

GCSE English Language

(8700)

Your guide to
our specimen
assessments



Get ready for live exams in
2017 with papers, inserts
and mark schemes.

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We're here to help

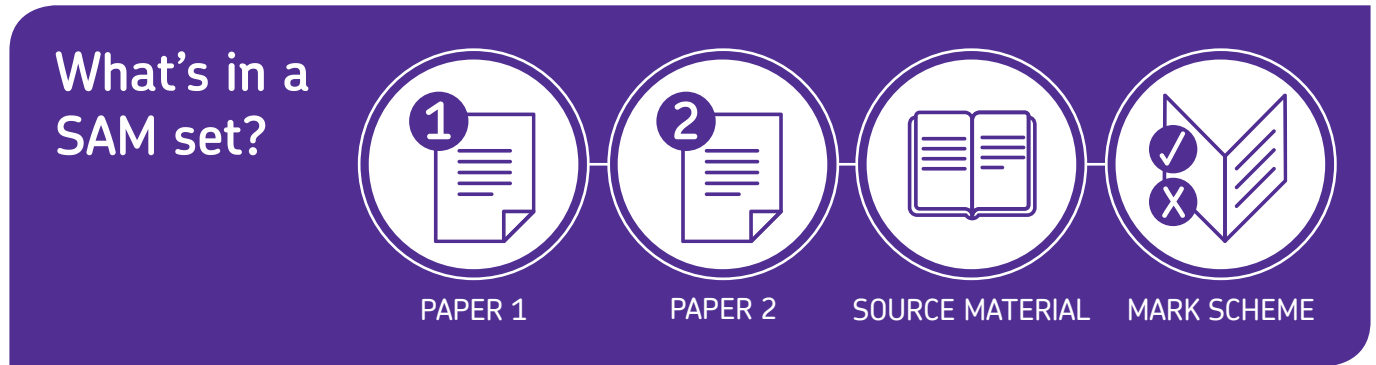
We know you need realistic practice questions and relevant source material to thoroughly prepare your students.

We've provided three complete sets of Specimen Assessment Materials (SAMs) for GCSE English Language, giving you a wider range of source material and practice questions for a given assessment objective.

As well as authentic papers and inserts, each SAM set has a detailed mark scheme to help you assess students with confidence and consistency.

Exam preparation starts here

Three Specimen Assessment Material (SAM) options, one purpose: to exemplify the standard required in formal exam responses.



SAMs 1: access quickly and easily

This set is publicly available on our website, so students can sharpen up their exam approach on their own terms – perhaps as homework, in groups, or as teacher-led activities.

Paper 1 questions are based on Jamaica Inn, and paper 2 extracts compare 19th and 20th century attitudes to homework.

GET THE SET: aqa.org.uk/8700_assess

On this page you'll also find a link to student responses and accompanying examiner commentaries to help you and your students spot common pitfalls.

SAMs 2, SAMs 3: securely hosted

These packs are ideal mock exam material.

SAMs 2 looks at Brighton Rock and compares festivals in the 19th and 21st century.

SAMs 3 explores a fantasy story and compares a minor event and a major tragedy.

GET THE SET: aqa.org.uk/eaqa
and navigate to Secure Key Materials

Understand specifically how marks are awarded on SAMs 2. Access our Mark Scheme Engagement materials – over 30 uploads including short video walk-throughs, as well as marked and annotated responses to benchmark against.

Writers' use of language

- Directs to a key section of the extract
- 'Chunks up' text into manageable sections
- Uses line references

A coach trembles and sways in the gusting wind on Bodmin Moor.

SAMs 1, paper 1, question 2

Source – 20th century novel

FIND IT:

aqa.org.uk/8700_assess

Lost in Brighton amongst the bewildered multitudes.

SAMs 2, paper 1, question 2

Source – 20th century novel

FIND IT:

aqa.org.uk/eaqa
and navigate to Secure Key Materials

A young boy played amongst a heap of rubble, but the shadows were growing...

SAMs 3, paper 1, question 2

Source – 21st century prose fiction

FIND IT:

aqa.org.uk/eaqa
and navigate to Secure Key Materials

0 2 Look in detail at this extract from **lines 8 to 18** of the source:

The wind came in gusts, at times shaking the coach as it travelled round the bend of the road, and in the exposed places on the high ground it blew with such force that the whole body of the coach trembled and swayed, rocking between the high wheels like a drunken man.

The driver, muffled in a greatcoat to his ears, bent almost double in his seat in a faint attempt to gain shelter from his own shoulders, while the dispirited horses plodded sullenly to his command, too broken by the wind and the rain to feel the whip that now and again cracked above their heads, while it swung between the numb fingers of the driver.

The wheels of the coach creaked and groaned as they sank into the ruts on the road, and sometimes they flung up the soft spattered mud against the windows, where it mingled with the constant driving rain, and whatever view there might have been of the countryside was hopelessly obscured.

How does the writer use language here to describe the effects of the weather?

You could include the writer's choice of:

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

[8 marks]

0 2 Look in detail at this extract from **lines 4 to 11** of the source:

They came in by train from Victoria every five minutes, rocked down Queen's Road standing on the tops of the little local trams, stepped off in bewildered multitudes into fresh and glittering air: the new silver paint sparkled on the piers, the cream houses ran away into the west like a pale Victorian water-colour; a race in miniature motors, a band playing, flower gardens in bloom below the front, an aeroplane advertising something for the health in pale vanishing clouds across the sky.

It had seemed quite easy to Hale to be lost in Brighton. Fifty thousand people besides himself were down for the day, and for quite a while he gave himself up to the good day, drinking gins and tonics wherever his programme allowed.

How does the writer use language here to describe Brighton on that day?

You could include the writer's choice of:

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

[8 marks]

0 2 Look in detail at this extract from **lines 5 to 15** of the source:

He tumbled fragments of old window in his hands like shattered marbles. He pushed the glass into the mound, making houses, balancing roofs on them, building towers. The last of the sunlight caught and glinted in the tiny glass walls.

More of the black birds than he'd ever seen before rushed overhead and gathered on the lamppost. The orange light hadn't yet switched on but the shadows were growing. He heard nine chimes of the town hall clock. For a moment, the lamppost looked like a tall thin man wearing a large black hat. When the man turned towards him, he looked like a lamppost. The man had a greyish-green coat speckled with rust and a black hat that quivered with beaks and feathers. The man didn't need to climb the mound; he was face to face with the boy with his feet still planted in the pavement.

How does the writer use language here to describe the boy playing in the evening?

You could include the writer's choice of:

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

[8 marks]

- Candidates self-select language features from one source

Black bread & chaff-stuffed beds: boarding school in 1822.

SAMs 1, paper 2, question 3
Source – 19th century letters

FIND IT:

[aqa.org.uk/8700_assess](https://www.aqa.org.uk/8700_assess)

0 3 You now need to refer **only** to **source B**, the letter by Henry written to his father.
How does Henry use language to try to influence his father?

[12 marks]

Dickens puts you at the heart of the fair.

SAMs 2, paper 2, question 3
Source – 19th century non-fiction

FIND IT:

[aqa.org.uk/eaqa](https://www.aqa.org.uk/eaqa)
and navigate to Secure Key Materials

0 3 You now need to refer **only** to **source B**, Dickens' description of the fair itself (**from line 19 to the end**).
How does Dickens use language to make you, the reader, feel part of the fair?

[12 marks]

A killer with a rotten heart.

SAMs 3, paper 2, question 3
Source – 20th century literary non-fiction

FIND IT:

[aqa.org.uk/eaqa](https://www.aqa.org.uk/eaqa)
and navigate to Secure Key Materials

0 3 You now need to refer **only** to **source A**, lines 27 to 40.
How does the writer use language to describe the coal tips?

[12 marks]

Writers' use of structure

- Encourages students to think about the structural shifts in the text
- Bullet points help support the student's response

A windswept heath, a single carriage and a group of travellers.

SAMs 1, paper 1, question 3

Sources – 20th century novel

FIND IT:

[aqa.org.uk/8700_assess](https://www.aqa.org.uk/8700_assess)

0 3 You now need to think about the whole of the source .

This text is from the opening of a novel.

How has the writer structured the text to interest you as a reader?

You could write about:

- what the writer focuses your attention on at the beginning
- how and why the writer changes this focus as the source develops
- any other structural features that interest you.

[8 marks]

Time ticks by as Hale does his duty.

SAMs 2, paper 1, question 3

Sources – 20th century novel

FIND IT:

[aqa.org.uk/eaqa](https://www.aqa.org.uk/eaqa)
and navigate to Secure Key Materials

0 3 You now need to think about the whole of the source .

This text is from the opening of a novel.

How has the writer structured the text to interest you as a reader?

You could write about:

- what the writer focuses your attention on at the beginning
- how and why the writer changes this focus as the source develops
- any other structural features that interest you.

[8 marks]

A young boy's game silences the world.

SAMs 3, paper 1, question 3

Source – 21st century prose fiction

FIND IT:

[aqa.org.uk/eaqa](https://www.aqa.org.uk/eaqa)
and navigate to Secure Key Materials

0 3 You now need to think about the whole of the source .

This text is from the middle of a short story.

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.

[8 marks]

Synthesis

For further insight see our 10-point guide to teaching synthesis:
aqa.org.uk/teachingsynthesis

A window into the world of education in the 19th and 21st century.

SAMs 1, paper 2, question 2

Sources – 21st century broadsheet article and 19th century letters

FIND IT:

aqa.org.uk/8700_assess

0 2

You need to refer to **source A** and **source B** for this question:

Use details from **both** sources. Write a summary of the differences between Eddie and Henry.

[8 marks]

Would Dickens have enjoyed Glastonbury? Find out how he let his hair down.

SAMs 2, paper 2, question 2

Sources – 21st century non-fiction and 19th century non-fiction

FIND IT:

aqa.org.uk/eaqa
and navigate to Secure Key Materials

0 2

You need to refer to **source A** and **source B** for this question:

The things to see and do at Glastonbury Festival and Greenwich Fair are different.

Use details from **both** sources to write a summary of the differences.

[8 marks]

A Welsh village tragically loses its children, and sleepers in the metropolis are awoken.

SAMs 3, paper 2, question 2

Source – 20th century literary non-fiction and 19th century non-fiction

FIND IT:

aqa.org.uk/eaqa
and navigate to Secure Key Materials

0 2

You need to refer to **source A** and **source B** for this question:

Both sources give details about the places where the events occur.

Use details from **both** sources to write a summary of the differences between Aberfan and London.

[8 marks]

Comparing writers' attitudes

- Refers to the whole of source A and B
- Bullet points help support the student's response

Comparing 19th and 21st century attitudes to homework.

SAMs 1, paper 2, question 4

Sources – 21st century broadsheet article and 19th century letters

FIND IT:

aqa.org.uk/8700_assess

0 4 For this question, you need to refer to the **whole of source A** together with **source B**, the father's letter to a family friend.

Compare how the two writers convey their different attitudes to parenting and education.

In your answer, you could:

- compare their different attitudes
- compare the methods they use to convey their attitudes
- support your ideas with references to both texts.

[16 marks]

Compare festival fun in the 19th and 21st century.

SAMs 2, paper 2, question 4

Sources – 21st century broadsheet article and 19th century non-fiction

FIND IT:

aqa.org.uk/eaqa
and navigate to Secure Key Materials

0 4 For this question, you need to refer to the **whole of source A** together with the **whole of source B**.

Compare how the writers have conveyed their different views and experiences of the festival and fair they describe.

In your answer, you could:

- compare their different views and experiences
- compare the methods they use to convey those views and experiences
- support your ideas with references to both texts.

[16 marks]

Comparing a minor event with a major tragedy.

SAMs 3, paper 2, question 4

Source – 20th century literary non-fiction and 19th century non-fiction

FIND IT:

aqa.org.uk/eaqa
and navigate to Secure Key Materials

0 4 For this question, you need to refer to the **whole of source A** together with the **whole of source B**.

Compare how the writers convey their different ideas and perspectives of the events that they describe.

In your answer, you could:

- compare their different ideas and perspectives
- compare the methods they use to convey their ideas and perspectives
- support your response with references to both texts.

[16 marks]

Evaluation questions

- This question is a culmination of the skills from A01 and A02 to A04
- Gives a statement for the student to respond to
- Bullet points help support the student's response

Inside the coach on the way to Jamaica Inn?

SAMs 1, paper 1, question 4

Source – 20th century novel

FIND IT:

aqa.org.uk/8700_assess

0 4 Focus this part of your answer on the second part of the source, **from line 19 to the end**.

A student, having read this section of the text said: 'The writer brings the very different characters to life for the reader. It is as if you are inside the coach with them.'

To what extent do you agree?

In your response, you could:

- write about your own impressions of the characters
- evaluate how the writer has created these impressions
- support your opinions with references to the text.

[20 marks]

It's a busy bank holiday in Brighton, but why does Hale feel unsafe?

SAMs 2, paper 1, question 4

Source – 20th century novel

FIND IT:

aqa.org.uk/eaqa
and navigate to Secure Key Materials

0 4 Focus this part of your answer on the second part of the source **from line 16 to the end**.

A student, having read this section of the text, said: 'This part of the text, explaining what Hale is doing, shows how nervous and unsafe he feels. It reminds me of the first line.'

To what extent do you agree?

In your response, you could:

- consider your own impressions of how Hale feels
- evaluate how the writer creates an unsafe atmosphere
- support your opinions with references to the text.

[20 marks]

Does a boy's fantasy become a chilling reality?

SAMs 3, paper 1, question 4

Source – 21st century prose fiction

FIND IT:

aqa.org.uk/eaqa
and navigate to Secure Key Materials

0 4 Focus this part of your answer on the second part of the source **from line 16 to the end**.

A reviewer wrote: 'This end part of the extract where the boy's game comes to life takes a darker and more chilling tone.'

To what extent do you agree?

In your response, you could:

- consider your own impressions of the boy's game
- evaluate how the writer creates a dark and chilling tone
- support your response with references to the text.

[20 marks]

Extended writing tasks

- Topic linked to reading material
- Option of picture or written prompt
- Will require narrative or descriptive writing

Enter a creative writing competition!

SAMs 1, paper 1, question 5

Theme – picture description or story opening

FIND IT:

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Try your hand at descriptive writing for the web.

SAMs 2, paper 1, question 5

Theme – picture or situation description

FIND IT:

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Write a story inspired by how children play.

SAMs 3, paper 1, question 5

Theme – choice of two story writing questions

FIND IT:

aqa.org.uk/eaqa
and navigate to Secure Key Materials

0 5 You are going to enter a creative writing competition. Your entry will be judged by a panel of people of your own age.

Either: Write a description suggested by this picture:



Or: Write the opening part of a story about a place that is severely affected by the weather.

(24 marks for content and organisation
16 marks for technical accuracy)

[40 marks]

0 5 Your school or college is asking students to contribute some creative writing for its website.

Either: Write a description suggested by this picture:



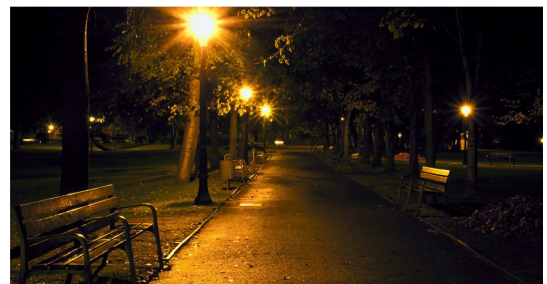
Or: Describe an occasion when you felt unsure or challenged. Focus on the thoughts and feelings you had at that time.

(24 marks for content and organisation
16 marks for technical accuracy)

[40 marks]

0 5 You have been invited to produce a piece of creative writing about how children play imaginatively.

Either: Write a story set on a dark night as suggested by this picture:



Or: Write a story about a game that goes badly wrong.

(24 marks for content and organisation
16 marks for technical accuracy)

[40 marks]

- Topic linked to reading material
- Clear sense of form, audience and purpose
- For further insight find a paper 2 writing resource at:
aqa.org.uk/8700writingtask

Do you think homework is a waste of time?

SAMs 1, paper 2, question 5

Theme – broadsheet newspaper article

FIND IT:

aqa.org.uk/8700_assess

0 5 Homework has no value. Some students get it done for them; some don't do it at all. Students should be relaxing in their free time.'

Write an article for a broadsheet newspaper in which you explain your point of view on this statement.

(24 marks for content and organisation
16 marks for technical accuracy)

[40 marks]

Would you ban Glastonbury?

SAMs 2, paper 2, question 5

Theme – letter writing

FIND IT:

aqa.org.uk/eaqa
and navigate to Secure Key Materials

0 5 'Festivals and fairs should be banned. They encourage bad behaviour and are disruptive to local communities.'

Write a letter to your local newspaper in which you argue for or against this statement.

(24 marks for content and organisation
16 marks for technical accuracy)

[40 marks]

Protect your environment.

SAMs 3, paper 2, question 5

Theme – text for a speech

FIND IT:

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0 5 'Floods, earthquakes, hurricanes and landslides – we see more and more reports of environmental disasters affecting the world and its people every day.'

Write the text of a speech for a debate at your school or college in which you persuade young people to take more responsibility for protecting the environment.

(24 marks for content and organisation
16 marks for technical accuracy)

[40 marks]

Coming soon

A new fourth set of sample assessment materials will soon be available on our website for you to use as a mock. You will also be able to submit your results to us, then see how your cohort compares to other AQA centres.


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