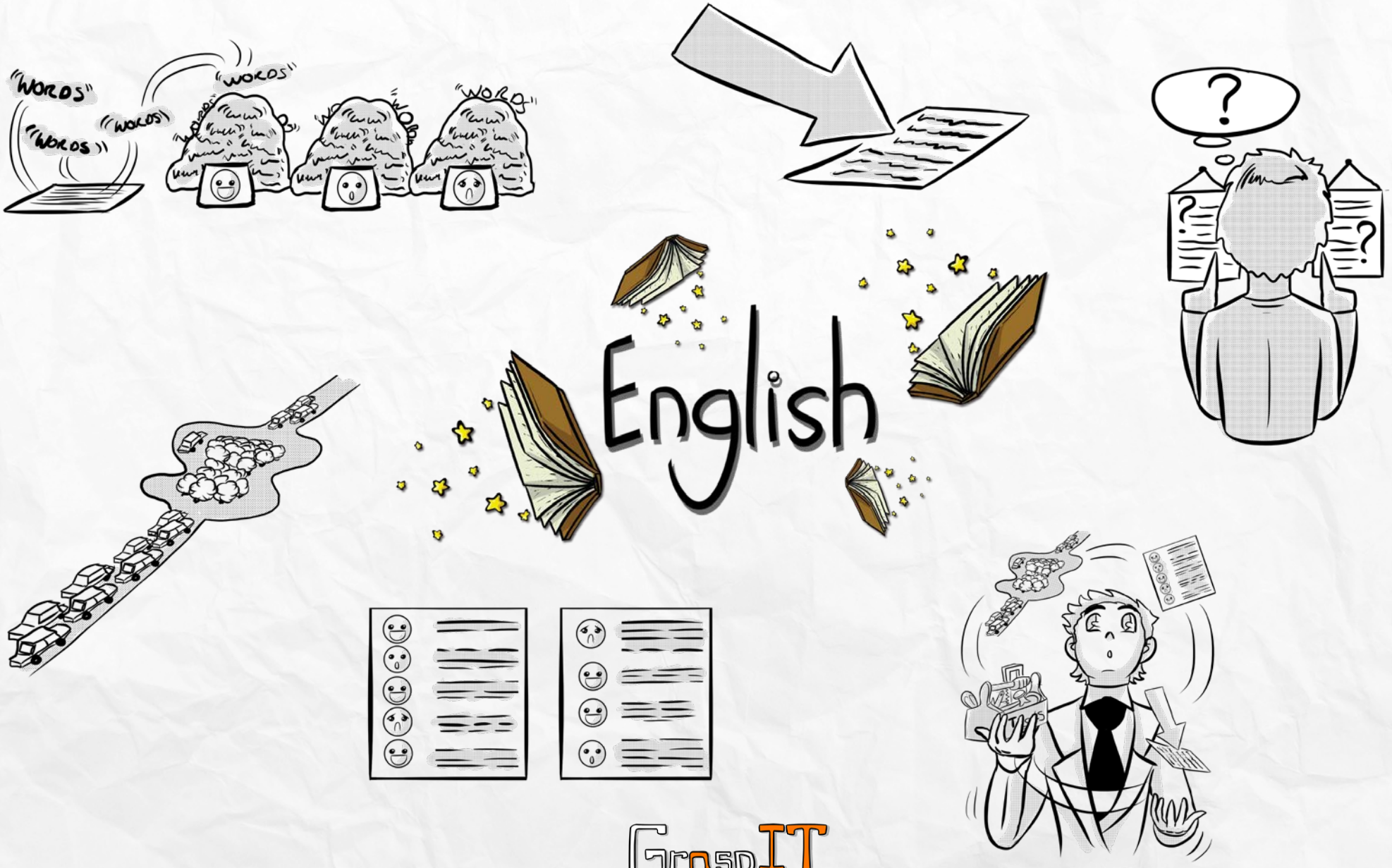
GCSE Edexcel GCSE English Language

Reading



GraspIT

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Knowing the Papers

- How many marks is each paper worth?
- How are the marks divided across the questions?
- How long do you have for each question on each paper?
- How are the assessment objectives (AOs) divided across the questions?
- What are the key differences between the two papers?

AO1 - Identifying, Interpreting and Synthesising

To secure your marks you need to show that you understand which parts of your evidence are relevant and which are not.

Take an exam paper and read the attached text. Make several *statements* about what you think the text is about and then select *evidence* to prove your points.

Look carefully at the evidence you have chosen – how long is each quotation? In most circumstances, the quotation you need will only be a few words long. Any longer than that and you are likely to be including surplus information. Look back through your chosen quotation and pick out the word, or words, that prove your point best. Do you really need the rest?

Part of AO1 is also your ability to draw *conclusions* across more than one text, as you must do on Q7a of Paper 2.

Take a Paper 2 and read the two texts. Make a bullet pointed list of all the key ideas in text one and then look for similarities in text two.

To secure your mark, look carefully are the points you are making – are they too similar to one another? How obvious are they? Which *comparisons* show that you understand the text the best?

AO2 - Analysing Language and Structure

Writer's methods are any techniques (*language* or *structure*) that they have used deliberately to help support their ideas. They are the tools a writer uses to build a piece of writing.

Methods can be anything from something as simple as a *rhetorical question* to a particular *semantic field*.

The key word here is: *relevant*. If you are saying that a writer feels angry about something then the method that you select and quote must be relevant. Although you may have selected evidence that is relevant on its own, this doesn't mean that any techniques that you spot within it will also be.

For example, it might be that the evidence you have chosen has *alliteration* in it. However, if you are looking to prove that the narrator is excited, this might not be the most relevant aspect of that quotation.

To get into the higher marks on this paper, you must be able to not only identify the techniques that the writer is using, you must be able to *explain how* they are used to create meaning. And don't forget, you must include BOTH language and structure in your response.

Select any exam paper and turn to question 3. Check the question focus and highlight your *evidence*. Label any methods that you can see, ensuring you are covering both language and structure. Now check – are these methods relevant to the question focus? Start trying to explain how the method and the quotation support your initial point – if you are finding this difficult, it's probably that you've chosen either a quotation or a method that doesn't work with your question.

AO3 - Comparing Writer's Viewpoints and Perspectives

The first thing you are going to have to do is to decide on what the *viewpoints* of your two writers are.

Once you have decided on the opinion of the writers in the two texts, this question then wants you to decide on what is similar, different or both about the writers' perspectives.

However, one of the key words here is: *relevant*.

There is no point spending time discussing the writer's point of view on an issue that you have not been asked about.

Take a Paper 2 and read through question 7b and both texts, then highlight what the focus of the Q is.

Now read through both of your texts and highlight any paragraphs where you see the writers' *perspectives* on this focus. This perspective may not be straight forward and it may change. There may be similarities at times but there may also be dramatic differences.

Make a list of the *similarities* and *differences* between the two texts.

To secure your mark, you will need to *justify* these viewpoints through both evidence and an understanding of the writer's methods.

AO4 - Evaluating

The evaluation questions are all about being able to comment on the success of one aspect of the text and explain what makes it so successful.

This isn't as specific as an AO2 question. Use the 'SITE' mnemonic as a guide to help you find evidence:

- *settings*
- *ideas*
- *themes*
- *events*

The key thing is to remember your *evaluative language* – you are commenting on the success of the writer's choices after all.

Take an exam paper, locate the evaluation question (Q4 on Paper 1 and Q6 on Paper 2) and read the connected text.

Use the SITE to form subheadings and make notes under each one, where you can, based on the text you have read. You do not need to write something under each subheading; only the ones that work (for example, there may not be any *setting* mentioned).

Next to each point, add an evaluative comment that indicates how important it is to the success of the piece (with regards to the question focus).

Ultimately, a writer's success is dependent on their ability to make the reader think or feel something specific. Look at each of the points you have made and write a note about how they will affect the reader.

Bringing It All Together

You will need a new exam paper for this one.

Go through the exam paper label each question with the correct AOs.

Next, at the top of each question, write some quick advice about what to include in your answer.

Once you feel confident, have a go!

You can use the advice you've left yourself to help you plan an answer, and also to check your answers against at the end.

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