

Paper 1: texts booklet, tasks, and exam-style questions

This booklet contains a selection of texts that will help you prepare for Paper 1 (fiction texts) the GCSE English Language exam.

It contains extracts from a range of different writers and books that are prose fiction texts, such as from short stories or novels. **They are all FICTION texts.** After each text, there are:

- **Tasks:** these are more to **get you thinking** about the text. They are only **loosely** based on the exam questions.
- **Exam questions:** these are based on the English Language GCSE exam for paper 1. There are 4 of these for certain texts, which test you on the Assessment Objectives for Paper 1.

After each text, there may be a **glossary**. The glossary includes difficult words that you would not be expected to know in an exam.

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The Metamorphosis (1915) by Franz Kafka

The following extract is from the start of Franz Kafka's *The Metamorphosis*, published in 1915. It focuses on the protagonist, Gregor Samsa, and his transformation from a man into an insect.

1 As Gregor Samsa awoke one morning from uneasy dreams he found himself transformed in his bed into a gigantic insect. He was lying on his hard, as it were armor-plated, back and when he lifted his head a little he could see his dome-like brown belly divided into stiff arched
5 segments on top of which the bed quilt could hardly keep in position and was about to slide off completely. His numerous legs, which were pitifully thin compared to the rest of his bulk, waved helplessly before his eyes.

10 What has happened to me? he thought. It was no dream. His room, a regular human bedroom, only rather too small, lay quiet between the four familiar walls. Above the table on which a collection of cloth samples was unpacked and spread out - Samsa was a commercial traveller - hung the picture which he had recently cut out of an
15 illustrated magazine and put into a pretty gilt frame. It showed a lady, with a fur cap on and a fur stole, sitting upright and holding out to the spectator a huge fur muff into which the whole of her forearm had vanished!

Gregor's eyes turned next to the window, and the overcast sky - one
20 could hear raindrops beating on the window gutter - made him quite melancholy. What about sleeping a little longer and forgetting all this nonsense, he thought, but it could not be done, for he was accustomed to sleep on his right side and in his present condition he could not turn himself over. However violently he forced himself
25 towards his right side he always rolled on to his back again. He tried it at least a hundred times, shutting his eyes to keep from seeing his struggling legs, and only desisted when he began to feel in his side a faint dull ache he had never experienced before.

Oh God, he thought, what an exhausting job I've picked on! Travelling
30 about day in, day out. It's much more irritating work than doing the actual business in the office, and on top of that there's the trouble of constant travelling, of worrying about train connections, the bed and irregular meals, casual acquaintances that are always new and never become intimate friends. The devil take it all! He felt a slight itching up
35 on his belly; slowly pushed himself on his back nearer to the top of the bed so that he could lift his head more easily; identified the itching place which was surrounded by many small white spots the nature of which he could not understand and made to touch it with a leg, but drew the leg back immediately, for the contact made a cold shiver run
40 through him.

Exam questions for *The Metamorphosis*

Question 1

[4 marks]

Read again the first part of the source, **lines 1 to 8**.

List **four** things from this part of the source that you learn about Gregor Samsa in these lines of the opening.

Question 2

[8 marks]

Look in detail at this extract from **lines 10-28**.

10 What has happened to me? he thought. It was no dream. His room, a regular human bedroom, only rather too small, lay quiet between the four familiar walls. Above the table on which a collection of cloth samples was unpacked and spread out - Samsa was a commercial traveller - hung the picture which he had recently cut out of an
15 illustrated magazine and put into a pretty gilt frame. It showed a lady, with a fur cap on and a fur stole, sitting upright and holding out to the spectator a huge fur muff into which the whole of her forearm had vanished!

20 Gregor's eyes turned next to the window, and the overcast sky - one could hear raindrops beating on the window gutter - made him quite melancholy. What about sleeping a little longer and forgetting all this nonsense, he thought, but it could not be done, for he was accustomed to sleep on his right side and in his present condition he could not turn himself over. However violently he forced himself
25 towards his right side he always rolled on to his back again. He tried it at least a hundred times, shutting his eyes to keep from seeing his struggling legs, and only desisted when he began to feel in his side a faint dull ache he had never experienced before.

How does the writer use language here to describe Gregor Samsa's situation?

You could include the writer's choice of:

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

Question 3

[8 marks]

You now need to think about the **whole** of the **source**. This text is taken from the start of a 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 and at the end;
- how and why the writer changes this focus as the source develops;
- how and why the writer uses structural features to show the change in Gregor Samsa's physical appearance;
- any other structural features that interest you.

Question 4

[20 marks]

Focus this part of your answer on the second part of the source, from **line 19 to the end**.

A student that read this extract said: 'Gregor Samsa is clearly agitated and upset by the situation that he is in.'

To what extent do you agree?

In your response, you could:

- the extent to which you agree with the above statement – do you agree with what the student thinking or not?
- consider your own impressions of the narrator – do you identify with her or not?
- evaluate how the writer is or is not harsh about the narrator – what does the writer make us think about her and how?
- consider how the writer explains the narrator's clothes, and the attention the detail;
- support your response with references to the text.

The Art of Racing in the Rain (2008) by Gareth Stein

This text is the opening of *The Art of Racing in the Rain*, by Gareth Stein. It was published in 2008 and instantly became a New York Times bestseller. It is written in the first person, though it is not the typical first-person narrator that you would expect...

1 Gestures are all that I have; sometimes they must be grand in nature.
And while I occasionally step over the line and into the world of the
melodramatic, it is what I must do in order to communicate clearly and
effectively. In order to make my point understood without question. I
5 have no words I can rely on because, much to my dismay, my tongue
was designed long and flat and loose, and therefore, is a horribly
ineffective tool for pushing food around my mouth while chewing, and
an even less effective tool for making clever and complicated
polysyllabic sounds that can be linked together to form sentences. And
10 that's why I'm here now waiting for Denny to come home - he should
be here soon - lying on the cool tiles of the kitchen floor in a puddle of
my own urine.

I'm old. And while I'm very capable of getting older, that's not the way I
want to go out. Shot full of pain medication and steroids to reduce the
15 swelling of my joints. Vision fogged with cataracts. Puffy, plasticky
packages of Doggie Depends stocked in the pantry. I'm sure Denny
would get me one of those little wagons I've seen on the streets, the
ones that cradle the hindquarters so a dog can drag his rear end
behind him when things start to fail. That's humiliating and degrading.
20 I'm not sure if it's worse than dressing up a dog for Halloween, but it's
close. He would do it out of love, of course. I'm sure he would keep me
alive as long as he possibly could, my body deteriorating, disintegrating
around me, dissolving until there's nothing left but my brain floating in a
glass jar filled with clear liquid, my eyeballs drifting at the surface and
25 all sorts of cables and tubes feeding what remains.

But I don't want to be kept alive. Because I know what's next. I've seen
it on TV. A documentary I saw about Mongolia, of all places. It was the
best thing I've ever seen on television, other than the 1993 Grand Prix
of Europe, of course, the greatest automobile race of all time in which
30 Ayrton Senna proved himself to be a genius in the rain. After the 1993
Grand Prix, the best thing I've ever seen on TV is a documentary that
explained everything to me, made it all clear, told the whole truth: when
a dog is finished living his lifetimes as a dog, his next incarnation will
35 be as a man.

I've always felt almost human. I've always known that there's
something about me that's different than other dogs. Sure, I'm stuffed
into a dog's body, but that's just the shell. It's what's inside that's
important. The soul. And my soul is very human.

40 I am ready to become a man now, though I realize I will lose all that I
have been. All of my memories, all of my experiences. I would like to
take them with me into my next life—there is so much I have gone
through with the Swift family—but I have little say in the matter. What
can I do but force myself to remember? Try to imprint what I know on
45 my soul, a thing that has no surface, no sides, no pages, no form of

any kind. Carry it so deeply in the pockets of my existence that when I open my eyes and look down at my new hands with their thumbs that are able to close tightly around their fingers, I will already know. I will already see.

- 50 The door opens, and I hear him with his familiar cry, “Yo, Zo!” Usually, I can’t help but put aside my pain and hoist myself to my feet, wag my tail, sling my tongue around, and shove my face into his crotch. It takes humanlike willpower to hold back on this particular occasion, but I do. I hold back. I don’t get up. I’m acting.

Exam questions for *The Art of Racing in the Rain*

Question 1

[4 marks]

Read again the first part of the source, **lines 1 to 10**.

List **four** things from this part of the source that you learn about the narrator of the story.

Question 2

[8 marks]

Look in detail at this extract from **lines 13-25**:

- 15 I’m old. And while I’m very capable of getting older, that’s not the way I want to go out. Shot full of pain medication and steroids to reduce the swelling of my joints. Vision fogged with cataracts. Puffy, plasticky packages of Doggie Depends stocked in the pantry. I’m sure Denny would get me one of those little wagons I’ve seen on the streets, the ones that cradle the hindquarters so a dog can drag his rear end behind him when things start to fail. That’s humiliating and degrading.
- 20 I’m not sure if it’s worse than dressing up a dog for Halloween, but it’s close. He would do it out of love, of course. I’m sure he would keep me alive as long as he possibly could, my body deteriorating, disintegrating around me, dissolving until there’s nothing left but my brain floating in a glass jar filled with clear liquid, my eyeballs drifting at the surface and
- 25 all sorts of cables and tubes feeding what remains.

How does the writer use language here to describe the narrator’s situation?

You could include the writer’s choice of:

- words and phrases;

- language features and techniques;
- sentence forms.

Question 3

[8 marks]

You now need to think about the **whole** of the **source**. This text is taken from the start of a 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 and at the end;
- how and why the writer changes this focus as the source develops;
- any other structural features that interest you.

Question 4

[20 marks]

Focus this part of your answer on the second part of the source, from **line 26 to the end**.

A student that read this extract said: 'In this section of the opening, the narrator thinks very much like a human, but acts like a dog.'

To what extent do you agree?

In your response, you could:

- consider your own impressions of the narrator – do you see him more as a dog or more as a human?
- evaluate how the writer shows what the narrator thinks and what he does when his owner comes to get him;
- consider how the writer explains the dog's views on life;
- support your response with references to the text.

The Bell Jar (1963) by Sylvia Plath

The following text is the opening to *The Bell Jar*, a book written in 1963 by Sylvia Plath. It tells the story of Esther Greenwood, a young woman from the suburbs of Boston, who gains a summer internship at a magazine in New York.

1 It was a queer, sultry summer, the summer they electrocuted the
Rosenbergs, and I didn't know what I was doing in New York. I'm
stupid about executions. The idea of being electrocuted makes me
sick, and that's all there was to read about in the papers - goggle-eyed
5 headlines staring up at me on every street corner and at the fusty,
peanut-smelling mouth of every subway. It had nothing to do with me,
but I couldn't help wondering what it would be like, being burned alive
all along your nerves.

I thought it must be the worst thing in the world.

10 New York was bad enough. By nine in the morning the fake, country-
wet freshness that somehow seeped in overnight evaporated like the
tail end of a sweet dream. Mirage-gray at the bottom of their granite
canyons, the hot streets wavered in the sun, the car tops sizzled and
glittered, and the dry, cindery dust blew into my eyes and down my
15 throat.

I kept hearing about the Rosenbergs over the radio and at the office till
I couldn't get them out of my mind. It was like the first time I saw a
cadaver. For weeks afterward, the cadaver's head - or what there was
left of it - floated up behind my eggs and bacon at breakfast and behind
20 the face of Buddy Willard, who was responsible for my seeing it in the
first place, and pretty soon I felt as though I were carrying that
cadaver's head around with me on a string, like some black, noseless
balloon stinking of vinegar.

25 I knew something was wrong with me that summer, because all I could
think about was the Rosenbergs and how stupid I'd been to buy all
those uncomfortable, expensive clothes, hanging limp as fish in my
closet, and how all the little successes I'd totted up so happily at
college fizzled to nothing outside the slick marble and plate-glass fronts
along Madison Avenue.

30 I was supposed to be having the time of my life.

I was supposed to be the envy of thousands of other college girls just
like me all over America who wanted nothing more than to be tripping
about in those same size-seven patent leather shoes I'd bought in
Bloomingdale's one lunch hour with a black patent leather belt and
35 black patent leather pocketbook to match. And when my picture came
out in the magazine the twelve of us were working on - drinking
martinis in a skimpy, imitation silver-lamé bodice stuck on to a big, fat
cloud of white tulle, on some Starlight Roof, in the company of several
anonymous young men with all-American bone structures hired or
40 loaned for the occasion - everybody would think I must be having a real
whirl.

Exam questions for *The Bell Jar*

Question 1

[4 marks]

Read again the first part of the source, **lines 1 to 8**.

List **four** things from this part of the source that you learn about the narrator.

Question 2

[8 marks]

Look in detail at this extract from **lines 3 to 15**:

The idea of being electrocuted makes me sick, and that's all there was to read about in the papers - goggle-eyed
5 headlines staring up at me on every street corner and at the fusty, peanut-smelling mouth of every subway. It had nothing to do with me, but I couldn't help wondering what it would be like, being burned alive all along your nerves.

I thought it must be the worst thing in the world.

10 New York was bad enough. By nine in the morning the fake, country-wet freshness that somehow seeped in overnight evaporated like the tail end of a sweet dream. Mirage-gray at the bottom of their granite canyons, the hot streets wavered in the sun, the car tops sizzled and glittered, and the dry, cindery dust blew into my eyes and down my
15 throat.

How does the writer use language here to describe New York?

You could include the writer's choice of:

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

Question 3

[8 marks]

You now need to think about the **whole** of the **source**. This text is taken from the start of a 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 and at the end;
- how and why the writer changes this focus as the source develops;
- any other structural features that interest you.

Question 4

[20 marks]

Focus this part of your answer on the second part of the source, from **line 30 to the end**.

A reviewer wrote: 'In this part of the extract the narrator is too harsh on herself. She is very critical about everything, from her clothes, to the way that she behaves.'

To what extent do you agree?

In your response, you could:

- consider your own impressions of the narrator – do you identify with her or not?
- evaluate how the writer is or is not harsh about the narrator – what does the writer make us think about her and how?
- consider how the writer explains the narrator's clothes, and the attention the detail;
- support your response with references to the text.