

Exam Techniques

The theme of the paper, marks and timing are written on the inside of the front page. See below for an example from the 2018 exam.

The theme of this examination paper is
Appearance and Reality

Instructions

There are three sections in this examination paper.

Section A	Reading and Writing with Competence	55 marks	4 questions
Section B	Understanding Characters	65 marks	3 questions
Section C	Responding Imaginatively to Texts	60 marks	2 questions

Answer all 9 questions

The questions do not all carry equal marks. The number of marks for each question is stated at the top of the question.

You should spend about 40 minutes on Section A, 35 minutes on Section B and 40 minutes on Section C.

Write your answers in the spaces provided in this booklet. You may lose marks if you do not do so. You are not required to use all of the space provided. You should read each question in full before beginning your response.

Extra pages are provided if needed. Label any extra work clearly with the question number and part.

You may only use blue or black pen when writing your answers. Do not use pencil.

Marking

There are 180 marks for the written paper. (Your CBA task is worth 20 marks, or 10% of the marks for the exam.)

There are no set marks for various sections so you must read the paper carefully on the day of the exam.

Be prepared to answer questions on:

- ✓ Reading Comprehension
- ✓ Media Studies
- ✓ Visual Texts
- ✓ Unseen Poetry
- ✓ Unseen Fiction
- ✓ Unseen Drama
- ✓ Film
- ✓ Studied Poetry
- ✓ Studied Fiction
- ✓ Studied Drama



You must also be prepared to respond by writing **creative** or **functional** pieces based on the stimulus material listed above.

In your exam you will be asked to show that you **appreciate and understand** the techniques that authors, poets and dramatists use and you will be given an opportunity to **show that you can use some of those same techniques** in your own writing.

Layout

There is no set layout for the paper so you must take the time to read every instruction carefully.

Timing



On the inside of the front page, you will be given guidelines to help you plan your timing for the exam. Stick to these as much as possible. You will get more marks if you attempt every question than if you write detailed answers on three quarters of the questions.

You should aim to spend roughly **three minutes per five marks** as a very general rule. So if a question is worth ten marks, spend six minutes on it and no more.

For each five marks, you should aim to make **one point**. (See PIE structure later in these notes.) Write a separate paragraph for each point.

Questions to ask yourself before each writing task:

1. What is the **task**? Is it a letter, talk, interview, descriptive piece...?
2. What is the **content**? What must be included? Watch out for the word 'and' as it can be a clue that there are several aspects to the question.
3. Who is my **audience**? Are you writing for your classmates or your principal or the general public?
4. What **sort of language** should I use? If you are writing a letter of application for a job, your language will need to be formal and persuasive. If you are writing an advertisement for a travel company, your language will need to be descriptive and persuasive. If you are writing a report, your language will need to be informative and impersonal.

Fiction

The following edited extract is adapted from the award winning novel, Mister Pip, by Lloyd Jones. Matilda is a young girl who lives in Bougainville, a tropical island that has been ravaged by a civil war. The tiny local school has been closed for a number of months due to the fighting. In this extract Mr Watts, also known as Pop Eye, a self-appointed teacher, has decided to re-open the school.

‘Get up, Matilda,’ my mum yelled one morning. ‘You’ve got school today.’ She must have enjoyed that moment. I could tell it cheered her up just to say it. It was as if we had slipped back into a comfortable old routine. I happened to know it was a Wednesday. My mum wouldn’t have known that. I kept a pencil under my mat and a calendar of days on the corner post. Eighty-six days had passed since my last day at school.

My mum swept her broom near my head. She shouted at a rooster that had flown in the door. ‘But we have no teachers,’ I said.

With a glimmer of a smile, my mum said, ‘You do now. Pop-Eye is going to teach you kids.’ ...

Pop-Eye was waiting for us inside. It was almost dark, though light enough to make out the tall, thin white man in his linen suit. He stood at the front of the class, his eyes glancing away from our inspection. His hair was long, nearly touching his shoulders. When it was short, we hadn’t noticed the flecks of red and grey. His beard spilled down onto his chest.



He looked at our faces, taking each of us in, though careful not to linger. He seemed to be taking note of who had turned up. I had never heard him speak. As far as I knew, nobody in that class had. I don't know what I was expecting, except when he spoke his voice was surprisingly small. He spoke as if he was addressing each one of us personally.

'I want this to be a place of light,' he said. 'No matter what happens. We must clear the space and make it ready for learning. Make it new again.' We swept out the classroom. We were enjoying our first day back at school. Mr Watts kept an eye on us. He allowed high spirits. But when he spoke, we shut up.

Now we returned to our desks to wait for him to dismiss us and send us home. He spoke in that same quiet voice that had come as such a surprise at the start of the day.

'I want you to understand something. I am no teacher, but I will do my best. That's my promise to you children. I believe, with your parents' help, we can make a difference to our lives.'

He stopped there like he'd just had a new thought, and he must have, because next he asked us to get up from our desks and to form a circle. He told us to hold hands or link arms, whatever we saw fit. There was no prayer. There was no sermon. Instead, Mr Watts thanked us all for turning up. 'I wasn't sure you would,' he said. 'I will be honest with you. I have no wisdom, none at all. The truest thing that I can tell you is that whatever we have between us is all we've got. Oh, and of course, Mr Dickens.'

The next day we sat at our desks and waited for Mr Watts to introduce Mr Dickens. He wasn't there when we arrived. There was just Mr Watts, as we had found him the day before, standing tall at the front of the class, lost in a dream.



While we waited for Mr Watts to wake from his dream, I counted three lime-green geckos. A flower-pecker bird flew in the open window and out again. As the bird flew out the window, Mr Watts began to read to us.

I had never been read to in English before. Nor had the others. We didn't have books in our homes, and before the blockade our only books had come from Moresby and those were written in pidgin.* When Mr Watts read to us, we fell quiet. It was a new sound in the world. He read slowly so we heard the shape of each word. 'My father's name being Pirrip, and my Christian name Philip, my infant tongue could make of both names nothing longer or more explicit than Pip. So I called myself Pip, and came to be called Pip.'

There had been no warning from Mr Watts. He just began to read. My desk was in the second row from the back. Gilbert Masoi sat in front, and I couldn't see past his fat shoulders and big woolly head. So when I heard Mr Watts speak I thought he was talking about himself. That he was Pip. It was only as he began to walk between our desks that I saw the book in his hand.

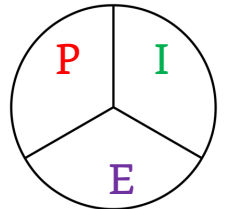
He kept reading and we kept listening. It was some time before he stopped, but when he looked up, we sat stunned by the silence. The flow of words had ended. Slowly we stirred back into our bodies and our lives. Mr Watts closed the book and held the paperback up in one hand like a church minister. 'That was chapter one of *Great Expectations*, which, incidentally, is the greatest novel by the greatest English writer of the nineteenth century, Charles Dickens.'

*Pidgin: A language made up of elements of two or more languages.

Answering Techniques

When answering questions, you should use the **PIE** method.

This stands for **POINT**, **ILLUSTRATE**, **EXPLAIN**.



1. Make your **POINT**
2. **ILLUSTRATE** your point by using evidence and/or quotes from the text.
3. **EXPLAIN** how the quote you have chosen proves your point.

Here is an example of a PIE paragraph based on the extract on the previous pages.

Question: What sort of person do you think Mr Watts is?

Answer: **I think Mr Watts is a shy man.** **When the children come into the schoolroom, he says nothing at first but stands 'with his eyes glancing away' from the children's inspection of him.** **He is obviously a little unhappy to be the centre of attention and he feels uncomfortable when the students stare at him.**



1. Don't begin an answer with 'Yes' or 'No'.
2. Reflect the wording of the question in the first line of the answer.
3. Don't begin your answer with a pronoun. (See the text box below.)
4. Write full sentence answers, even for short questions.
5. Ask yourself if the reader could work backwards from your answer and guess what the question was. If they could, you have done a great job!



Question: Do you think the narrator's mother is pleased the school is re-opening?

Weak answer: Yes, because it cheers her up.

Note: There is no way to know what question is being answered here. The writer shouldn't have begun with 'Yes'. Using pronouns - 'it' and 'her' - in the first sentence makes the answer unclear.

A pronoun is a word which stands in for a noun. If we substituted pronouns for the nouns in the sentence "Please give the present to Conor," it would read "Please give it to him."

Strong answer: I think the narrator's mother is pleased that the school is re-opening. She wakes her daughter up with the news and the narrator says she 'could tell it cheered her up just to say it'. The mother's eagerness to tell her daughter about the school and her enjoyment as she breaks the news shows how glad she is that her daughter can return to school. *Note: This is a much better answer. It is written in the PIE format and the person reading it could work out exactly what the question was.*



Over to you...

Below are two sample answers to a question. What marks would you give each answer, and why? Write the comments you would make if you were advising the student on how they might improve their answer next time.

There is a checklist below to help you in your marking.

- ✓ Are there the right number of points?
- ✓ Is the answer divided into paragraphs?
- ✓ If possible, are there links between the paragraphs?
- ✓ Does the first sentence reflect the wording of the question?
- ✓ Is there a PIE structure to each point?
- ✓ Are quotes, detailed references and/or key moments used to support the points?
- ✓ Is the vocabulary rich and varied?
- ✓ Could the answer be written in six minutes?

Question: Based on what you have read in this extract, do you think Mr Watts will be a good teacher? (10)

Sample answer A

Yes, I think Mr Watts will be because he wants to do his best. He volunteered to do the job when nobody else wanted to do it. He knows he doesn't know much but he wants to help the kids and wants to make the school work.

He likes the kids, which I feel is good because they will probably like him too for that. He knows they want to learn and he wants to teach them. He chooses his favourite book which he thinks they will like and they do. Which is a good sign.

Mark out of ten: _____

Comment _____

Sample answer B

I think Mr Watts will make a good teacher because he is committed and enthusiastic. He volunteered for the post even though he admits he is unqualified and has 'no wisdom, none at all'. I think it is a good sign that Mr Watts wants to teach despite these obstacles and his dream of making the school 'a place of light' shows his positive attitude which I feel will pay off in the end.

Another reason I think Mr Watts will be great at his job is that he understands and likes the children in the school. He lets them indulge in 'high spirits' when they are cleaning the room but he holds their attention the minute he begins to speak. He is honest and admits to the children that he is 'no teacher' but he promises to do his best. He uses the words 'we' and 'our' when talking about the future of the school which shows he wants to work with the children and make a difference in their lives.



Mark out of ten: _____

Comment _____

Sample answer C

Yes, because he wants to be one. He puts a lot of time into his job and wants to do the best he can. He wants to do a good job. In my opinion, I think he will be good because he likes the children and wants to help them to learn. He chooses a good book that they will like and reads it to them. They love the book and listen quietly which shows that they enjoy it and they want to hear more about it.

Mark out of ten: _____

Comment _____

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