was a rich man: banker, merchant, manufacturer, and what not. A big, loud man, with a stare, and a metallic laugh. A man made out of a coarse material, which seemed to have been stretched to make so much of him. A man with a great puffed head and forehead, swelled veins in his temples, and such a strained skin to his face that it seemed to hold his eyes open, and lift his eyebrows up. A man with a pervading appearance on him of being inflated like a balloon, and ready to start. A man who could never sufficiently vaunt himself a self-made man. A man who was always proclaiming, through that brassy speaking-trumpet of a voice of his, his old ignorance and his old poverty. A man who was the Bully of humility.

How does the writer use language and structure to give a sense of character?

Question 2 (Week 14)

This week you are looking at EVALUATION. Read the short extract below and write one paragraph in response to the question.

(In this extract from *War of the Worlds* by HG Wells, the narrator describes an approaching alien attack)

All unsuspected, those missiles the Martians had fired at us drew earthward, rushing now at a pace of many miles a second through the empty gulf of space, hour by hour and day by day, nearer and nearer. It seems to me now almost incredibly wonderful that, with that swift fate hanging over us, men could go about their petty concerns as they did.

In this extract, the writer creates a sense of approaching danger. Evaluate how effectively this is achieved.

Question 3 (Week 13)

This week you are looking at 7a **COMPARISON**. Read the two short extracts below and answer the question beneath.

(Text 1 - this essay by George Orwell discusses comics aimed at boys)

Merely looking at the cover illustrations of the papers which I have on the table in front of me, here are some of the things I see. On one a cowboy is clinging by his toes to the wing of an aeroplane in mid-air and shooting down another aeroplane with his revolver. On another a Chinese is swimming for his life down a sewer with a swarm of ravenous-looking rats swimming after him. On another an engineer is lighting a stick of dynamite while a steel robot feels for him with its claws. On another a man in airman's costume is fighting barehanded against a rat somewhat larger than a donkey. On another a nearly naked man of terrific muscular development has just seized a lion by the tail and flung it thirty yards over the wall of an arena, with the words, 'Take back your blooming lion!'

(Text 2 - this article by Francis Hitchman discusses old-fashioned sensational story books called Penny Dreadfuls)

'Cheeky Charlie, or what a Boy can do' - the third of these 'stories' - is an impossible tale of an outcast boy, who is rescued by a personage very appropriately called 'the Vagabond,' from the cruelties, of the workhouse and the Guardians of the Poor. The hero is always in company with a magnificent horse; is always armed with sword and pistols, sumptuously dressed; he has a rich, mellow voice. The moon is always 'shining merrily' on his gallant exploits, and fortune is ever on the side of the handsome hero, and as constantly unfavourable to the stupid, cowardly, and ill-looking constables and their assistants.

Both writers talk about popular texts. What similarities can you find?

Question 4 (Week 11)

You are looking at the **ANALYSIS** question for Paper 1 and Paper 2 again today. For the analysis question you need to write about 3 answer paragraphs:

1. One analysing the connotations of a word
2. One analysing the language techniques used
3. One analysing structure techniques

Read the extract below and answer the question beneath it.

(In this extract from Vanity Fair by William M Thackeray, a young lady called Amelia Smedley is described)

Now, Miss Amelia Sedley was a young lady of this singular species; and had many charming qualities. For she could not only sing like a lark, or a Mrs. Billington, and dance like Hillisberg or Parisot; and embroider beautifully; and spell as well as a Dictionary itself; but she had such a kindly, smiling, tender, gentle, generous heart of her own, as won the love of everybody who came near her, from Minerva herself down to the poor girl in the scullery, and the one-eyed tart-woman's daughter, who was permitted to vend her wares once a week to the young ladies in the Mall. She had twelve intimate and bosom friends out of the twenty-four young ladies.

How does the writer use language and structure to show Miss Smedley's character?

Try and write 3 paragraphs. One word analysis. One language technique analysis. One structure technique analysis.

Question 5 (Week 10)

This week you are looking at EVALUATION. Remember, this means talking about HOW and WHY the extract you have been given is interesting.

Is it interesting because it's:

Dramatic? Emotional? Shocking? Scary?

Does describe a particularly interesting:

Event? Person? Idea from the time period?

Read the extract below and answer the question beneath it.

(In this extract from Dracula by Bram Stoker, a group of men attempt to kill a vampire)

"Take this stake in your left hand, ready to place the point over the heart, and the hammer in your right. Then when we begin our prayer for the dead—I shall read him, I have here the book, and the others shall follow—strike in God's name, that so all may be well with the dead that we love and that the Un-Dead pass away."

Arthur took the stake and the hammer, and when once his mind was set on action his hands never trembled nor even quivered. Van Helsing opened his missal and began to read, and Quincey and I followed as well as we could. Arthur placed the point over the heart, and as I looked I could see its dint in the white flesh. Then he struck with all his might. The Thing in the coffin writhed; and a

hideous, blood-curdling screech came from the opened red lips. The body shook and quivered and twisted in wild contortions; the sharp white teeth champed together till the lips were cut, and the mouth was smeared with a crimson foam. But Arthur never faltered.

In this extract there is an attempt to describe a dramatic moment. How effectively is this achieved?

Try to write 2 paragraphs.

Question 6 (Week 8)

This week we are focussing on question 7B. This is the longer comparison question. With this question you must compare the ideas in the texts AND analyse the language / techniques used by the writers.

Read the two short texts below and answer the question beneath.

Text 1

(In this extract from *The Heart of England* by Edward Thomas, the writer describes his travels through the English countryside)

The chestnut blossom is raining steadily and noiselessly down upon a path whose naked pebbles receive mosaic of emerald light from the interlacing boughs. At intervals, once or twice an hour, the wings of a lonely swallow pass that way, when alone the shower stirs from its perpendicular fall. Cool and moist, the perfumed air flows, without lifting the most nervous leaf or letting fall a suspended bead of the night's rain from a honeysuckle bud. In an indefinite sky of grey, through which one ponderous cloud billows into sight and is lost again, no sun shines: yet there is light—I know not whence; for the brass trappings of the horses beam so as to be extinguished in their own fire. There is no song in wood or sky. Some one of summer's wandering voices—bullfinch or willow-wren—might be singing, but unheard, at least unrealised. From the dead nettle spires, with dull green leaves stained by purple and becoming more and more purple towards the crest, which is of a sombre uniform purple, to the elms reposing at the horizon, all things have bowed the head, hushed, settled into a perfect sleep. Those elms are just visible, no more. The path has no sooner emerged from one shade than another succeeds, and so, on and on, the eye wins no broad dominion.

Text 2

(In this extract from his autobiography, Laurie Lee describes he walks through England)

That first day alone - and now I was really alone at last - steadily declined in excitement and vigour. As I tramped through the dust towards the Wiltshire Downs a growing reluctance weighed me down. White elder-blossom and dog-roses hung in the hedges, blank as unwritten paper, and the hot empty road - there were few motor cars then - reflected Sunday's waste and indifference. High sulky summer sucked me towards it, and I offered no resistance at all.

The long evening shadows pointed to folded villages, homing cows, and after-church walkers. I tramped the edge of the road, watching my dusty feet, not stopping again for a couple of hours. When darkness came, full of moths and beetles, I was too weary to put up the tent. So I lay myself down in the middle of a field and stared up at the brilliant stars. I was oppressed by the velvety emptiness of the world and the swathes of soft grass I lay on. Then the fumes of the night finally put me to sleep - my first night without a roof or bed. I was woken soon after midnight by drizzling rain on my face, the sky black and the stars all gone. Two cows stood over me, windily sighing, and the wretchedness of that moment haunts me still. I crawled into a ditch and lay awake till dawn, soaking alone in that nameless field.

Explore how the writers of both texts present their views and perspectives of the countryside.

Paper 1 Q3 (analysis) and Q4 (evaluation) - a complete practice question

(In this extract from a story by Arthur Conan Doyle titled 'The Brazilian Cat', a man has tricked into entering a cage with a black puma)

With a sleek ripple of its long, black back it rose, stretched itself, and then rearing itself on its hind legs, with one fore paw against the wall, it raised the other, and drew its claws across the wire meshes beneath me. One sharp, white hook tore through my trousers — for I may mention that I was still in evening dress — and dug a furrow in my knee. It was not meant as an attack, but rather as an experiment, for upon my giving a sharp cry of pain he dropped down again, and springing lightly into the room, he began walking swiftly round it, looking up every now and again in my direction. For my part I shuffled backwards until I lay with my back against the wall, screwing myself into the smallest space possible. The farther I got the more difficult it was for him to attack me.

He seemed more excited now that he had begun to move about, and he ran swiftly and noiselessly round and round the den, passing continually underneath the iron couch upon which I lay. It was wonderful to see so great a bulk passing like a shadow, with hardly the softest thudding of velvety pads. The candle was burning low — so low that I could hardly see the creature. And

then, with a last flare and splutter it went out altogether. I was alone with the cat in the dark!

It helps one to face a danger when one knows that one has done all that possibly can be done. There is nothing for it then but to quietly await the result. In this case, there was no chance of safety anywhere except the precise spot where I was. I stretched myself out, therefore, and lay silently, almost breathlessly, hoping that the beast might forget my presence if I did nothing to remind him. I reckoned that it must already be two o'clock. At four it would be full dawn. I had not more than two hours to wait for daylight.

How slowly those dreadful two hours went by! Once I heard a low, rasping sound, which I took to be the creature licking its own fur. Several times those greenish eyes gleamed at me through the darkness, but never in a fixed stare, and my hopes grew stronger that my presence had been forgotten or ignored. At last the least faint glimmer of light came through the windows — I first dimly saw them as two grey squares upon the black wall, then grey turned to white, and I could see my terrible companion once more. And he, alas, could see me!

Question 3 (analysis) (6 marks)

How does the writer use language and structure to present the puma?

Question 4 (evaluation) (15 marks)

In this extract there is an attempt to describe fear. Evaluate how effectively this is this achieved.

Paper 2 Q3 (analysis) and Q6 (evaluation) - a complete practice question

(In 2013, Malala Yousafzai gave this speech to the United Nations General Assembly. She was 16 years old and tells them about being shot by the Taliban)

Dear Friends, on the 9th of October 2012, the Taliban shot me on the left side of my forehead. They shot my friends too. They thought that the bullets would silence us. But they failed. And then, out of that silence came, thousands of voices. The terrorists thought that they would change our aims and stop our ambitions but nothing changed in my life except this: Weakness, fear and hopelessness died. Strength, power and courage was born. I am the same Malala. My ambitions are the same. My hopes are the same. My dreams are the same.

Dear sisters and brothers, I am not against anyone. Neither am I here to speak in terms of personal revenge against the Taliban or any other terrorists group. I

am here to speak up for the right of education of every child. I want education for the sons and the daughters of all the extremists especially the Taliban.

Dear brothers and sisters, we want schools and education for every child's bright future. We will continue our journey to our destination of peace and education for everyone. No one can stop us. We will speak for our rights and we will bring change through our voice. We must believe in the power and the strength of our words. Our words can change the world.

Because we are all together, united for the cause of education. And if we want to achieve our goal, then let us empower ourselves with the weapon of knowledge and let us shield ourselves with unity and togetherness.

Dear brothers and sisters, we must not forget that millions of people are suffering from poverty, injustice and ignorance. We must not forget that millions of children are out of schools. We must not forget that our sisters and brothers are waiting for a bright peaceful future.

So let us wage a global struggle against illiteracy, poverty and terrorism and let us pick up our books and pens. They are our most powerful weapons.

One child, one teacher, one pen and one book can change the world. Education is the only solution. Education First. Thank you.

Question 3 (analysis) (15 marks* note Q3 is worth more on Paper 2)

How does the writer use language and structure to show her passion?

Question 4 (evaluation) (15 marks)

In this extract the writer describes the importance of education. Evaluate how effectively this is achieved.

Paper 2 Comparison 7a and 7b

Read the two texts below then answer Question 7a and Question 7b.

TEXT 1

When do you know you're old enough to die? Barbara Ehrenreich has some answers

By Lucy Rock, published in The Guardian newspaper

Four years ago, Barbara Ehrenreich, 76, reached the realisation that she was old enough to die. Not that the author, journalist and political activist was sick; she just didn't want to spoil the time she had left undergoing myriad preventive medical tests or restricting her diet in pursuit of a longer life.

While she would seek help for an urgent health issue, she wouldn't look for problems.

Now Ehrenreich felt free to enjoy herself. "I tend to worry that a lot of my friends who are my age don't get to that point," she tells the *Guardian*. "They're frantically scrambling for new things that might prolong their lives."

It is not a suicidal decision, she stresses. Ehrenreich has what she calls "a very keen bullshit detector" and she has done her research. The results of this are detailed in her latest book, *Natural Causes: An Epidemic of Wellness, the Certainty of Dying, and Killing Ourselves to Live Longer*, published on 10 April.

Part polemic, part autobiographical, Ehrenreich - who holds a PhD in cellular immunology - casts a skeptical, sometimes witty, and scientifically rigorous eye over the beliefs we hold that we think will give us longevity. She targets the medical examinations, screenings and tests we're subjected to in older age as well as the multibillion-dollar "wellness" industry, the cult of mindfulness and food fads.

These all give us the illusion that we are in control of our bodies. But in the latter part of the book, Ehrenreich argues this is not so. For example, she details how our immune systems can turn on us, promoting rather than preventing the spread of cancer cells. When Ehrenreich talks of being old enough to die, she does not mean that each of us has an expiration date. It's more that there's an age at which death no longer requires much explanation.

"That thought had been forming in my mind for some time," she says. "I really have no hard evidence about when exactly one gets old enough to die, but I notice in obituaries if the person is over 70 there's not a big mystery, there's no investigation called for. It's usually not called tragic because we do die at some age. I found that rather refreshing."

A recent exchange with a friend summed up what Ehrenreich hoped to achieve with *Natural Causes*. "I gave the book to a dear friend of mine a week ago. She's 86 and she's a very distinguished social scientist and has had a tremendous career. "She said: 'I love this, Barbara, it's making me happy.' I felt 'wow'. I want people to read it and relax. I see so many people my age - and this has been going on for a while - who are obsessed, for example, with their diets.

"I'm sorry, I'm not going out of this life without butter on my bread. I've had so much grief from people about butter. The most important thing is that food tastes good enough to eat it. I like a glass of wine or a bloody mary, too."

Yet despite her thoughts on the "wellness" industry with its expensive health clubs (fitness has become a middle-class signifier, she says) and corporate "wellness" programs (flabby employees are less likely to be promoted, she writes), Ehrenreich won't be giving up the gym anytime soon. She works out most

days because she enjoys cardio and weight training and "lots of stretching", not because it might make her live longer.

"That is the one way in which I participated in the health craze that set in this country in the 70s," she says. "I just discovered there was something missing in my life. I don't understand the people who say, 'I'm so relieved my workout is over, it was torture, but I did it.' I'm not like that."

TEXT 2

What is So Good About Growing Old **By Helen Fields, Smithsonian Magazine**

Forget about senior moments. The great news is that researchers are discovering some surprising advantages of aging. Scientists are finding the mind gets sharper at a number of vitally important abilities as you get older.

Even as certain mental skills decline with age—what was that guy's name again?—scientists are finding the mind gets sharper at a number of vitally important abilities. In a University of Illinois study, older air traffic controllers excelled at their cognitively taxing jobs, despite some losses in short-term memory and visual spatial processing. How so? They were expert at navigating, juggling multiple aircraft simultaneously and avoiding collisions.

People also learn how to deal with social conflicts more effectively. For a 2010 study, researchers at the University of Michigan presented "Dear Abby" letters to 200 people and asked what advice they would give. Subjects in their 60s were better than younger ones at imagining different points of view, thinking of multiple resolutions and suggesting compromises.

It turns out that managing emotions is a skill in itself, one that takes many of us decades to master. For a study published this year, German researchers had people play a gambling game meant to induce regret. Unlike 20-somethings, those in their 60s didn't agonize over losing, and they were less likely to try to redeem their loss by later taking big risks.

These social skills may bring huge benefits. In 2010, researchers at Stony Brook University analyzed a telephone survey of hundreds of thousands of Americans and found that people over 50 were happier overall, with anger declining steadily from the 20s through the 70s and stress falling off a cliff in the 50s.

This may be news to people who equate being old with being sad and alone, but it fits with a body of work by Laura Carstensen, a psychologist at Stanford. She led a study that followed people ages 18 to 94 for a decade and found that they got happier and their emotions bounced around less. Such studies reveal that negative emotions such as sadness, anger and fear become less pronounced than in our drama-filled younger years.

Cornell sociologist Karl Pillemer and co-workers interviewed about 1,200 older people for the book *30 Lessons for Living: Tried and True Advice from the Wisest Americans*. "Many people said something along these lines: 'I wish I'd learned to enjoy life on a daily basis and enjoy the moment when I was in my 30s instead of my 60s,'" he says. Elderly interviewees are likely to "describe the last five or ten years as the happiest years of their lives."

"We have a seriously negative stereotype of the 70s and beyond," says Pillemer, "and that stereotype is typically incorrect."

7a) Similarities about the benefits of old age (6 marks)

7b) Compare the writers perspectives and viewpoints on growing old (14 marks)