

Revising Paper 1 Question 3

Step One: Know what you are looking for! This question will always ask you to look at the whole text. As it is an extract, you will be told where it features in the whole text. For example, it may be the ending or opening of a novel. Practise reading openings and endings with the following ideas in mind:

Structural stability or instability as a way of reinforcing meaning. For example, switching from one point to another, juxtapositions or incongruities for effect at the specific points they might occur and how this might impact on meaning as a whole.

How the writer's conclusion might generate unanswered questions. For example, questions about earlier aspects of the text, or how this might contribute to wider meaning and shades of interpretation.

Changes or structural shifts in focus

- what these shifts are and where they occur
- how they are developed in and through the text
- why the writer might have chosen to take the reader on this particular reading 'journey' of discovery.

How and why a writer might use 'cinematic' techniques. For example to foreground or emphasise:

- starting points and end points
- developments
- sequential or causal points in the reader's understanding.

The writer's use of discourse markers or connectives and their impact on the whole In particular, specific points in the text where the writer might position information or revelation to have impact at that moment of reading.

A writer might change narrative perspectives, or change between narrative and dialogue. In particular: what, how and why these aspects might help a reader to engage with a character, theme, or mood at specific points in the text. For example: an inside perspective looking outwards or an outward perspective looking inwards.

How and why a writer might introduce, develop or end with the reader considering a character's positioning. For example in a particular setting, or through time, manner and place – possibly developed through chronological or non-chronological aspects of structure. Within this, are there any echoes, reiterations, repetitions, or recurring uses of imagery or motifs?

Structural links between external actions or internal thoughts. For example, use and impact of techniques like 'flashback' to forewarn or foreshadow things to come, or remind the reader of things past.

You could create structural flash cards to help you remember what to look out for. Remember, the quality of your comments are where the marks are gained. You must practice discussing how a writer chooses to structure their work... not spot what they have used.

- changes from a big focus to a small focus
- narrowing in
- zooming out
- shifts of time
- shifts of topic
- shifts of person
- shifts of place
- sudden introductions or changes
- gradual introductions or changes
- flashbacks
- flashforwards
- foreshadowing
- shifts in narrative position
- external actions of characters
- internal thoughts of characters
- shifting point of view
- developments
- repetitions
- circular structures

Step 2: Learn to question the text for structural features. Here are some focused questions that can help you to get started:

1. When I first start to read the text, what is the writer focusing my attention on?

2. How is this being developed?
3. What feature of structure is evident at this point?
4. Why might the writer have deliberately chosen to begin the text with this focus and therefore make use of this particular feature of structure?
5. What main points of focus does the writer develop in sequence after the starting point?
6. How is each being developed?
7. Why is the writer taking me through this particular sequence?
8. How is this specific to helping me relate to the intended meaning(s) at these points?
9. What does the writer focus my attention on at the end of the text?
10. How is this developed as a structural feature?
11. How am I left thinking or feeling at the end?
12. Why might the writer have sought to bring me to this point of interest/understanding?

Step 3: Know what a top level response looks like. Use this response to help shape your own answers. Notice how it is closely focussed upon the text that has been set:

At the beginning, the writer allows us to see the internal thoughts of the villagers, describing some as “eager”, but the writer also focuses on the external reactions of their faces, with “grim expressions”. For Anuja, who will play the pivotal role in shifting the villagers’ feelings, she is doing nothing other than observing the room and we are unaware of her own feelings about the proposed depot. There is a juxtaposition between the wealth of the representative, who looks “well-fed” and the crowd who are “roughly dressed” and “weather beaten”. We get a sense that they are definitely the underdogs and as we move through the passage, it is clear Anuja thinks they are being taken advantage of and ‘bribed’.

In the middle of the text, we see the mood swing as Carmichael convinces them that the land is a health hazard that is of no use. It’s important that we see this shift towards him. The writer also switches each paragraph from a focus on Carmichael to a focus on Anuja. We see Carmichael’s words (but not his internal thoughts) compared to Anuja’s internal thoughts which give us an idea of how angry she is and how amazed that Carmichael could suggest the place is infested with vermin, not recognising that it is a sanctuary for the falcons. The pivotal moment where she stands up and redirects the crowd shows how easily they were tricked by the sales talk, but also how valuable the land is to them really.

By the end, then, it is clear the villagers have ‘won’ the battle. Carmichael’s final words are menacing, when he says “we will have our way”, and the falcon takes on a different meaning. At first, we saw the falcon as a symbol of the beauty and value of the land, a natural image that reminds us of the beauty of nature, but by the end we remember that it is a predator, not unlike the company, and that it is the natural order of life that predators will pick off ‘insects’, which is perhaps a subtle reference to the fact that the battle will indeed be ‘titanic’ as the “weather-beaten” villagers will have to fight off the slick and ‘glossy’ power of the development company. However, we don’t know if the falcon caught the insect in the final image, as the writer says the falcon “swooped” then “veered away” and we don’t know if the insect lived to see another day. There is a sense of inevitability by the end that the development company will have

their way, and the 'dark clouds' that pass across Carmichael's face are picked up with the image of the rain and lightning giving us a sense that the battle is really only beginning.

Step 3: Use the following example questions to practice your method for answering this question.

This question is worth 8 marks. You should only spend around ten minutes answering this question in the examination.

Question 3

Think about the entire source.

This text comes from the opening of a novel by William Golding.

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
- how and why the writer changes this focus as the source develops
- any other structural features that interest you

The boy with fair hair lowered himself down the last few feet of rock and began to pick his way toward the lagoon. Though he had taken off his school sweater and trailed it now from one hand, his grey shirt stuck to him and his hair was plastered to his forehead. All round him the long scar smashed into the jungle was a bath of heat. He was clambering heavily among the creepers and broken trunks when a bird, a vision of red and yellow, flashed upwards with a witch-like cry; and this cry was echoed by another.

"Hi!" it said. "Wait a minute!"

The undergrowth at the side of the scar was shaken and a multitude of raindrops fell pattering.

"Wait a minute," the voice said. "I got caught up."

The fair boy stopped and jerked his stockings with an automatic gesture that made the jungle seem for a moment like the Home Counties.

The voice spoke again.

"I can't hardly move with all these creeper things."

The owner of the voice came backing out of the undergrowth so that twigs scratched on a greasy wind-breaker. The naked crooks of his knees were plump, caught and scratched by thorns. He bent down, removed the thorns carefully, and turned around. He was shorter than the fair boy and very fat. He came forward, searching out safe lodgements for his feet, and then looked up through thick spectacles.

"Where's the man with the megaphone?" The fair boy shook his head.

"This is an island. At least I think it's an island. That's a reef out in the sea. Perhaps there aren't any grownups anywhere."

The fat boy looked startled.

"There was that pilot. But he wasn't in the passenger cabin, he was up in front."

The fair boy was peering at the reef through screwed-up eyes.

"All them other kids," the fat boy went on. "Some of them must have got out. They must have, mustn't they?"

The fair boy began to pick his way as casually as possible toward the water. He tried to be offhand and not too obviously uninterested, but the fat boy hurried after him.

"Aren't there any grownups at all?"

"I don't think so."

The fair boy said this solemnly; but then the delight of a realized ambition overcame him. In the middle of the scar he stood on his head and grinned at the reversed fat boy.

Question 3

Think about the entire source.

This text comes from the opening of a novel by J.R.R Tolkien.

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
- how and why the writer changes this focus as the source develops
- any other structural features that interest you

IN A HOLE in the ground there lived a hobbit. Not a nasty, dirty, wet hole, filled with the ends of worms and an oozy smell, nor yet a dry, bare, sandy hole with nothing in it to sit down on or to eat: it was a hobbit-hole, and that means comfort.

It had a perfectly round door like a porthole, painted green, with a shiny yellow brass knob in the exact middle. The door opened on to a tube-shaped hall like a tunnel: a very comfortable tunnel without smoke, with panelled walls, and floors tiled and carpeted, provided with polished chairs, and lots and lots of pegs for hats and coats – the hobbit was fond of visitors. The tunnel wound on and on, going fairly but not quite straight into the side of the hill – The Hill, as all the people for many miles round called it – and many little round doors opened out of it, first on one side and then on another. No going upstairs for the hobbit: bedrooms, bathrooms, cellars, pantries (lots of these), wardrobes (he had whole rooms devoted to clothes), kitchens, dining-rooms, all were on the same floor, and indeed on the same passage. The best rooms were all on the left-hand side (going in), for these were the only ones to have windows, deep-set round windows looking over his garden, and meadows beyond, sloping down to the river.

This hobbit was a very well-to-do hobbit, and his name was Baggins. The Bagginses have lived in the neighbourhood of The Hill for time out of mind, and people considered them very respectable, not only because most of them were rich, but also because they never had any adventures or did anything unexpected: you could tell what a Baggins would say on any question without the bother of asking him. This is a story of how a Baggins had an adventure, and found himself doing and saying things altogether unexpected. He may have lost the neighbours' respect, but he gained – well, you will see whether he gained anything in the end.

Think about the entire source.

This text comes from the opening of a novel by Raymond Chandler.

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**
- **how and why the writer changes this focus as the source develops**
- **any other structural features that interest you**

It was one of those mixed blocks over on Central Avenue, the blocks that are not yet all Negro. I had just come out of a three-chair barber shop where an agency thought a relief barber named Dimitrios Aleidis might be working. It was a small matter. His wife said she was willing to spend a little money to have him come home.

I never found him, but Mrs. Aleidis never paid me any money either.

It was a warm day, almost the end of March, and I stood outside the barber shop looking up at the jutting neon sign of a second floor dine and dice emporium called Florian's. A man was looking up at the sign too. He was looking up at the dusty windows with a sort of ecstatic fixity of expression, like a hunky immigrant catching his first sight of the Statue of Liberty. He was a big man but not more than six feet five inches tall and not wider than a beer truck. He was about ten feet away from me. His arms hung loose at his aides and a forgotten cigar smoked behind his enormous fingers.

Slim quiet Negroes passed up and down the street and stared at him with darting side glances. He was worth looking at. He wore a shaggy borsalino hat, a rough gray sports coat with white golf balls on it for buttons, a brown shirt, a yellow tie, pleated gray flannel slacks and alligator shoes with white explosions on the toes. From his outer breast pocket cascaded a show handkerchief of the same brilliant yellow as his tie. There were a couple of colored feathers tucked into the band of his hat, but he didn't really need them. Even on Central Avenue, not the quietest dressed street in the world, he looked about as inconspicuous as a tarantula on a slice of angel food.

His skin was pale and he needed a shave. He would always need a shave. He had curly black hair and heavy eyebrows that almost met over his thick nose. His ears were small and neat for a man of that size and his eyes had a shine close to tears that gray eyes often seem to have. He stood like a statue, and after a long time he smiled.

He moved slowly across the sidewalk to the double swinging doors which shut off the stairs to the second floor. He pushed them open, cast a cool expressionless glance up and down the street, and moved inside. If he had been a smaller man and more quietly dressed, I might have thought he was going to pull a stick-up. But not in those clothes, and not with that hat, and that frame.

The doors swung back outwards and almost settled to a stop. Before they had entirely stopped moving they opened again, violently, outwards. Something sailed across the sidewalk and landed in the gutter between two parked cars. It landed on its hands and knees and made a high keening noise like a cornered rat. It got up slowly, retrieved a hat and stepped back onto the sidewalk. It was a thin, narrow-shouldered brown youth in a lilac colored suit and a carnation. It had slick black hair. It kept its mouth open and whined for a moment. People stared at it vaguely. Then it settled its hat jauntily, sidled over to the wall and walked silently splay-footed off along the block.

Silence. Traffic resumed. I walked along to the double doors and stood in front of them. They were motionless now. It wasn't any of my business. So I pushed them open and looked in.