



Mark Scheme (Results)

Summer 2026

Pearson Edexcel International GCSE

in English Language (4EA1)

Paper 2: Poetry and Prose Texts and Imaginative
Writing

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General Marking Guidance

- All candidates must receive the same treatment. Examiners must mark the first candidate in exactly the same way as they mark the last.
- Mark schemes should be applied positively. Candidates must be rewarded for what they have shown they can do rather than penalised for omissions.
- Examiners should mark according to the mark scheme not according to their perception of where the grade boundaries may lie.
- There is no ceiling on achievement. All marks on the mark scheme should be used appropriately.
- All the marks on the mark scheme are designed to be awarded. Examiners should always award full marks if deserved, i.e. if the answer matches the mark scheme. Examiners should also be prepared to award zero marks if the candidate's response is not worthy of credit according to the mark scheme.
- Where some judgement is required, mark schemes will provide the principles by which marks will be awarded and exemplification may be limited.
- When examiners are in doubt regarding the application of the mark scheme to a candidate's response, the team leader must be consulted.
- Crossed out work should be marked UNLESS the candidate has replaced it with an alternative response.

Specific Marking Guidance

When deciding how to reward an answer, examiners should consult both the indicative content and the associated marking grid(s). When using a levels-based mark scheme, the 'best fit' approach should be used.

- Examiners should first decide which descriptor most closely matches the answer and place it in that level.
- The mark awarded within the level will be decided based on the quality of the answer and will be modified according to how securely all bullet points are displayed at that level.
- Indicative content is exactly that – they are factual points that candidates are likely to use to construct their answer.
- It is possible for an answer to be constructed without mentioning some or all of these points, as long as they provide alternative responses to the indicative content that fulfils the requirements of the question. It is the examiner's responsibility to apply their professional judgement to the candidate's response in determining if the answer fulfils the requirements of the question.

Placing a mark within a level

- Examiners should first decide which descriptor most closely matches the answer and place it in that level. The mark awarded within the level will be decided based on the quality of the answer and will be modified according to how securely all bullet points are displayed at that level.
- In cases of uneven performance, the points above will still apply. Candidates will be placed in the level that best describes their answer according to the descriptors in that level. Marks will be awarded towards the top or bottom of that level depending on how they have evidenced each of the descriptor bullet points.
- If the candidate's answer meets the requirements fully, markers should be prepared to award full marks within the level. The top mark in the level is used for work that is as good as can realistically be expected within that level.

AO1	Read and understand a variety of texts, selecting and interpreting information, ideas and perspectives.
AO2	Understand and analyse how writers use linguistic and structural devices to achieve their effects.
AO4	Communicate effectively and imaginatively, adapting form, tone and register of writing for specific purposes and audiences.
AO5	Write clearly, using a range of vocabulary and sentence structures, with appropriate paragraphing and accurate spelling, grammar and punctuation.

SECTION A: Reading

Question Number	Indicative content
1	<p>Reward responses that explain how the writer presents the supernatural.</p> <p>Responses may include the following points about how the setting is presented:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the extract starts during the night, which in folklore is a time associated with supernatural events: 'During the night' the narrator wakes 'abruptly in the early hours' because of strong winds, creating a sense of fear and vulnerability the weather is windy, and in folklore the wind is linked to the coming of spirits and supernatural events: the narrator says that it 'increased greatly in force' fear of the supernatural is emphasised by the description of the noise within the house: 'there was the sound of moaning down all the chimneys of the house' the way the writer presents the house as 'quite alone and exposed' suggests a feeling of isolation typical in supernatural tales the way that the narrator describes 'the warm and snug safety of my bed in the nursery at the top of our family house in Sussex' shows the contrast between the settings, putting emphasis on how the current setting feels uncomfortable and threatening the idea of darkness hiding dangers or mysteries is demonstrated when the narrator explains how a cry comes 'from somewhere, out of that howling darkness' the narrator thinks he hears the cry of 'a child somewhere out on the marsh', which would create fear and anxiety in the reader given that it is the middle of the night, the weather is frightening and the house is isolated the narrator identifies that the setting has a 'long-dead ghost' who is creating the crying noise, which is a supernatural phenomenon the reader questions the narrator's grip on reality, building tension through the contrast in what the narrator hears: he hears 'Nothing', but also hears the 'tumult of the wind, like a banshee, and the banging and rattling of the window' the narrator tries to use the setting to make himself feel less afraid by creating a more comfortable, familiar feeling: 'I would go down into the kitchen and make myself a drink, stir up the fire a little' the sudden event of the lights going out creates a feeling that supernatural forces may be at work, and plunges the narrator into 'pitch blackness' the idea of a supernatural presence in the house is seen in the way the narrator describes how he feels he is not alone: 'someone who had just that very second before gone past me on their way from the top of the stairs to one of the other rooms', 'I had simply the absolutely certain sense of someone just having passed close to me and gone away down the corridor' the narrator describes how a locked door opens by itself, creating a feeling of an otherworldly presence playing tricks on him: 'the nursery whose door had been so firmly locked and then, inexplicably, opened'. <p>Responses may include the following points about how the characters are described:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the narrator describes how he 'awoke abruptly' in the middle of the night, which is usually associated with a shock or nightmare

- the narrator reflects on how the weather seems to have become much worse, building his fear: the wind 'increased greatly in force' and 'there was the sound of moaning down all the chimneys of the house and whistling through every nook and cranny'
- feelings of tension and fear associated with supernatural events are built as the narrator says 'At first I was alarmed', and the description of the house mirrors his feelings: 'quite alone and exposed'
- the narrator uses his childhood memories to make himself feel safer: 'I lay back and slipped into that pleasant, trance-like state'. This state could also suggest that the narrator lacks control of his thoughts and feelings
- the narrator's grip on what is real creates fear and mystery – he believes he hears a cry, but then hears 'Nothing', and then hears the 'tumult of the wind, like a banshee, and the banging and rattling of the window'. The reader questions his clarity of thought, linking to the contrast between real and supernatural
- the narrator's questioning of what is happening demonstrates the contrast between rational thought and irrational feelings about a possible supernatural presence: 'How could there be? Yet how could I lie here and ignore even the crying of some long-dead ghost?'
- the idea that the narrator feels he should be active in the situation creates a sense of foreboding associated with supernatural tales. He decides to get up and go down 'into the kitchen' and goes 'out onto the landing'. This suggests to the reader that something may await him
- the narrator feels he is not alone, despite knowing that there is no one else in the house: 'someone who had just that very second before gone past me on their way from the top of the stairs to one of the other rooms'
- his certainty that there is nothing there is contrasted with the idea that there is someone or something there, demonstrating the sense of reality versus fiction: 'I had seen no one, felt nothing. There had been no movement', 'I had simply the absolutely certain sense of someone just having passed close to me and gone away down the corridor'
- the narrator presents the idea that there could be someone hiding in the house and coming out at night: 'a person who hid themselves away in that mysterious nursery and came out at night to fetch food and drink and to take the air', but he is aware that these are likely to be 'wild, incoherent fantasies'
- the narrator tries to explain the mysterious presence in real terms by relating it to Mrs Drablow: 'Had Mrs Drablow harboured some reclusive old sister or retainer, had she left behind her a mad friend that no one had known about?'
- there is a 'presence' in the house that makes the narrator think that there is something supernatural happening: 'Whatever was about, whoever I had seen, and heard rocking, and who had passed me by just now, whoever had opened the locked door was not 'real''
- the narrator doubts himself and feels more confused and disorientated when the lights go out: 'At that moment I began to doubt my own reality', 'I stood in the pitch blackness, unsure for a moment of my bearings'
- the impact of the broken torch overwhelms the narrator and he feels 'ashamed of myself' for getting so tense and afraid
- the character of Spider the dog helps the narrator to come back to reality, as he says she 'brought me to my senses by scratching a little at my arm and then by licking the hand I stretched out to her'; the description of Spider's 'warm body' reflects the idea that she is real and living

- the extract ends with the narrator hearing again the supernatural cry, leaving the reader with the confusion of whether what he has heard is real or supernatural: 'again and again I heard that child's terrible cry borne on the gusts towards me'.

Responses may include the following points about **the use of language and structure**:

- from the beginning of the extract short sentence structures create a sense of fear and tension: 'During the night the wind rose', 'No light came on', 'The torch had broken', 'No. But what was 'real'?'
- the adverb 'abruptly' creates a sense of suddenness and shock at the start of the extract: 'when I awoke abruptly'
- the description of the weather indicates almost unnatural strength and power combined with potential danger: 'force', 'battered'
- the writer uses verbs to describe the weather as something or someone making almost unearthly sounds, creating fear in the narrator as night should be peaceful and calm: 'roaring', 'moaning', 'rattling', 'whistling', 'boomed'
- the writer uses a short sentence to demonstrate the fear typically associated with supernatural events when someone is woken in the middle of the night: 'At first I was alarmed'
- the writer uses the description of the house to reflect the narrator's feelings of loneliness and isolation: 'quite alone and exposed'
- the memory of the wind when the narrator was a child makes it appear like a malevolent force: 'hearing the wind rage round like a lion, howling at the doors and beating upon the windows'
- adjectives associated with mystery and the supernatural are used to describe the setting and conditions: 'howling', 'long-dead', 'mysterious'
- the description of the setting reflects typical Gothic ideas: 'howling darkness', 'The tumult of the wind, like a banshee', 'pitch blackness'
- questions show that the narrator is unsure of what is happening: 'How could there be?', 'how many years?', 'and who was now in this house with me?'
- the writer uses language associated with death or mourning to create a feeling of mortality and the supernatural: 'long-dead ghost', 'Rest in peace', 'the woman in black'
- the writer's use of non-specific nouns and pronouns creates a sense of mystery linked to a possibly supernatural presence: 'no one', 'someone', 'another human being', 'a person', 'who', 'Whatever', 'whoever'
- negatives demonstrate that the narrator is unsure and disbelieving of what is happening: 'I had not bothered ...', 'I had seen no one, felt nothing', 'I had not even heard a footstep'
- the use of language creates a contrast between what the narrator may be imagining and what is reality, creating a feeling of confusion and uncertainty: 'the impression of someone', 'unsure for a moment of my bearings', 'I actually began to conjecture that there was indeed someone'
- the writer juxtaposes the chaos of the storm with ominous calm: 'no movement, no brush of a sleeve against mine, no disturbance of the air'
- the setting is described as dark, claustrophobic and mysterious: 'pitch blackness', 'short narrow corridor', 'to the nursery whose door had been so firmly locked and then, inexplicably, opened', 'mysterious nursery'
- adjectives associated with the bizarre or unusual are used, creating a sense of the supernatural being unreal: 'reclusive', 'mad', 'wild, incoherent'

- this is contrasted with language the narrator uses to try and rationalise the supernatural experiences: 'rational explanation', 'whoever had opened the locked door was not 'real''
- the use of specific names for characters in the story creates a sense of reality that contrasts with the unreal sense of the supernatural: 'Mrs Drablow', 'Samuel Daily', 'Spider'
- the verbs used to describe the narrator's behaviour once the lights go out suggest lack of control and chaos: 'groped', 'stumbled', 'dropped', 'spinning', 'fell', 'breaking', 'crawling'
- the noises of the weather at the start of the extract are described in human, animal or supernatural terms: 'roaring', 'moaning', 'like a banshee'. This is recalled at the end of the extract as the reader is reminded of the mysterious child crying: 'child's terrible cry borne on the gusts towards me'.

Reward **all** valid points.

Level	Mark	AO1 Read and understand a variety of texts, selecting and interpreting information, ideas and perspectives (12 marks)
	0	No rewardable material.
Level 1 <i>Limited Basic</i>	1-3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Basic selection of information/ideas. • Limited use of quotations/textual references • Limited understanding of information/ideas, likely through retelling or paraphrasing.
Level 2 <i>Some Developing</i>	4-6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some selection of valid information and ideas. • Some use of valid quotations/textual references. • Some valid interpretation demonstrating a developing understanding of information and ideas.
Level 3 <i>Clear Relevant</i>	7-9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clear and relevant selection of information, ideas and/or perspectives. • Clear and relevant use of supporting quotations/textual references. • Relevant interpretation demonstrating a clear understanding of information, ideas and/or perspectives.
Level 4 <i>Detailed Perceptive</i>	10-12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Detailed and persuasive selection of information, ideas and perspectives. • Discriminating use of supporting quotations and textual references. • Perceptive interpretation demonstrating a convincing understanding of information, ideas and perspectives.

Level	Mark	AO2 Understand and analyse how writers use linguistic and structural devices to achieve their effects (18 marks)
	0	No rewardable material.
Level 1 <i>Limited Basic</i>	1–3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Limited identification of language and/or structural devices. Limited selection of textual references. Offers basic and simple comment on the effect of language and/or structure.
Level 2 <i>Some Developing</i>	4–6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some identification/selection of language and/or structural devices. Some accurate textual references. Some developing comment on the effect of language and/or structure.
Level 3 <i>Clear Relevant Explanatory</i>	7–10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clear and relevant selection of language and structural devices. Relevant and generally appropriate use of textual references. Clear explanations of the effects of language and structure.
Level 4 <i>Thorough Confident Exploratory</i>	11–14	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Thorough and confident selection of language and structural devices. Confident and detailed use of textual references. Detailed exploration of the effects of language and structure.
Level 5 <i>Discriminating Perceptive Analytical</i>	15–18	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Subtle and discriminating selection of language and structural devices. Discriminating and assured use of textual references. Perceptive analysis of the effects of language and structure.

Section B: Imaginative Writing

Refer to the writing assessment grids at the end of this section when marking Questions 2, 3 and 4.

Question Number	Indicative content
2	<p>Purpose: to write a real or imagined piece about a time a person experienced something mysterious. This may involve a range of approaches, including: description, anecdote, speech, narrative, literary techniques.</p> <p>Audience: the writing is for a general readership. Candidates can choose to write for an audience of adults or young people.</p> <p>Form: the response may be narrative, descriptive or a monologue. There should be clear organisation and structure with an introduction, development of points and a conclusion. Some candidates may intentionally adapt their language and style to their audience by using, for example, a more informal or colloquial approach. Candidates may introduce some literary elements.</p> <p>Responses may:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • use the extract as inspiration • explain what the mysterious thing was and what made it mysterious, for example an unexplained event, an unexpected meeting, a suspicious person or persons and how the person and others felt about the mystery • describe ideas, events, settings and characters • use appropriate techniques for creative writing: vocabulary, imagery, language techniques • use a voice that attempts to make the piece interesting and/or believable to the chosen audience • be written in a register and style appropriate for the chosen form, which may include colloquial elements, dialogue within description or narrative, or a sustained single voice in a monologue. <p><i>The best-fit approach</i></p> <p>An answer may not always satisfy every one of the assessment criteria for a particular level in order to receive a mark within that level range, since on individual criteria the answer may meet the descriptor for a higher or lower mark range. The best-fit approach should be used to determine the mark which corresponds most closely to the overall quality of the response.</p>

Question Number	Indicative content
3	<p>Purpose: to write a real or imagined story with the title ‘The House on the Hill’. This may involve a range of approaches, including: description, anecdote, speech, literary techniques.</p> <p>Audience: the writing is for a general readership. Candidates can choose to write for an audience of adults or young people.</p> <p>Form: the response may be narrative, descriptive or a monologue. There should be clear organisation and structure with an introduction, development of points and a conclusion. Some candidates may intentionally adapt their language and style to their audience by using, for example, a more informal or colloquial approach. Candidates may introduce some literary elements.</p> <p>Responses may:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • describe the house, for example a large family home, an abandoned house, a house that is rumoured to be haunted • explain how the house is seen from the point of view of the owners, family members or members of the community • describe ideas, events, settings and characters • use appropriate techniques for creative writing: vocabulary, imagery, language techniques • use a voice that attempts to make the piece interesting and/or believable to the chosen audience • be written in a register and style appropriate for the chosen form, which may include colloquial elements, dialogue within description or narrative, or a sustained single voice in a monologue. <p><i>The best-fit approach</i></p> <p>An answer may not always satisfy every one of the assessment criteria for a particular level in order to receive a mark within that level range, since on individual criteria the answer may meet the descriptor for a higher or lower mark range. The best-fit approach should be used to determine the mark which corresponds most closely to the overall quality of the response.</p>

Question Number	Indicative content
4	<p>Purpose: to write a real or imagined story that ends ‘I was no longer alone.’ This may involve a range of approaches, including: description, anecdote, speech, literary techniques.</p> <p>Audience: the writing is for a general readership. Candidates can choose to write for an audience of adults or young people.</p> <p>Form: the response may be narrative, descriptive or a monologue. There should be clear organisation and structure with an introduction, development of points and a conclusion. Some candidates may intentionally adapt their language and style to their audience by using, for example, a more informal or colloquial approach. Candidates may introduce some literary elements.</p> <p>Responses may:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • use the images to inspire writing • create a character and a scenario about something or someone • describe ideas, events, settings and characters • use appropriate techniques for creative writing: vocabulary, imagery, language techniques • use a voice that attempts to make the piece interesting and/or believable to the chosen audience • be written in a register and style appropriate for the chosen form, which may include colloquial elements, dialogue within description or narrative, or a sustained single voice in a monologue. <p><i>The best-fit approach</i> An answer may not always satisfy every one of the assessment criteria for a particular level in order to receive a mark within that level range, since on individual criteria the answer may meet the descriptor for a higher or lower mark range. The best-fit approach should be used to determine the mark which corresponds most closely to the overall quality of the response.</p>

Writing assessment grids for Questions 2, 3 and 4

Level	Mark	AO4 Communicate effectively and imaginatively, adapting form, tone and register of writing for specific purposes and audiences.
	0	No rewardable material.
Level 1	1–3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication is at a basic level, and limited in clarity. • Little awareness is shown of the purpose of the writing and the intended reader. • Little awareness of form, tone and register.
Level 2	4–7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communicates in a broadly appropriate way. • Shows some grasp of the purpose and of the expectations/requirements of the intended reader. • Straightforward use of form, tone and register.
Level 3	8–11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communicates clearly. • Shows a clear sense of purpose and understanding of the expectations/requirements of the intended reader. • Appropriate use of form, tone and register.
Level 4	12–15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communicates successfully. • A secure realisation of purpose and the expectations/requirements of the intended reader. • Effective use of form, tone and register.
Level 5	16–18	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication is perceptive and subtle. • Task is sharply focused on purpose and the expectations/requirements of the intended reader. • Sophisticated use of form, tone and register.

Level	Mark	AO5 Write clearly, using a range of vocabulary and sentence structures, with appropriate paragraphing and accurate spelling, grammar and punctuation.
	0	No rewardable material.
Level 1	1–2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expresses information and ideas, with limited use of structural and grammatical features. Uses basic vocabulary, often misspelt. Uses punctuation with basic control, creating undeveloped, often repetitive, sentence structures.
Level 2	3–4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expresses and orders information and ideas; uses paragraphs and a range of structural and grammatical features. Uses some correctly spelt vocabulary, e.g. words with regular patterns such as prefixes, suffixes, double consonants. Uses punctuation with some control, creating a range of sentence structures, including coordination and subordination.
Level 3	5–7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develops and connects appropriate information and ideas; structural and grammatical features and paragraphing make the meaning clear. Uses a varied vocabulary and spells words containing irregular patterns correctly. Uses accurate and varied punctuation, adapting sentence structures as appropriate.
Level 4	8–10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Manages information and ideas, with structural and grammatical features used cohesively and deliberately across the text. Uses a wide, selective vocabulary with only occasional spelling errors. Positions a range of punctuation for clarity, managing sentence structures for deliberate effect.
Level 5	11–12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Manipulates complex ideas, utilising a range of structural and grammatical features to support coherence and cohesion. Uses extensive vocabulary strategically; rare spelling errors do not detract from overall meaning. Punctuates writing with accuracy to aid emphasis and precision, using a range of sentence structures accurately and selectively to achieve particular effects.