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AQA GCSE English Language and English Literature

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Sample content

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Writing creatively

What's it all about?

In this chapter, you will explore the techniques that make the very best creative writing, in the form of narratives or descriptions, come alive. You will look at how writers create convincing, compelling voices that draw us into their world. You will explore the ways in which writers address powerful ideas about the way we live, or our place in the world. You will also see how writers experiment with conventional techniques and styles of writing to give the reader unusual and surprising perspectives.

In this chapter, you will learn how to

- engage the reader through original forms of narration
- use imagery and symbolism to enhance narrative and descriptive power
- use structures to create memorable texts
- apply your skills to English Language and English Literature tasks.



English Language GCSE

Which AOs are covered?	<p>AO5 Communicate clearly, effectively and imaginatively, selecting and adapting tone, style and register for different forms, purposes and audiences.</p> <p>Organise information and ideas, using structural and grammatical features to support coherence and cohesion of texts.</p>	<p>AO6 Candidates must use a range of vocabulary and sentence structures for clarity, purpose and effect, with accurate spelling and punctuation.</p>
How will this be tested?	<p>Questions will require you to apply what you have learned about the overall organisation of texts so that they are consciously crafted to create effects on readers. They will also require you to write for one of two purposes – to describe or to narrate – so you will need to show your ability to adapt, manipulate and craft language appropriately.</p>	<p>Questions will require you to think of original, compelling ways of expressing yourself through your choice of vocabulary and sentences. You will be expected to demonstrate a rich and ambitious vocabulary.</p>

Engage the reader through original forms of narration

Assessment objective

- English Language AO5, AO6

Learning objectives

You will learn how to

- use a range of forms of narration to surprise and engage the reader
- deploy different techniques to write in a convincing voice or persona.

How can you engage the reader through narrative forms or voices?

Getting you thinking

This is the opening to a story called 'Wreckage'.

Of course being young, shiny and vibrant I did not expect to die so young. But then Spring is soon past, and Autumn soon upon us. For me the Spring was birth in a factory on the other side of the world; Autumn was a bend on the motorway when Suki lost control and I ended up on my side on a barren highway, wondering why there were flames belching from my body and Suki staring at me from the side of the road, shaking uncontrollably in the stutter of the police lights. But through the tears, I saw it in her eyes: I was finished.

- 1 Who is narrating this extract?
- 2 What do we learn about the narrator and their relationships?
- 3 In what way is the writer trying to engage the reader in the opening sentence of the story?



Explore the skills

Choosing an unusual narrative voice for a text can be one way of making what could be a dull tale come alive. For example, you could:

- give something inanimate or not human a voice
- make the narrator a 'phantom' or double of the main character in some way (for example, a voice from the dead or a younger self)
- make the narrator an observer or someone who does not appear to be central to the story
- place the narrator in an unusual situation or position from which 'normal' description is difficult
- use a combination of these ideas!

4 Which of the narrative perspectives above can you link to the following short extracts? Jot down:

- who the narrator is
- what they are seeing or describing
- what makes them engaging or interesting as narrators.

a I'm not quite clear why things have changed between us. All I know is that my bowl isn't filled as regularly as it once was, and I'm as likely to get a slap as a pat on the back...

b For a moment, he wished he could rise out of his body, still and flat on the hospital bed and look down on the family as they inspected him. Of course, all he actually saw was the upper half of his father's face, a sweaty brow, and grey eyes peering, like marbles, through the porthole of his world.

c They met at my stall. That first day, she dropped her change and he picked it up. She smiled, they laughed nervously, and he pressed the fifty pence piece into her hands. They left in separate directions, but the next day they were here at the same time, chatting, exchanging looks. I was invisible.

d She doesn't know it yet, but one day she will be me. Now, she is a seven year old, proud of her brittle sandcastle, neither she, nor it, fully formed. I watch her, a phantom of the future, helpless to alter her choices, the cold tide coming in. Of course, you are there, too, observing her from the rocks at a distance, her best friend forever...or so she thinks.

5 Each of the above narratives suggests something about a relationship (or relationships). Write down:

- what the relationship is
- any clues given about its history or its future development.

Develop the skills

Choosing who your narrator is and selecting someone more unusual or in an unusual situation can make your writing more original, but just as important is the tone, the voice you adopt. Read this opening to the novel, *High Fidelity* by Nick Hornby.

My desert-island, all time, top five most memorable split-ups, in chronological order:

- 1) Alison Ashworth
- 2) Penny Hardwick
- 3) Jackie Allen
- 4) Charlie Nicholson
- 5) Sarah Kendrew

These were the ones that really hurt. Can you see your name in that lot Laura? I reckon you'd sneak

into the top ten, but there's no place for you in the top five; those places are reserved for the kind of humiliations and heartbreaks that you're just not capable of delivering. This probably sounds crueller than it is meant to, but the fact is that we're too old to make each other miserable, and that's a good thing, not a bad thing, so don't take your failure to make the list personally.

Nick Hornby, from *High Fidelity*

- 6 Whom is the narrator addressing here? (This may be more than one person.)
- 7 Should we trust what he says about Laura? Why/why not?
- 8 What does the use of a 'desert-island' style list to categorise former girlfriends suggest about the narrator? How might this be linked to the title of the novel?
- 9 What language features can we see here that contribute to the distinctive voice and style? See if you can find examples of any elements below.

Informal, chatty vocabulary and turns of phrase	Semicolons used to add a clarification to the previous statement
Vivid, descriptive setting	Third person narrator
Directly addressing another character	Past tense references to past events
First person narrator	Present tense references to current situations
Reflective thoughts on emotions	Exclamation marks for shock or anger

- 10 What overall **tone** is created?
- 11 Now look again at the four extracts (a, b, c, d) in Activity 4.

- a What tone of voice is used in each case?
- b What language clues indicate this?

For example, how do the following uses of metaphor **1** and the short end clause **2** create a particular tone in the fourth example? What is the tone?

I watch her, a phantom of the future, helpless to alter her choices, **the cold tide coming in.**¹ Of course, you are there, too, observing her from the rocks at a distance, her best friend forever ... **or so she thinks.**²

Key terms

tone: suggests an attitude in the 'voice' that is 'speaking' to you in the text, for example, through the words used, the way sentences are phrased and the level of formality



- 12** Choose one of the short extracts from Activity 4 and continue it, maintaining a similar style and narrative perspective.

Apply the skills

- 13** Consider the following approach to developing a description or a story before tackling the task below.

- Begin by generating some ideas around the title and/or photo, in order to come up with suggestions about the situation or relationship. Try to think beyond the obvious: relationships can be between all sorts of people (family members, friends, leaders and followers, and so on).
- Decide on a narrator. Go back to the possibilities you have encountered in this unit, and think about what would make an interesting or original perspective. If you are using the picture, it could be someone out of shot, not necessarily the people shown. Or you could alternate between two different narrators, with different narrative voices.
- Plan the style of narrative voice and how you will create it.

Write a description or story suggested either by the photo above or the title, 'Long Division'.

Checklist for success

- Make your narrator interesting and engaging.
- Match the language and style to the story told, or the relationships revealed.

▲ I can create a range of convincing, original and compelling narrative voices and perspectives which engage the reader from the first sentence of the story.

▲ I can create some engaging and convincing narrative voices and perspectives.

▲ I can create different narrative voices and perspectives.

Use imagery and symbolism to enhance narrative and descriptive power

Assessment objective

- English Language AO5, AO6

Learning objectives

You will learn how to

- use imagery and symbolism to add power to your stories
- draw on wider ideas to create interesting connections for the reader.

How can you make your stories and descriptions distinctive and powerful?

Getting you thinking

Read this short **cinquain**.

Key terms

cinquain: a five-line poem invented by Crapsey which has a structure of 2, 4, 6, 8, 2 syllable lines

The Warning

Just now,
Out of the strange
Still dusk – as strange, as still –
A white moth flew. Why am I grown
So cold?

Adelaide Crapsey



1 On the surface, the **literal** meaning is simply that of a moth appearing as night falls. But is that all the poet wants to convey? Write brief answers to these questions.

- What might the 'white moth' represent?
- Why do you think the poet chose a moth, rather than a butterfly?

Key terms

literal: the surface or obvious meaning

Explore the skills

Use of powerful **imagery** such as the 'white moth' appearing out of the strange twilight can convey or **symbolise** lots of ideas. These are created by the connotations that come to mind from the image – whether this is frailty, destruction or something else.

Key terms

imagery: language that creates vivid pictures

symbolise: represent

- 2 Weather and the seasons are typically used to symbolise emotions or life's progress. Complete one of the cinquains below, or write your own, trying to convey a deeper or more powerful idea.

a Here lies
The fallen tree ...

b Dark clouds
Gather by us ...

c Our house
Glow with bright sun ...

Now read this extract from a short story by Ted Hughes, 'The Rain Horse'. In the extract, a man comes back to the countryside area he left twelve years earlier.

As the young man came over the hill the first thin blowing of rain met him. He turned his coat-collar up and stood on top of the shelving rabbit-riddled hedgebank, looking down into the valley. He had come too far. What had set out as a walk along pleasantly-remembered tarmac lanes had turned dreamily by gate and path into a cross-ploughland trek, his shoes ruined, the dark mud of the lower fields inching up the trouser legs of his grey suit where they rubbed against each other. And now there was a raw, flapping wetness in the air that would be downpour at any minute. He shivered, holding himself tense against the cold.

Ted Hughes, from 'The Rain Horse'

the weather begins to change

suggests he has lost his way

the happy memories, almost dream-like, are replaced by reality

wearing business clothes

- 3 On the surface, all this story seems to be about is a man who has got lost in the countryside. But is there more to it than that? Look at the annotations, and then make notes on:
- a the narrator's situation and the error he has made
 - b how conditions have changed
 - c any phrases or sentences that suggest there is more to this than just a ruined walk.
- 4 Think about the young man returning after twelve years. What could this extract suggest about his decision to return?

Now read this later extract from the same story:

Twelve years had changed him. This land no longer recognized him, and he looked back at it coldly, as at a finally visited home country, known only through the stories of a grandfather...

- 5 Hughes uses **figurative language** in two further ways here. Identify:
- a his use of **personification** in how the countryside responds to him
 - b his use of comparison in how he responds to the countryside.

Key terms

figurative language: words or phrases that represent or symbolise other ideas, not just literal ones

personification: a type of metaphor where something inanimate or inhuman is given human characteristics

- 6 How do these descriptions build on the earlier idea of him being unwelcome or out of place?
- 7 Copy and complete the following statements to create similar personifications:
- The countryside turned its ... on him.*
 - The sky covered its ... and disappeared.*
 - The mouth of the valley ...*

- 8 Now choose one set of features of the landscape he is in from the following list:

- mud, earth, soil
- fences, hedges, gates
- trees, shrubs, woods
- hills, slopes, mounds.

Write a paragraph which presents your chosen aspect as unwelcoming to the character. You could use these techniques to help you:

- personification in the form of verbs related to conflict ('attacked', 'battered')
- negative adjectives or nouns ('foreign', 'stranger')
- unpleasant similes to describe key features ('hawthorn hedges like barbed wire').

Develop the skills

The central idea of the landscape being unwelcoming is taken a stage further in the story when a black horse suddenly charges at him, and he is forced to hide. Just as he is beginning to think the attack is a one-off, it happens again.

The black shape was above him, right across the light. Its whinnying snort and the spattering whack of its hooves seemed to be actually inside his head as he fell backwards down the bank, and leapt again like a madman dodging among the oaks, imagining how the buffet would come and how he would be knocked headlong. Halfway down the wood the oaks gave way to bracken and old roots and stony rabbit diggings. He was well out into the middle of this before he realized he was running alone.

horse creates darkness

so powerful it seems to be in his mind

Gasping for breath now and cursing mechanically, without a thought for his suit he sat down on the ground to rest his shaking legs, letting the rain plaster his hair down over his forehead and watching the dense flashing lines disappear abruptly into the soil all around him as if he were watching through thick plate glass. He took deep breaths in the effort to steady his heart and regain control of himself. His right trouser turn-up was ripped at the seam and his suit jacket was splashed with the yellow mud of the top field.

now more focused on survival than how he looks

- 9 The power of the narrative comes from the details of the horse's actions and of the man's reactions and feelings. Through these, Hughes begins to suggest or imply other ideas.

Looking over the annotations, make brief notes about:

- the idea that the horse may symbolise something more than just a vicious or startled animal
- how his own behaviour and priorities have now changed
- whether Hughes is making wider points about man and nature.

Apply the skills

- 10 Use the following steps to guide you through answering the task below.
- Briefly, jot down some ideas for your story:
 - *Who* is lost? Will there be *anyone else* (or thing) in the story?
 - *Where* they are lost/*Where* they have come from?
 - *How* did it happen?
 - Now, think about how you can represent the relationship between the setting and the person who is lost. It does not need to be alien or unwelcoming, but could be a refreshing change or new experience.
 - Draft your opening three paragraphs. You could begin with the familiar and then move onto the unfamiliar, increasing the emotional and physical effects.

Write the opening to a story in which someone gets lost in an unfamiliar environment.

Checklist for success

- Suggest a deeper meaning to the story than simply a tale of someone getting lost through imagery or symbolism.
- Use personification to describe inanimate or natural objects.
- Choose verbs and nouns carefully to imply the relationship between place and person.

Check your progress:

- ▲ I can sustain a powerful range of ideas through my selection of imagery and symbols.
- ▲ I can use appropriate imagery and symbolism in my writing to create vivid narratives.
- ▲ I can use some imagery to make my writing more vivid.

Use structures to create memorable texts

Assessment objective

- English Language AO5, AO6

Learning objectives

You will learn how to

- use structure to produce an interesting and coherent narrative
- develop themes or ideas to suggest moods and tones in a story
- use shape and structure of the whole text to give an overall 'completeness'.

How can you order and structure narratives to interest and engage the reader?

Getting you thinking

At the heart of all writing is structure, and in narratives that means the particular arrangement of events, and the way and the order in which the writer reveals the story to us.

Read this opening line to a short story called 'Miss Brill' by Katherine Mansfield

Although it was so brilliantly fine—the blue sky powdered with gold and great spots of light like white wine splashed over the **Jardins Publiques**—Miss Brill was glad that she had decided on her fur.

Katherine Mansfield, 'Miss Brill'

Glossary

Jardins Publiques: public park/gardens

- 1 Who are we introduced to in this opening line?
- 2 What is happening?
- 3 Is there any other way this sentence could have been arranged?
- 4 Can you think of any reason why the writer ordered it like this?

Explore the skills

A key part of the structure is the opening. It can do many things:

- set the scene (tell us where and when things are happening)
- introduce minor or key characters
- suggest themes or ideas that might prove to be important later
- establish a tone or mood
- show a particular event or action taking place which may have later significance.

In the opening line, the writer begins with a subordinate clause which starts with a word ('Although') indicating qualification or even negativity: even though it was nice weather, the main character feels cold so wears fur. This suggests (and it is only a hint) that this may not turn out to be a perfectly happy tale.

Other structural features relate to the time order of events. Now read the whole opening paragraph to 'Miss Brill'.

Although it was so brilliantly fine—the blue sky powdered with gold and great spots of light like white wine splashed over the *Jardins Publiques*—Miss Brill was glad that she had decided on her fur. The air was motionless, but when you opened your mouth there was just a faint chill, like a chill from a glass of iced water before you sip, and now and again a leaf came drifting—from nowhere, from the sky. Miss Brill put up her hand and touched her fur. Dear little thing! It was nice to feel it again. She had taken it out of its box that afternoon, shaken out the moth-powder, given it a good brush, and rubbed the life back into the dim little eyes. "What has been happening to me?" said the sad little eyes. Oh, how sweet it was to see them snap at her again from the red eiderdown!...But the nose, which was of some black composition, wasn't at all firm. It must have had a knock, somehow. Never mind—a little dab of black sealing-wax when the time came—when it was absolutely necessary...Little rogue! Yes, she really felt like that about it. Little rogue biting its tail just by her left ear. She could have taken it off and laid it on her lap and stroked it. She felt a tingling in her hands and arms, but that came from walking, she supposed. And when she breathed, something light and sad—no, not sad, exactly—something gentle seemed to move in her bosom.

opening establishes the current situation

signals earlier action

returns us to the present moment

Short stories require economy, conveying a great deal in not many sentences. They often focus on one current or ongoing moment, rather than plodding through everything that has happened in strict time order.

- 5 The story begins in the public gardens, but what *earlier* event are we then told about?
- 6 What verb form ('had taken', 'has taken' or 'took') does the writer use to indicate this event that has been completed?
- 7 What do we learn about how Miss Brill feels about the fox fur *now*?
- 8 What verb form ('bitten', 'bite', 'biting', 'had bitten') tells us this is what she is experiencing at this moment in the story?



- 9 In Mansfield's story, there is also a young couple in the gardens. Write a similar first few lines about them as they, too, arrive at the park.

Start with a sentence about them and what they are doing as they arrive in the park. For example...

Luke and Estelle pushed open the gate and ran into the open space, scattering the pigeons ...

Then, go back in time to reveal earlier events or actions between them (use the past perfect 'had' form).

Just an hour ago, they ...

Finally, write a sentence establishing something happening to them now (use the participle '...ing' form).

Here, ...ing in the park...

Develop the skills

The structuring of a narrative or description is also made memorable by echoes and patterns that imply ideas or moods and tones. We have already seen how the story opens with a qualifying conjunction that hints at all not being well.

- 10 Where in the text does Mansfield use 'but' to:
- emphasise the coldness in the air
 - indicate the fox fur isn't completely restored?
- 11 What other descriptions hint at or add to this sense of things being not quite perfect, or at a darker side to the story?
- 12 Copy and complete these sentences about the same young couple in the park; add suitable conjunctions to hint at not everything being well. Choose from: *but, even though, although, yet*.

[Conjunction] *the water in the duck lake looked clear and blue at a distance, there was ...*

They had hoped to find a quiet spot to sit and chat, [conjunction] a ...

The boy hugged the girl close to him, [conjunction] she ...

Now read the ending of 'Miss Brill.' She is watching a band play on the bandstand and a young couple come and sit near her, the boy trying to kiss the girl.

"No, not now," said the girl. "Not here, I can't."

"But why? Because of that stupid old thing at the end there?" asked the boy. "Why does she come here at all—who wants her? Why doesn't she keep her silly old mug at home?"

"It's her fu-ur which is so funny," giggled the girl. "It's exactly like a fried whiting."

"Ah, be off with you!" said the boy in an angry whisper. Then: "Tell me, ma petite chère—"

"No, not here," said the girl. "Not yet."

On her way home she usually bought a slice of honey-cake at the baker's. It was her Sunday treat. Sometimes there was an almond in her slice, sometimes not. It made a great difference. If there was an almond it was like carrying home a tiny present—a surprise—something that might very well not have been there. She hurried on the almond Sundays and struck the match for the kettle in quite a dashing way.

But today she passed the baker's by, climbed the stairs, went into the little dark room—her room like a cupboard—and sat down on the red eiderdown. She sat there for a long time. The box that the fur came out of was on the bed. She unclasped the necklet quickly; quickly, without looking, laid it inside. But when she put the lid on she thought she heard something crying.

The way in which the ending echoes or draws upon earlier ideas can give the structure of a short story a sense of overall 'completeness'.

13 In what ways does the ending:

- develop the earlier theme of spinsterhood
- link back to earlier events or things Miss Brill has done?

Apply the skills

14 Before embarking on the task below, draft a plan with main character(s), setting, and the basic elements of the plot.

Write your own story called 'The Anniversary'.

Checklist for success

- Reveal past and present information fluently by your use of tenses.
- Hint or indicate mood or tone through your use of conjunctions or sentence order.
- Create a 'completeness' in your story by echoing or coming back to earlier events or themes in your final paragraph.

Check your progress:

▲ I can use structural devices fluently and inventively to create a range of ideas and effects.

▲ I can use structural devices to make my writing coherent and engaging.

▲ I can link ideas effectively using some structural devices.

Apply your skills – Preparing to answer questions on writing creatively

Assessment objectives

- English Language AO5, AO6

Learning objectives

You will learn how to

- apply the key skills from this chapter to an English Language task
- reflect on your progress through looking at different responses to the task.

Responding to English Language tasks

- 1 Consider the following task and how you would respond to it.

You are going to enter a creative writing competition. In the competition you have to write a description suggested by the photo below.

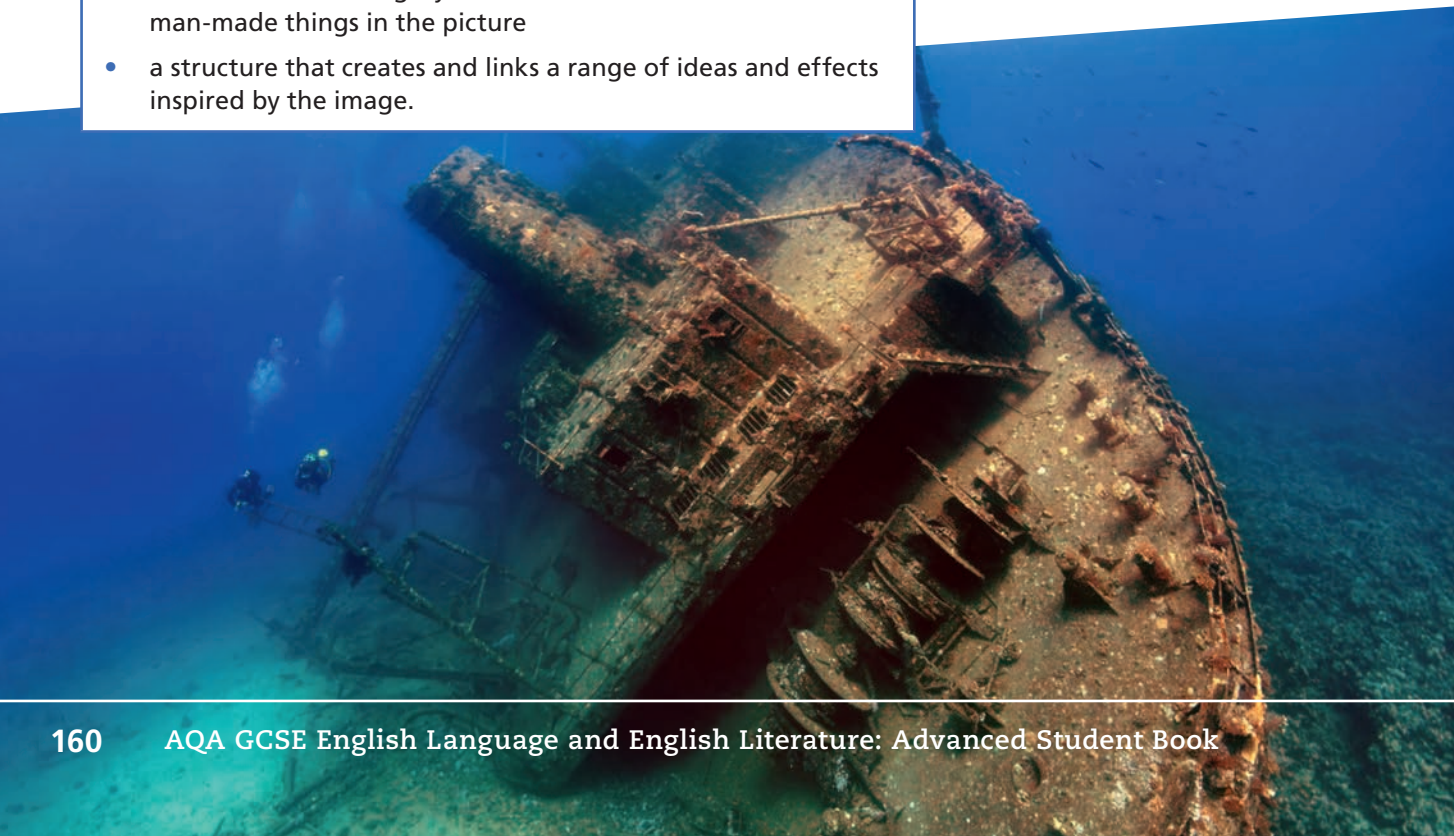
Think about:

- what you can see in this picture
- how you could create a vivid and detailed description for the reader.

Checklist for success

A successful response should include:

- a convincing, original and compelling narrative voice to engage the reader
- vivid details and imagery to reflect the natural world and the man-made things in the picture
- a structure that creates and links a range of ideas and effects inspired by the image.



Reflecting on your progress

- 2 Read the following response to this task. As you read, think about what the student has done well and what advice they might need in order to make more progress.

Response 1

Under the sea the only sound at first is the air pressure against your scuba mask. The world is silent and dark and you struggle to make out shapes. Then, slowly, it all comes into focus and you make sense of the world around you. The huge ship is tilted on its side and is a monster, but one that is asleep. It seems to be groaning but it is all in the mind. Everything remains still and it feels as if you're the only thing in deep sea universe.

narrative voice implied by use of 'you' and 'your'

The round port-holes in the side of the ship are eyes staring out into the blackness. If you shine a torch deep into the sockets you will see there is no life there at all. If you run your hands along the rusty edge that feels so rough and hard, you will feel the metal like jagged jaws that could cut like daggers. And if you run your hand along the top you will feel the slime of centuries.

metaphors personify the ship

rhetorical patterning of 'If you' is repeated

Inside the old ship's body you feel tense. What if there are bodies still here, even though it has been centuries since the ship sank? There are eyes watching you, or so you think, as you push open the creaky metal door into the lower bit. Groping for something to hold, you descend. Into the darkness as if into hell. Then at the bottom you turn and cast your torch light on the corridor. The glow goes around the walls lighting up rusty shelves. Your feet crunch on old, dirty cups on the floor, so you flip your flippers to break free and go along the space towards the cabins. This is a place you fear but you must face.

effective short sentence sums up by referring back

phrase echoes the opening of the text

Under your gaze, groups of little silver fish flash in front of your eyes and for a moment you forget your reason for being there. The water is green and grimy here too, and you're glad you can't taste it just the oxygen you're breathing all the time.

So, you push open the first cabin door. But nothing happens. It is rusted fast onto its old warped hinges. Taking out a small axe from your belt, you bash away at the hinges until even through the mask you hear a welcome crack. Slowly the door opens inwards and you point your fading torch light at the cabin.

focused detail

At first it is indistinct. Then the image grows and you see a white figure lying on the bed. Rags which were once clothes

pronoun 'it' is foregrounded, making the reader wait to find out more

hang from the poor dead soul's tatty frame. It is a skeleton of someone drowned while dreaming – they never had a chance, and now they're here forever asleep. You reach down to pull the chain from around the corpse's neck. It won't come off so you wrench and pull till suddenly the whole head and neck fall off. You scream inside your mask and turn for the exit.

phrase echoes opening of text

Under the spell of the dead ship, you do not know what else you will find, so you decide to head for the surface. Something has spooked you deep inside and you can't face going back. You take one last look at the rotting ship and swim upwards towards the light.

Comments on Response 1

This response is reasonably effective but occasionally strays into narrative when it could perhaps build and develop ideas, such as the symbolic notion of the ship as a monster or a dead creature. There are also several opportunities to allude or draw on other stories or myths, such as descent into the underworld, or notions of souls in limbo (the skeleton which will be always 'asleep' in the ship) or references to piracy on the high seas. There are some good attempts to try to create echoes or patterns of phrases, such as the repeated use of 'Under' but these could be more ambitious; this also means the voice of the narrator is rather bland and detached, when it should be more original and memorable.

- 3 How could this sample response be improved? Using the middle rung of the Check your progress ladder at the end of this chapter, think about what advice you might give to this student in order to improve their work.
- 4 Now read Response 2. As you read, think about what the student has done that is an improvement on Response 1, and what advice this student might need in order to make even more progress.

Response 2

Above, I am invisible.

I am a dead orchestra. I am a thousand sounds that cannot be heard in the chambers of the ocean. I am one, yet I am many.

The notes from my music are airy bubbles that float into nothingness. My players are the gaping port-holes, wind instruments that belch out sonic booms into blue nothingness.

My strings are the leaves of sea plants that wave and curl in the current and tide.

powerful metaphor

imagery is developed and extended across the paragraph

I sing a dead song. It is a song I repeat for infinity, a song of a hopeful journey turned into despair. It is a song of a captain who lost his way. For all humans lose their way on the journey of life, on the voyage of life, in the path through the forest of waves and calm. Up, down, up, down. Swinging high, low, high, low. Slowly, I will disappear into the ashes of the ocean floor, taking with me the memories and the history. My past in the dockyards of the north, my free adventures around the globe and my passing several centuries ago. I can feel my old body sinking into the arms of the ocean bed, a terrible destructive embrace.

I shall sing my song as I descend into the coffin of the earth. There are many of us who rest here in the graveyard of the ocean: tiny dinghies that capsized on pleasure trips; trawlers that took their fishermen with them; motorboats who disappeared during races. Dotted around the globe, we are an underwater army that no one sees.

Can you hear us? If you put your ear to a shell on a sandy beach you will hear a roar. This is not the sea but our souls crying out for rest.

Listen out for us as you pass on your own voyages. Do not forget us.

We are below you.

— rhetorical patterning mimics the roll of the ocean

— literal reference amongst the abstract and figurative

— personification of ocean is vivid and original

— effective use of colons and semicolons to embellish the idea

— effective final line acts as summary and extension of what has just been described

— alludes to childhood game

— final short sentence is literally as well as figuratively 'below' and also links back to the first sentence.

Comments on Response 2

This is a rich and evocative re-imagining, using the picture as a prompt. The compelling metaphors which draw parallels between life's journey and actual travel are original, and the overall structure and composition with its echoes and repetitions fits the idea of a sunken boat.

Occasionally, the metaphors and abstractions seem to contradict each other, and perhaps drift a little bit away from the source but in general the range of vocabulary, the choice of imagery and the variety in sentences and overall arrangement create an ambitious and original piece.

Check your progress



- I can create a range of convincing, original and compelling narrative voices and perspectives which engage the reader from the first sentence of the story.
- I can sustain a powerful range of ideas through my selection of imagery and symbols.
- I can use structural devices fluently and inventively to create a range of ideas and effects.



- I can create engaging and effective narrative voices and perspectives.
- I can use appropriate imagery and symbolism in my writing to create vivid narratives.
- I can use structural devices to make my writing coherent and engaging.



- I can create a range of different narrative voices and perspectives.
- I can use imagery to make my writing more vivid.
- I can link ideas effectively using some structural devices.

