YEAR 11

Writing for Top Marks

Year 11, pitched at Pearson Edexcel GCSE English Language. Harder extracts and full exam thinking: how the paper works, the skills on the text, then top-band judgement. Both papers end with a 40-mark writing task. This is how to lift it.

A. Warm-up

1. What should the last five minutes of a writing task be for?
   (a) Starting a new paragraph
   (b) Proofreading for errors
   (c) Rewriting the plan
   (d) Counting words **(b) Proofreading for errors**

2. Which plan is most useful?
   (a) Writing the whole answer twice
   (b) No plan at all
   (c) Five brief paragraph points, with the ending decided in advance
   (d) A list of fancy words only **(c) Five brief paragraph points, with the ending decided in advance**

3. Which is the most ambitious vocabulary?
   (a) The silence was really quiet.
   (b) It was very silent.
   (c) There was no noise.
   (d) The silence was oppressive. **(d) The silence was oppressive.**

4. Which uses a semicolon correctly?
   (a) The storm had passed; the damage remained.
   (b) The storm; had passed the damage remained.
   (c) Because the storm had passed; the damage remained.
   (d) The storm had; passed the damage remained. **(a) The storm had passed; the damage remained.**

5 Which connective shows cause and effect?
(a) However,
(b) Consequently,
(c) Meanwhile,
(d) For example, **(b) Consequently,**

B. Where you should be now

6 Which opening sentence is most original?
(a) It was a normal day.
(b) I am going to tell you a story.
(c) My grandmother kept her secrets in biscuit tins.
(d) Once upon a time there was a girl. **(c) My grandmother kept her secrets in biscuit tins.**

7 Which is an effective structural shift?
(a) Repeating the first paragraph
(b) Ending mid-sentence
(c) Listing the characters
(d) From a wide view of a crowded beach to one child's abandoned sandal **(d) From a wide view of a crowded beach to one child's abandoned sandal**

8 Which uses sentence structure for effect?
(a) Waves. Endless waves, rolling in from a horizon that never came closer.
(b) There were waves.
(c) The waves were waves.
(d) Waves came and went and came. **(a) Waves. Endless waves, rolling in from a horizon that never came closer.**

9 Which opening hooks the reader of an article?
(a) This article is about a town.
(b) Imagine a town where nobody under twenty has anywhere to go after school.
(c) I am writing this article.
(d) Towns are places. **(b) Imagine a town where nobody under twenty has anywhere to go after school.**

10 Which closing line has the strongest impact?
(a) That is the end.
(b) Then I went to bed.
(c) And so the house waited, as it always had, for someone to come home.
(d) So that was the house. **(c) And so the house waited, as it always had, for someone to come home.**

11 Which verb is most precise?
(a) The car went off the road.
(b) The car moved off the road.
(c) The car got off the road.
(d) The car careered off the road. **(d) The car careered off the road.**

C. Stretch

12 Which uses an **extended metaphor**?
(a) The city was a beast: its streets were veins, its traffic a restless pulse.
(b) The city was big.
(c) The city was like a city.
(d) The city was busy and loud. **(a) The city was a beast: its streets were veins, its traffic a restless pulse.**

13 Which is most concise and controlled?
(a) She sat down because she was exhausted and tired and needed to sit down.
(b) Exhausted, she sat down.
(c) She was exhausted so she sat down because she was tired.
(d) Sitting down, she sat, exhausted, down. **(b) Exhausted, she sat down.**

14 Which rhetorical question works best in an article?
(a) Are libraries a thing?
(b) What is a library?
(c) If we will not protect our libraries, who will?
(d) Do you like books or not? **(c) If we will not protect our libraries, who will?**

15 Which is correct?
(a) Me and him went to the shop.
(b) Him and me went to the shop.
(c) Him and I went to the shop.
(d) He and I went to the shop. **(d) He and I went to the shop.**

16 Which suits a formal letter?
(a) I would be grateful if you could consider this proposal.
(b) Please sort this out asap.
(c) Can you just do it?
(d) This proposal is well good. **(a) I would be grateful if you could consider this proposal.**