

IGCSE ENGLISH LANGUAGE

GUIDE TO EXAMS EXTENDED Paper 2



Overview of the IGCSE Course

This section tells you information about the ways in which you will be assessed for your IGCSE course.

A final examination – 50%

Paper 1 Reading Passage (Core) OR
Paper 2 Reading Passages (Extended)

Coursework – 50%

You will submit a Coursework portfolio of **three** assignments

Your teacher will assess your skills during the IGCSE course and will discuss with you which papers and which level of examination (Core or Extended) you should take for your version of the syllabus. Extended gives grades A* to E; Core gives grades C to G.

The assessment objectives are:

Reading:

- R1 demonstrate understanding of explicit meanings
- R2 demonstrate understanding of implicit meanings and attitudes
- R3 analyse, evaluate and develop facts, ideas and opinions
- R4 demonstrate understanding of how writers achieve effects
- R5 select for specific purposes.

Writing:

- W1 articulate experience and express what is thought, felt and imagined
- W2 sequence facts, ideas and opinions
- W3 use a range of appropriate vocabulary
- W4 use register appropriate to audience and context
- W5 make accurate use of spelling, punctuation and grammar.

Overview of the exam – Paper 2 Reading Passages (Extended)

2 hours, 50 marks

40 marks for Reading, 10 marks for Writing
50% of the overall mark for IGCSE

Spend 15 minutes reading the texts. Passage A will be 650–750 words long and Passage B will be 550–650 words long.

Answer three questions on two passages:

- Question 1: Extended Response to Passage A (20 marks)
- Question 2: Language Question Passage A (10 marks)
- Question 3: Summary on Passage B (20 marks)

You will be given a reading booklet and an answer booklet. You must answer **all** questions in the answer booklet.

You can get grades A-E.

What will be tested?

The exam will test your ability to:

Read:

- demonstrate a precise understanding of extended texts
- synthesise, develop, analyse and evaluate facts, ideas and opinions
- effectively summarise, paraphrase and re-express
- demonstrate understanding of how writers achieve their effects
- recognise and respond to sophisticated linguistic devices
- extract appropriate information for specific purposes.

Write:

- express effectively what is thought, felt and imagined
- order and convey facts, ideas and opinions effectively
- demonstrate a sophisticated use of imaginative and varied vocabulary
- demonstrate a clear sense of audience and context
- demonstrate accuracy in spelling, punctuation and grammar
- use effectively a variety of sentence structures.

Key to Success – General Advice

- Work through the paper in order. Some tasks are designed to build up to the next question.
- READ EACH QUESTION CAREFULLY – check you have answered it fully. There are several aspects to the questions and you need to make sure you have addressed all of them.
- Look out for the key words in a question and underline them. What is the question asking you to do? It is carefully worded to focus your attention in the right direction. Also pay attention to bullet points as they indicate what you should include in your answer.
- Spend more time and effort on questions or parts of the exam that are worth more marks.
- DO plan your work; DO NOT write a rough draft. If you plan your work carefully this will suffice.
- Allow yourself time to CHECK and CHANGE your answers: use * or ^ to insert more information. Put a line through words you want to delete.
- Write as neatly as possible and make sure you have the right equipment with you.
- Do not write more than you need to – you will not have time to check it. Suggestions for length are there to help you understand what is expected within the time limit.
- If you finish the exam early, go back and check your answers again; you may have missed something.
- Use punctuation properly to make your writing clear. Don't use commas where you should have used a full stop.
- Keep concentrating until the end – don't let the quality of your work decline for the later questions.

Question 1 Extended Response (20 marks)

Candidates write about 250–350 words, responding in one of the following text types: letter, report, journal, speech, interview, newspaper report or magazine article.

The examiner wants to see that you can:

Read (15 marks):	Write (5 marks):
R1 demonstrate understanding of explicit meanings	W1 articulate experience and express what is thought, felt and imagined
R2 demonstrate understanding of implicit meanings and attitudes	W2 sequence facts, ideas and opinions
R3 analyse, evaluate and develop facts, ideas and opinions.	W3 use a range of appropriate vocabulary
	W4 use register appropriate to audience and context.

POINT OF VIEW: you should use I and imagine you are the character from the text.

FORM: 'interview' shows that this should be written as a script, with opening and closing comments from the interviewer.

CONTENT: You must use these questions as a basis for the interview and provide accurate information based on your reading.

Imagine that you are Narsingh Singh. You are being interviewed for the Sultanpur weekly newspaper by a reporter who has heard of the arrival of Shamdeo at the children's home.

The reporter asks the following questions:

- ***What were your thoughts and feelings when you found the boy?***
- ***Why are you so sure that he was brought up by wolves?***
- ***How do you think he will develop?***

Write the words of the interview, beginning with the first question.

Base your interview on what you have read in Passage A. Be careful to use your own words.

Write between 1 ½ and 2 sides, allowing for the size of your handwriting.

Up to 15 marks are available for the content of your answer, and up to 5 marks for the quality of your writing.

AUDIENCE:
You are writing formally for a news-paper.

Ideas should be based and expand on information from Passage A.

Marks are also awarded for accurate spelling, grammar and punctuation.

Specifies how much you should write.

Do not copy quotations/phrases from the text.

Read the question carefully because it will tell you very specific information about how you should write your answer. It is important that you read this information carefully before you begin.

- **Point of view:** The question may say to write from the point of view of the writer for example, or a journalist, or a character in the text.
- **Form:** the question will tell you to write a letter, report, journal, speech, interview, newspaper report or magazine article.
- **Content:** You will be given a list of bullet points of information you should include.
- **Number of words:** You will be asked to write approximately **1½ - 2 sides**.
- **How to start:** The question may tell you to **begin with** these words.
- **Audience:** The question may tell you who your readers will be. If you are writing for friends or family your writing should still be relatively formal and avoid slang.

How to approach the question

When planning....

1. Read the question carefully (see above)
 - a. Highlight key words and phrases.
 - b. Pay attention in particular to the bullet points itemizing the information you need to include in your answer.
 - c. Remember that you are being tested on your reading skills.
2. Re-read the text.
 - a. You should have already read the text – now you need to read it in more detail, looking for the information you need.
 - b. Highlight or underline the material relevant to the question using a pencil so that you can change your mind if you need to.
 - c. Be aware of the atmosphere being created and the feelings of any characters in your response. This means watching out for details and picking up on clues in the passage as you read. Some ideas might be quite subtle and implied.
 - d. If a detail is relevant, use it! Make sure that you are using as much of the material as it is possible to do. However, there may be some parts of the passage which you can ignore because they are not covered by the question.
3. Plan your work.
 - a. Next, draw up a quick plan in order to organise the ideas you've found into a logical structure, before you start writing. You do not have time to write a rough draft, but you should spend a few minutes planning.
 - b. Use the bullet points to help you to structure your answer. The material from the passage should be put into the appropriate section and not repeated. Do not be tempted to add extra sections. For instance, where you are given the questions to ask in an interview, stick to those questions only and develop the responses to them. It can make your answers too fragmented or less focused if you add more.
 - c. Make brief notes on how to expand the information. You are going to be rewarded not only for identifying relevant material in the passage but also for development of those ideas and use of supporting detail. The more you can adapt the details from the passage to suit the task you have been set, the more likely you are to score well for reading.
 - d. Do not drift away from the text. Everything you write must be directly connected to the passage and be supported by references to it.

When writing...

- Before you start writing decide on the appropriate tone to use – you will decide this based on your audience, why you are writing, or the character from whose point of view you are writing. Write in a formal style, even if you are writing a letter to a relative or friend. If writing for a publication, remember who you are writing to and address them directly.
- Don't forget that you should be using paragraphs.
- Remember your writing skills are being tested – the quality and accuracy of your writing is important.
- You will be rewarded for showing a wide range of vocabulary – don't repeat the same word too often.
- Use your own words as far as possible. Using words or phrases from the passage here and there when you are giving details within your answer is fine. Watch out though, that you do not copy big chunks of text, whole sentences or lengthy phrases.
- Make sure that your writing is legible.
- Remember: no marks are awarded for layout so don't waste time to dividing a newspaper report into columns or add drawings and extra advertisements to try to make it look similar to real life.

When checking

- Check your answer and correct any mistakes. Look out for errors like missed full stops and careless spelling errors.
- Read your answer back to yourself to help you spot errors. Thinking about the way your answer would sound if it were read aloud will help you to check if you are getting this right.
- Use the bullet points to remind you of what should be included and check you have covered what is required.
- For the full marks out of 5 for Writing you need to show that you have structured your answer, sequenced your ideas, and used 'a wide range of original and appropriate language'.

Sample Responses

Look at the following extracts from genuine student responses to the question on page 4. Note that they are not the full response, as the student would have needed to respond to the other two questions in order to get full marks.

Student 1 (extract)

Reporter:

What were your thoughts and feelings when you found the boy?

Narsingh:

I thought my eyes were playing tricks on me. When I first found him he was playing with those cubs, I was amazed he had not been eaten. His fingernails had grown like tiger claws and his teeth were sharp it was as if he was half animal. I wondered what I should do with him, I decided that it was not safe in the jungle for a small boy, so I tiptoed over to him to pick him up, and he bites me! All the more reason for me to believe that he was raised by wolves.

This is a Band 3 because the student:

Reading

- Shows a reasonable understanding of the text but has missed some important details.
- Has focused on the correct information for the task.
- Expands on some of the information but not as much as he could have.
- Uses some supporting detail.
- Presents ideas simply.

Writing

- Uses language clearly and appropriately.
- Worded the text plainly.
- Included some opinion but needed to develop it more for higher marks.
- Structured the paragraph well.
- Made a few technical errors, e.g. use of commas.

Student 2 (extract)

Reporter: Okay, first of all, what were your thoughts and feelings when you found the boy?

Narsingh: Well, I must say I was startled but not very surprised as it is not the first time I seen children get abandoned to the wild. In fact, I've come across four other young boys not unlike Shamedo and adopted them. Though I must admit, I was curious as I've never seen someone brought up as a wolf before. When I found him, he was trying to run away with the other cubs but with a human-like posture. His untidy state moved my heart: I noticed his abnormal physical features such as pointed teeth and claw-like fingernails and the thought that crossed my mind was: Is he still human? The things I had witnessed in those few moments wrenched my heart, they gave me an immense feeling of empathy towards this poor boy being abandoned by his family, being left to fend for himself at such a young age. It was at that second I knew I could not leave him here like this and that I must help him to have a normal life.

This is a Band 1 answer because the student:

Reading

- Demonstrates a thorough reading of the passage and implied information.
- Uses a range of ideas.
- Develops and expands on the information.
- Integrates supporting detail into the response.

Writing

- Creates a consistent voice for the character.
- Uses convincing and appropriate language e.g. formal language with discourse markers to indicate that it is a conversation.
- Uses a wide range of effective and interesting language.
- Has made a few minor technical errors in grammar and punctuation.

Key points from the examiner

Finally, here are some ways in which this type of answer could be improved:

- Answer all parts of the question.
- Answer in your own words and adapt material from the passage to the type of answer you are writing.
- Be aware of the main issues and themes in the passage and use plenty of detail to support your ideas.
- If you are writing as a character from the passage, try to create a personality and a voice which shows your understanding of what you have read.
- Give equal attention to all sections of the question.
- Explain points briefly, but in sufficient detail to show their significance in the context.
- Use your own words where appropriate; do not copy whole phrases from the original.
- Be careful to give only information that is focused on the question.
- Only make a point once.
- Give thought to the structure and sequence of the material in the response
- Adopt a suitable voice and register for the task .
- Pay attention to length.

Question 2 Language Question (10 marks)

This question, in response to Passage A, may be sub-divided into two parts – each part will direct you to re-read specific paragraphs or sections from the text.

You will then be asked to select specific quotations from the extracts you have read and explain the effects created. You will be expected to write about 200-300 words.

The examiner wants to see that you can:

R4 demonstrate understanding of how writers achieve effects.

How to approach the question:

When planning:

1. Read the question carefully and highlight any key words or phrases.
2. Locate the sections referred to in the question and re-read them carefully. Make sure that you concentrate only on the sections of the passage which you have been told to look at.
3. Underline any words/phrases in the passage that are effective or stand out.
4. Spend some time thinking about which quotes you will explain – choose the strongest examples rather than the first ones you come to. Do not select a quotation which you do not understand as you will not be able to explain either its meaning or its effect.
5. Things to look for could include: use of the five senses – including colour, noise or sound effects, use of contrast or links between the subject and the environment, surprising or unusual words in the context of the description, imagery (similes and metaphors).
6. Consider the quotes you have chosen:
 - a. Do you understand the meaning of all the words?
 - b. What techniques are used by the writer? Why?
 - c. How do these relate to writer's audience and purpose?
 - d. What effect might they have on the reader?
7. When you have some ideas for your comments, think about how they fit together before you start writing your answer – in that way you can avoid contradicting or repeating yourself.

When writing:

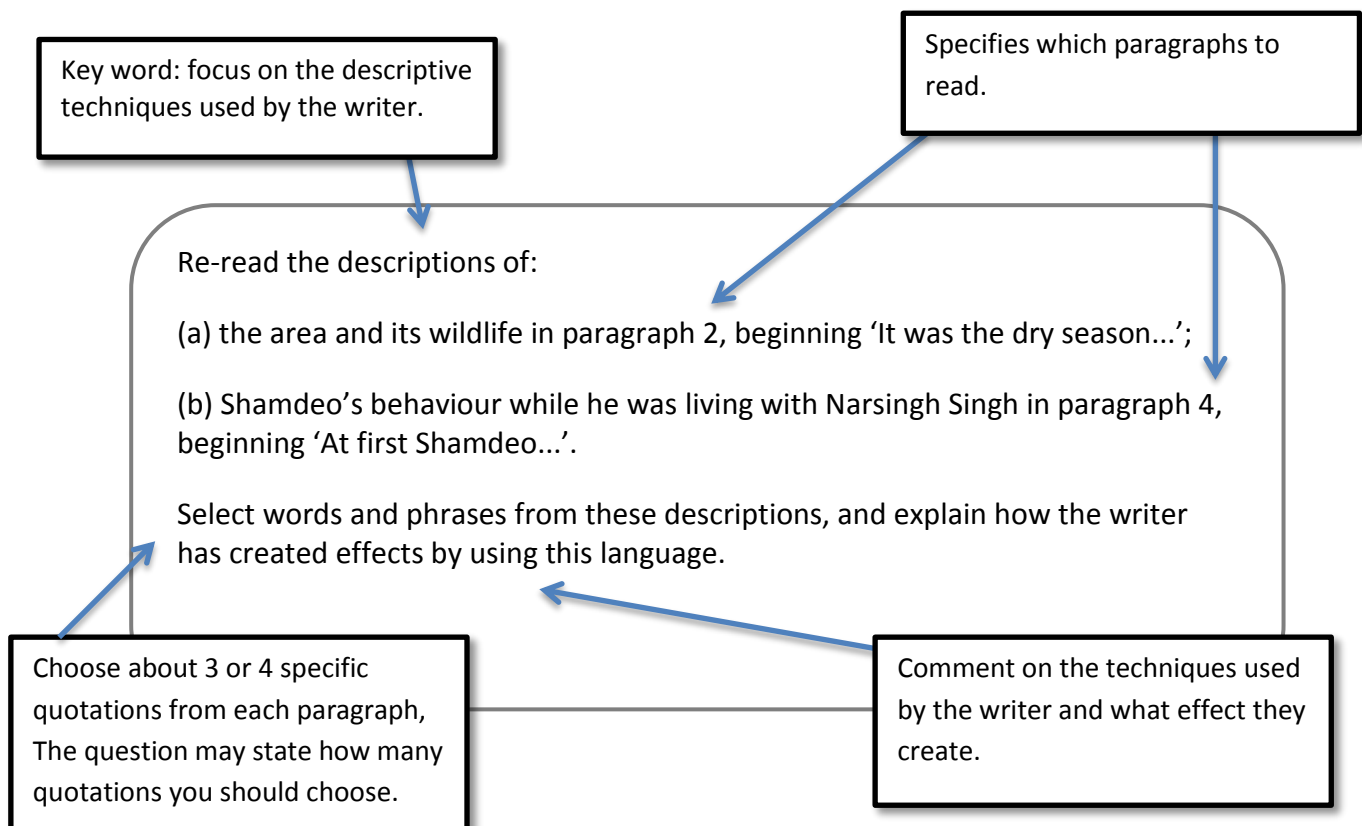
- Give equal attention to each part and provide at least half a page for each.
- Give the quotation, in quotation marks, explain its meaning, and then explain its effect in the passage. Make sure that it is clear which word(s) you are discussing. If you choose more than three or four words together it is not clear which one(s) you are selecting, so try to keep quotations short.
- Avoid clumping words together or listing them – again you need to focus on each word individually as you explore and explain the effect the writer wanted them to have on the reader.

- You need to do more than label literary features – saying that something is a metaphor is a starting point but to show understanding of the effect, you need to explain why and how the author has chosen that particular image in the context of the passage.
- Do not repeat the words used in the quotation. You need to use your own words to show that you understand what you are reading.
- Only discuss a quotation once.
- Give a full range of explained effects and link them to a comment about what the writer was trying to achieve in the passage as a whole.
- Try to avoid generalised and ‘gushing’ comments such as ‘The writer makes me feel as though I am there’ and ‘The passage is cleverly written’. These will gain no marks and give the impression that you are failing to find things to say. You need to explain HOW this is the case.

When checking:

- Remember there are no marks for writing in this question but if the examiner is not able to follow what you are saying it will be hard for you to show your understanding.
- Try to keep the examiner in mind as you write – explain your points clearly and fully so they know exactly what you are suggesting.
- Proofread your work to ensure it makes sense.

Sample Question and responses



Student 1

a) "it was approaching mid-morning" "sweltering temperature" "thickets of stately bamboo" "flamboyantly beaked horn bills"

The author has used words to create an atmosphere of a mystical exotic image in the readers mind.

b) "hated the sun" "would only play with dogs" "he could smell the scent of blood"

It is indicated that Shamedo has been thrown into an environment that is strange to him so he falls back on his animal instincts to survive, not used to having things provided for him.

This is a Band 5 response because the student:

- Chose some relevant quotations but not all were accurate or could have been more effective.
- Made some brief general comments about the effect achieved.
- Clumped phrases together and did not discuss the effect of words individually.
- Gave only a short response which did not explore the language in detail.

Student 2

A) "sweltering temperature" this shows the reader that the environment of northern India is a harsh one. It shows the reader just how hot and uncomfortable it must be for narsingh and shamedo being outside for long periods of time

"blinding blue background of empty sky" This gives the impression of absolute brilliance to the reader showing just how intense the sky can be in a place untouched by man.

"flamboyant beaked hornbills" this gives the reader a sense of amazement that not everything that lives in a harsh environment must be harsh as well. It gives the reader an insight into the beauty of nature making the reader want to witness these amazing creatures for themselves.

B) "wee to curl up in dark places" this shows the reader the extreme effect living with wolves has had on this boy. It gives the impression of fear and the need to hide.

"to stop him following the Jackals" this shows the reader just how lost this boy feels without the wolves and how the pack mentality has consumed his life. It makes the reader feel sad at the lack of emotion this young boy has for fellow human beings.

"He could smell the scent of blood" this gives the effect of an adapt or perish scenario making the reader feel a sort of amazement of how a boy so young has adapted to survive in such an unforgiving environment and the power of instinct.

This is a Band 3 response because the student:

- Identifies appropriate words and phrases.
- Shows understanding of the meanings of words.
- Gives some explanation of effects, although this is general at times.
- Shows some understanding of the effect on the reader.
- Note that there are some spelling and punctuation marks

Student 3

In paragraph 2, the writer uses language techniques to effectively describe the exotic Indian forest. The use of the adverb 'stately' to describe the bamboos creates an impression that the trees were majestic and beautiful, emphasizing their height and rigidness. The 'statuesque' and 'pointing' thorn tress likewise convey the beauty and height of the trees, personifying them as graceful and dignified like nobility, yet dominant and imposing. The use of adjectives also add to the atmosphere with words like 'sweltering' and 'thick' to create the intensity of the heat and the density of the forest. Altogether these words imply the imposing nature of the forest and help to add to the sense that it is powerful and dominant, beautiful yet daunting.

In paragraph 4 the writer uses language devices to describe Shamdeo's behavior. The adjective 'cowered' describes how Shamdeo attempted to hid from other children by trying to make himself small. It suggests that he is so afraid he is degraded to the same level as an animal, like how a dog will cower away from its master. The fact that he 'tottered' when he tried to stand shows how unused he is to human ways. The verb implies that he is slow and weak, suggesting he is like a baby newly born trying to stand for the first time or perhaps like a dog standing on its hind legs. The writer also describes Shamdeo's actions of 'growling' and 'scampering'. Both these words are linked to dogs and suggest the animal-like nature of his behavior and how he is different from other humans in the way he acts around others.

This is a Band 1 response because the student:

- Selects a range of words and phrases.
- Shows a thorough understanding of how language works.
- Identifies the technique **and** gives a specific explanation of its effect and why the writer has chosen each word/phrase.
- Comments are precise and interpretations are convincing.
- Relates the word to the overall effect the writer is trying to achieve.
- Wrote clearly and used PEE paragraphs to structure his answer. While he does not get extra marks for this, it does make the response easy to follow and explanations are expressed well.

Key points from the examiner

Finally, here are some ways in which this type of answer could be improved:

- Avoid general comments such as ‘the writer makes you feel that you are really there’ or ‘this is a very descriptive phrase’. Such comments will not earn any marks at all.
- Your first task is to choose some words and phrases that seem special to you. Do not write out whole sentences but use single words or phrases of two or three words. Do not write out the beginning and end of a long quotation with the key words missing from the middle.
- Treat each of your choices separately and do not present them as a list or give a general comment which applies to all of them.
- If you are not sure about explaining effects, try to at least give a meaning for each of your choices. That can give you half marks for the question.
- When you explain effects, think of what the reader imagines when reading the word or phrase. It may suggest more than one thing.
- Learn to recognise images and explain them (but you do not need to know or to give their technical names). Say what they literally mean, in this context, and then explain why they have been used in the passage.

Question 3 – Summary Question (20 marks)

This question is based on Passage B (sometimes both Passages A and B) and may have two parts.

Part a) will ask you to make notes and pick out specific information from Passage B or Passages A and B.

Part b) will ask you to summarise your notes in 200-250 words.

The examiner wants to see that you can:

Read (10 marks):	Write (5 marks):
R1 demonstrate understanding of explicit meanings	W1 articulate experience and express what is thought, felt and imagined
R2 demonstrate understanding of implicit meanings and attitudes	W2 sequence facts, ideas and opinions
R5 select for specific purposes.	W3 use a range of appropriate vocabulary

General advice

- You will need to focus just on the specific ideas or details relevant to the question. Make sure you focus on all parts of the question and its exact wording.
- If asked to focus on Passage A and Passage B do not attempt to combine the two passages. This is not required and is not rewarded; trying to do so makes your task more difficult as they may not be directly comparable.
- Do not write more or less than the specified word limit i.e. 200-250 words. If you are asked to summarise two topics give each about 100-125 words. You will be penalized if you write more or less.
- Make sure that your points count – they need to be clear, not vague.
- Don't repeat points.
- You do not need to introduce or conclude your summary. Start by using the wording of part of the question e.g. 'The features of the desert were...'
- Find all the points you can for each part of the question. Do not stop when you get to 15 – use everything relevant to get top marks.
- To get full writing marks you need to be clear, concise and precise.
- For part b) use the correct form: paragraphs, full sentences, objective third person.
- When writing the summary: use bullet points or a list, write in the first person or narrative, use quotation, add extra information or your own opinions.
- Remember to use your own words for part b) accept for larger technical words e.g. solar heaters. Use longer sentences with several points made.

Use the following five-step approach to summary writing (see the Revision section for more details):

1. Read and underline the relevant material in pencil (so that you can change your mind easily if needed).
2. Transfer the points into a plan, whilst changing them into your own words.
3. Group the points logically (using arrows/brackets); put them in order (using numbers), and decide which ones can be combined into one sentence.
4. Write the summary in two paragraphs using complex sentences.
5. Check the summary for accurate expression; adapt the length and improve if necessary by adding material overlooked or by removing repetition.

Sample questions and responses for Question 3

Part a)

This question is designed to help you plan your writing for Part ii). You should complete this section first

Question 3

Answer the questions in the order set.

You must write about BOTH the typical behaviour and physical characteristics.

a) Notes

Include information from Passage A and B

What is the typical behaviour of feral children as described in Passage B and the physical characteristics of the wolf boy as described in Passage A.

Write your answer using short notes.

Use bullet points. You do not need to write in full sentences.

You do not need to use your own words.

Up to 15 marks are available for the content of your answer.

It's ok to use words from the passage.

For 15 marks you need to spend more time and make fifteen points.

Student 1

Information on the typical behaviour of feral children as described in Passage B and the physical characteristics of the wolf boy as described in Passage A.

Typical behavior of feral children is

- Another trait which 'wild' children have in common is that they run on all fours like animals,
- have hardened, calloused hands and knees as a result.
- Also, like wild animals, they are most active at night and sleep during the day.

Physical Characteristics of wolfboy

- covered from people and would only play with dogs he saw the callouses on his palms, elbows and knees, and the scars on the side of his head which the mother wolf would have made

This is a low mark answer because the student....

- Has made a few points for each part of the question.
- Lifted too much quotation from the text, without selecting only the relevant phrases.
- Included irrelevant information.

Student 2

Information on the typical behavior of feral children as described in Passage B and the physical characteristics of the wolf boy as described in Passage A.

Typical behaviour

- naked.
- dirty.
- Run on all fours.
- sleep during day.
- Growl/don't talk
- Like animals but hates humans
- Like outdoors
- Sleep on ground

Characteristics of wolfboy

- Darkened skin.
- Claw-like fingernails.
- Long matted hair.
- Pointed teeth.
- Scar tissue on head.
- Unstable/tottering
- Peering
- Good smell
- hands to signal.

This is a high mark answer because the student....

- Used the information from Passage A and B
- Has listed a number of points for each part of the question.
- Made notes using bullet points.
- Copied from the text and did not spend time writing it in his own words.
- Used short clear words (although 'good smell' is a bit vague)
- Did not add in extra or irrelevant information
- Gave equal attention to both behaviour and physical characteristics.

Part b)

Use the points you made in the last part to help you write your summary.

b) Summary

Now use your notes to write a summary of what Passage B tells you about the behaviour of feral children and Passage A tells you about the characteristics of wolf-boy.

Writing should be in proper paragraphs with full sentences.

You must use continuous writing (not note form) and use your own words as far as possible.

Your summary should include all of your points in Question 3 (a) and must be 200 to 250 words.

Use all the information from a).

Do not write less or more than the word count specified.

Up to 5 marks are available for the quality of your writing.

You will gain more marks for accurate spelling, punctuation and grammar.

Student 1 (extract)

The typical behaviour of feral children, according to both fictional and mythological records, as well as past instances is that they are usually of spare proportion although not always. According to roman legend, twin brothers Romulus and Remus who were raised by a she-wolf grew to be mighty men and one of them found Rome. Typically the wild inhibit certain skills and methods of whatever fosters them, it is not uncommon for these to have rough hands. The way children who have been raised by animals, the way they move, hunt and sleep largely depends on the habits of the animal they were raised by.

The physical characteristics of the wolf boy is that....

This gets a low mark because....

- It has the appropriate amount of words but only a small amount of the information is relevant.
- He copies information directly from the text and does not put it into his own words.
- There are simple punctuation and grammar errors.
- Some of the writing is unclear.

Student 2 (extract)

Feral children are typically very cautious of humans and do not like having any contact with them. There sometime even very vicious toward humans biting or attacking humans when the humans get too close to them. They run on all fours and as a result have callouses and hardened skin on their hands and elbows. They are naked and dirty and have darkened skin. The trust animals more and behave wild they live unhygenecly and are prone to illness. They have diease as they have weakend immuned systems. They have little or no emotional concepts. I think it is terrible the way they have been abandoned by their parents.

The wolf Narsingh found was like a beaten child...

This gets a middle mark because...

- The student makes a few focused points about the physical characteristics of feral children.
- The student uses his own words where possible.
- The student mostly writes using full sentences but there are several errors with spelling, grammar and punctuation.
- It is written in proper paragraphs.
- It does not get higher because
 - The student has combined information about the 'physical characteristics' with 'behavioural characteristics', indicating some confusion about points.
 - There is some repetition.
 - Explanations are too wordy.
 - Opinions and examples have been included.

Student 3 (extract)

Feral children are children which have been brought up by animals in the wild. The most obvious characteristic of them are their untidiness and lack of hygiene. They have unkept hair, sharper teeth and prefer to move around using both hands and legs. As a result, they're very quick and fast. Feral children are normally nocturnal and prefer the company of animals thus they're rather aggressive towards humans. Raw meat from dead bodies of other animals made up their diet and since they were brought up in the wild, they prefer to live in a wide open space instead of small limited places. Feral children usually have a limited skill of human speech and often make sounds of other animals.

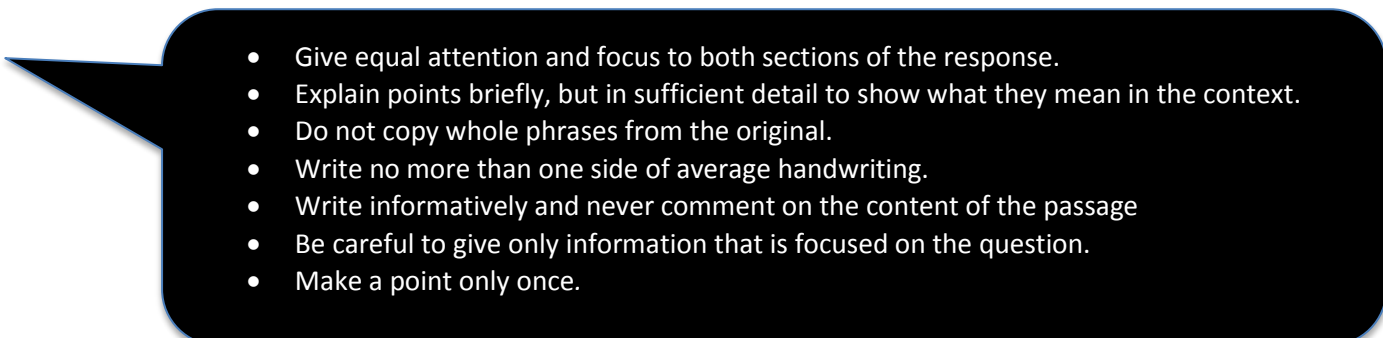
When the wolf boy was found he was....

This gets a higher mark because....

- The student makes a number of clear, concise points.
- He focuses precisely on the passage and the question.
- It is written in full sentences using paragraphs to separate the information.
- The student uses his own words where possible.
- Only relevant information has been included.
- Expression is good with mostly accurate spelling, punctuation and grammar, although there are some errors, which is why it does not get full marks.

Key points from the examiner

Here are some ways in which the summary could be improved:

- 
- Give equal attention and focus to both sections of the response.
 - Explain points briefly, but in sufficient detail to show what they mean in the context.
 - Do not copy whole phrases from the original.
 - Write no more than one side of average handwriting.
 - Write informatively and never comment on the content of the passage
 - Be careful to give only information that is focused on the question.
 - Make a point only once.

What you need to do

English is different from other subjects because you are tested on your skills rather than your knowledge. In Science for example, you might need to learn how a process works. In English you need to be able to have practised writing and reading in a wide variety of contexts. You need to understand the different ways that the language can be used and can respond appropriately.

The best approach is to use a variety of books, articles, newspapers, magazines, as well as the internet to practice the skills you will be tested on. The table below suggests some activities that will be useful.

Skill	You should be able to	Suggestions to practice the skill
Reading. Locating specific information as quickly as possible = Skimming	Read more detailed and extensive informative or non-fiction texts, such as leaflets, news reports and advertisements	Looking at leaflets, reports, guidelines. Analysing brochures.
Reading. Locating more detailed information; looking more carefully = Scanning	Read longer and more challenging non-fiction texts, such as articles from newspapers and magazines	Reading similar articles (in style and in length) to those seen frequently in past examination papers Reading factual articles Extracting relevant information from articles
Reading & Writing. Integrated reading and writing	1. Read a text which contains information and respond using the relevant material from the text. Convey a thorough understanding by writing a lengthy response in a different genre from the original text	Practising using the same material in different genres Practicing writing formal letters
	2. Understand descriptive texts and select relevant information and phrases from them Select, explain and analyse the effect of the usage of certain phrases in the text	Reading passages from literary texts and identifying the ways in which feeling or atmosphere has been created.
	3. Adopt an appropriate voice in which to express a response to a text Adopt a sophisticated or official persona	Practising using different registers and styles for different aims according to specific tasks.
	4. Target your audience	Practising using devices which show ability to address your audience directly and manipulate its response
	5. Summarise two passages which have similarities	Writing a summary based on a set of notes of between 7 and 15 points Practising the use of own words Becoming familiar with the concise and precise language of summary style
Writing	1. Describe, discuss, argue and narrate Carry out longer writing tasks on a range of topics, paying attention to structure, sequence and style	Writing descriptions of events, places, people using all five senses and imagery Planning openings and endings to stories Structuring and supporting points for an argument.

	<p>2. Use language for a specific purpose, e.g. to persuade, to consider, to evaluate, to inform, to entertain, to convey an impression.</p> <p>Create sustained and cohesive responses to continuous writing tasks, showing an awareness of the generic characteristics of different types of writing</p>	<p>Writing (and performing) debate speeches Balancing ideas for and against a discussion topic. Analysing the devices used in letters, articles and editorials stating a point of view Writing stories which have gripping openings, pace, dialogue, climax, strong endings.</p>
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Revision

Reading

- You should read as widely and as often as you can – all sorts of texts, from magazines to short stories, from leaflets to letters sent out by businesses or schools. The aim is to know what as many different forms of written English might sound like.
- You should try to learn the meanings of common prefixes so that you can guess meanings of words.

Summary

- You should practise summarising passages. This is a specific and almost scientific skill which, once gained, makes it easily possible to get full marks.
- Practise using the right approach – it is best to follow a 5-step process:
 1. Read and underline the relevant material in pencil (so that you can change your mind easily if needed).
 2. Transfer the points into a plan, whilst changing them into your own words.
 3. Group the points logically (using arrows/brackets); put them in order (using numbers), and decide which ones can be combined into one sentence.
 4. Write the summary in two paragraphs using complex sentences.
 5. Check the summary for accurate expression; adapt the length and improve if necessary by adding material overlooked or by removing repetition.
- Don't write too much – you are meant to be summing up, not adding to the original ideas.
- In an examination summary there will be at least as many points as marks available, so count how many you have made and check against the marks for the question.
- Remember that summaries never include:
 - examples
 - repetitions
 - direct speech
 - figurative language
 - minor details.

All these must be removed from the passage, and then you use only the facts, which are what you have left.

- You can practise turning passages into news reports; they have a particular style and structure which are different from any other kind of writing. You will need to think about:
 - style – short paragraphs; short sentences; dramatic vocabulary; statistical information; stacking of adjectives and descriptive phrases before the noun (e.g. 'The Japanese-owned lightweight racing yacht Sunshine II...', 'Divorced former model and mother of two, Susan Smith...')
 - using impersonal expression (do not use 'I' or 'We' and do not give any opinions)
 - using interview material and direct speech as well as reported speech – don't quote straight from the passage though; write your own to show that you understand what you have read

- structure – unlike normal chronological sequence, news reports begin with the very recent past (usually yesterday); go on to fill in past background prior to the event; return to the immediate present and how things are developing; then finally speculate about the future.

Writing

- Practise writing formal letters to people in official positions and people you don't know well. These kind of letters typically adopt a formal style and polite tone, and they are structured in three sections:
 - the topic of the letter/reason for writing it
 - background information, arguments and factual details
 - request or suggestions for future action.

Your teacher will keep telling you that each question should be answered in a different style.

What is style? It is about:

- i) matching the expression to the type of speaker/writer – writing in role
- ii) matching the expression to the recipient – writing for audience
- iii) matching the expression to the aim – writing for purpose
- iv) choosing appropriate structure and devices – writing in genre
- v) choosing appropriate vocabulary and syntax – writing in register.

As you read different types of texts in English, try to notice how they sound different from each other and how they compare.

In your own writing you can:

- Practise joining simple sentences into complex sentences, using a range of connectives and participles. Above all avoid using 'and', 'but' and 'so'.
- Practise varying your sentences to develop your own style. You don't want your sentences all to follow the same formula and start in the same way. Try writing some of the sentence types here:
 - main clause followed by one or more subordinate clauses e.g. 'The cat fell asleep, after it had eaten, although someone had switched on loud music.'
 - subordinate clause(s) followed by main clause e.g. 'After it had eaten, the cat fell asleep.'
 - subordinate clause followed by main clause followed by another subordinate clause e.g. 'After it had eaten, the cat fell asleep, although someone had switched on loud music.'
 - main clause containing embedded subordinate clause e.g. 'The cat, which had been sleeping all day, fell asleep again.'
 - main clause containing embedded subordinate clause, followed by another subordinate clause e.g. 'The cat, which had been sleeping all day, fell asleep again, even though there was loud music playing.'

To improve your own writing you should also:

- Learn the correct version of commonly misspelt words which you know you are likely to need to use e.g. separate, definitely, business, opportunity, surprise, privilege. The best way to learn them is to:

1. Stare at them and try to 'photograph' them; cover them while you write them from the imprint on your memory; check back to see if you were correct. This is the Look, Cover, Write, Check method. Copying words letter by letter does not fix the 'letter-strings' in your mind successfully.
 2. Remember the rule: 'i' before 'e' except after 'c', if the sound you are making is long double 'ee'. (The only known exception, apart from in names, is 'seize'.)
 3. If in doubt whether a word has a single or double consonant apply the generally sound rule that if the vowel is short the consonant is double, but if the vowel is long the consonant is single e.g. 'hopping and hoping', 'sitting and siting', 'dinner and diner', 'writing and written'.
 4. Create mnemonics, little sayings and rhymes which, however silly, actually work e.g. 'necessary' is spelt with one c and two s because 'one coat has two sleeves'; 'possesses' possesses five esses.
 5. Be aware of prefixes, so that you can work out which words have double letters and which don't e.g. 'dis-satisfied' as opposed to 'dismay', and the spelling of words like 'extra-ordinary' and 'con-science'.
 6. Be aware of suffixes, so that you can work out which adverbs end in 'ly' and which in 'lly' (i.e. only those which already have an 'l' at the end of the adjective, like 'beautiful – beautifully').
 7. Think about how the word is spelt in other languages you know e.g. the French verb 'separer' will remind you of how 'separate' is spelt in English
 8. Break difficult words down into syllables in your mind, so that you can hear how 'in-ter-est-ing' must be spelt.
- Revise direct speech punctuation. It is likely that in one or more parts of the examination you will be required to or will wish to use dialogue. Remember in particular that a change of speaker requires a change of line, and that all speech needs a final punctuation mark in addition to the closing inverted commas. Remember also that exclamations and questions which fall inside the speech are not followed by a capital letter if the sentence continues, and that commas not full stops are used to end speech unless there is no continuation to the sentence. e.g.

'Really?' she asked.

'Really,' he answered.

When you are practising your writing:

- You should try to broaden the range of the connectives you use.

Be aware that there are over thirty connectives available in English for joining parts of sentences (clauses) together. Challenge a friend to see how many you can think of without looking them up.

In addition, present and present perfect continuous participles ('arriving', 'having arrived') can also be used, with or without prepositions ('after arriving', 'after having arrived'). For fun, practise having a "conversation" with a friend using a different connective each time each of you speaks – see how long you can keep going.

- Try redrafting a piece of writing to use all three types of parenthesis rather than just one. They all separate a group of words from the rest of the sentence in which they are not grammatically necessary, but see if you can hear that they create subtly different effects in the degree of separation:
 - i) a pair of commas is the weakest way e.g. 'A dog, which was huge, approached.'

- ii) a pair of dashes is stronger e.g. 'A dog – which was huge – approached.'
- iii) a pair of brackets is the strongest e.g. 'A dog (which was huge) approached.'

- Practise persuasive writing. The exam is weighted towards this life skill in both the reading and writing papers. Support all points with proof and think about how you might persuade your reader – for example the use of tricolon, rhetorical questions, direct address perhaps.
- Read lots of openings to stories and practise beginning the same story in different ways. You could start:
 - i) by setting the scene, referring to place and time, season and weather
 - ii) with description of the main character
 - iii) in the middle of the action
 - iv) in the middle of dialogue
 - v) with an intriguing or shocking statement
- Try writing a plan for a story, then experimenting with different ways to end it. There is a range of ways to end a narrative including:
 - i) ironic comment in direct speech
 - ii) an unexpected twist
 - iii) a return to the beginning
 - iv) a happy ending
 - v) a sad ending
 - vi) a 'cliffhanger'

DON'T end the story by waking up from a dream - that just means that as a writer you couldn't think of an ending to explain what had happened in your story in any other way – a sure sign of poor planning!

- You also need to consider and practise the ways of beginning an argumentative essay:
 - i) an unexpected claim
 - ii) a provocative statement
 - iii) a summary of a situation
 - iv) a famous quotation
 - v) a direct question

To improve your writing further:

- Learn, finally, those little things you've always got wrong and never bothered to work out why e.g. the difference between it's (it is/it has) and its (belonging to it); who's (who is/who has) and whose (belonging to who); continuous (without stopping) and continual (with stops); uninterested (without interest) and disinterested (without prejudice); lay (with object) and lie (without object).
- Remind yourself of any punctuation marks of which you have never been sure. You could revise
 - the rules for the use of the apostrophe (missing letter or possession)
 - the hyphen (using two words as one)
 - starting a new paragraph (change of time, place or topic).
- Paragraphing is particularly important as it is evidence of lack of planning and/or inability to sequence material. Revise how to structure paragraphs, topic sentences, PEE structure and when to start a new paragraph.

- Commas are also important as they aid the meaning of the writing and the understanding of the reader. Their function is to separate parts of a sentence (phrases and clauses). A test you can apply as to whether a group of words needs commas around it is to try saying the sentence without it. If it still makes sense, then 'scissor' the phrase or clause with a pair of commas to show it can be removed, but if the group of words is necessary to the grammar of the sentence, then do not put commas around it.
- Even if you've always had trouble knowing where to put full stops, it's never too late to learn and now is the time, as your writing marks will be seriously reduced if you are unable to form proper sentences use commas where you should use full stops. If there is no connective you must use either a full stop or a semi-colon at the end of a group of words containing a verb, before starting another one.

Finally – use the internet!

There are websites you can use to improve your skills and you can use search engines to help you find examples of different types of writing too.

Here are a few sites you might like to try if you have not already visited them:

www.englishbiz.co.uk

www.topmarks.co.uk

www.bbc.co.uk/schools/gcsebitesize/