

Cambridge IGCSE / IGCSE (9-1) / O Level Literature in English (for examination from 2028)

The aim of this video is to give you and your learners a breakdown of how Assessment Objective 3 is assessed. However, remember that for each candidate answer, all four assessment objectives are considered by the examiner. The best candidate responses will consider all four when answering the question.

Prose Assessment Objective 3

AO3: Analyse ways in which writers use language, structure and form to create meanings and achieve effects. Here are some notes

Notes

Think of a movie you know and enjoy, perhaps one you have watched more than once.

Now, think of a part in that movie that makes you feel happy, or sad, or frightened. Now think about how and why that scene makes you feel happy, sad or frightened.

- What is it about that part of the movie that makes you feel this way?
- What has the director done to evoke that emotion in you?

You will have probably concluded that the feeling you experience when you watch that particular scene is brought about by the use of sound, dialogue, setting, events, lighting, and character behaviour and relationships (and of course special effects).

While watching a film, each of these things act upon us and stir our emotions and thoughts in relation to what is happening on screen. These are the tools that are used to engage the audience and tell the story.

So, what has all this got to do with responding to prose texts?

Well, when we read a text, the writer manipulates our emotions and thoughts in relation to the events that are unfolding. Instead of using the audio and visual tools, writers use a range of language and structural devices to create effects upon us. The effects of these language and structure devices affect how we feel towards, and understand, the meanings of a text, the significance of settings, the senses of atmosphere created and the development of characters and their relationships.

In terms of the mark scheme, we need to fulfil Assessment Objective 3 (along with AO1, AO2 and AO4). That means we must recognise and appreciate ways in which writers use language, structure and form to create and shape meanings and effects.

What does it mean really?

Basically, to satisfy this assessment objective, we must focus on analysing how the writer's use of language and structure devices makes the reader feel about events, characters, relationships between characters, settings and the senses of atmosphere created.

Here is a list of some of the language and structure devices writers use in order to affect our feelings and thoughts as they tell their stories.

Notes

In order to maximise our marks, we should always try to select quotations that allow us to discuss the effects of these things when responding to the examination questions. If we use quotations which contain relevant and effective language devices, then our explanations and analysis of them should also be relevant and effective.

Language devices

- Interesting adjectives
- Powerful adverbs
- Simile
- Metaphor
- Personification
- Alliteration
- Oxymoron
- Repetition
- Hyperbole
- Reported speech

Structure devices

- Sentence structures
- Paragraph length
- Use of flashback
- Narrative voice (i.e. first or third perspective)
- Dramatic irony
- Foreshadowing

Let's have a look at a passage from Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre* to see if we can begin to identify suitable quotations that could help us answer the following question:

How does Brontë develop Jane Eyre's isolation and fear in the following passage?

The passage is taken from Chapter 2 from 'Daylight began to forsake the red-room...' to '...the key turned, Bessie and Abbot entered.'

Let's look at how Brontë creates effects upon the reader through her use of language. There is not much opportunity here to discuss the use of structural devices. However, the fact that Brontë chose to begin the story when Jane was young and mistreated by her cousins and her Aunt, Mrs. Reed, is significant. The story would have a different effect and so would our feelings of empathy with Jane, had the story begun when Jane was in her twenties.

Therefore, how Brontë begins the story in Jane's youth to secure a deep emotional bond between the reader and this character is worthy of a brief structural point, perhaps in a short paragraph after your introduction. Let's see if we can include that a bit later on when we consider how we can go about developing our written responses to this passage-based question.

Notes

Let's try and select quotations from this passage that will help us answer this question.

What to think about when selecting quotations from the text:

- Do I understand what the quotation means?
- Does the quotation help me answer the question?
- How does the quotation help me to explain something about character, events, themes, settings and/or atmosphere in relation to the question?
- Does the quotation contain interesting vocabulary choices and/or imagery that will help me explore the different effects the writer has created?

'I heard the rain still beating continuously on the staircase window, and the wind howling in the grove behind the hall; I grew by degrees cold as a stone, and then my courage sank.'

'In such a vault I had been told did Mr. Reed lie buried; and led by this thought to recall this idea, I dwelt on it with gathering dread.'

'It must have been most irksome to find herself bound by a hard-wrung pledge to stand in the stead of a parent to a strange child she could not love, and to see an uncongenial alien permanently intruded on her own family group.'

'My heart beat thick, my head grew hot; a sound filled my ears, which I deemed the rushing of wings; something seemed near me; I was oppressed, suffocated; endurance broke down; I rushed to the door and shook the lock in desperate effort.'

Here are some quotations that are very central to the passage. Did you select any of these?

It is okay if you did not, as there is always a range of evidence available for you to choose. However, some of the evidence available is better than others. If you used the criteria on how to select effective quotations, then you will have at least one of these.

Consider these quotations in relation to the ones you have selected, and the criteria we used for selecting quotations.

Remember you do not get any marks for retelling the story.

Some of these quotations are quite large, and too long to include in an essay. After all, we don't want to waste words in the 45 minutes we have to respond to the essay question during the examination.

So instead of quoting each long sentence you could choose to use parts of the quotation. For example, you could just use the phrases highlighted in bold.

'My heart beat thick, my head grew hot; a sound filled my ears, which I deemed the rushing of wings; something seemed near me; **I was oppressed, suffocated;** endurance broke down; I **rushed** to the door and **shook the lock in desperate effort.'**

In this way, we will be able to keep our writing very specific, and focus in on commenting upon the effects created by Brontë's use of language.

However, what would this paragraph look like?

Here is an example of what such a response could look like.

Take a moment to read this carefully (with your mark schemes).

Notes

The isolation and fear that Jane feels in the red-room climaxes when she sees the light from the lantern. 'My heart beat thick, my head grew hot;' emphasises the pure terror that she endures as she imagines that it is her dead uncle's spirit visiting her. It conveys her absolute fear as she is deeply distressed and alone; thus, creating great sympathy for her. 'I was oppressed, suffocated;' emphasises her isolation as the pronouns 'my' and 'I' remind us she is alone and vulnerable. Also, she is physically suffering here as she cannot breathe; emphasising her panic and helplessness. 'rushed' reinforces these feelings of terror as she acts in a sudden and uncontrolled way. 'shook the lock in desperate effort.' also highlights her fear as she has lost control and battles to open the door even though she knows it is securely locked. The contrasting long vowel sounds and harder consonant sounds convey her loneliness and fear as they add a soft, but urgent helplessness to her tone. This long sentence, with its sudden pauses of punctuation, adds a jerky tension and breathlessness that helps convey her fear too.

What are the strengths and weaknesses of this paragraph?

Try to use a mixture of your own comments and comments from the mark scheme as you answer this question.

Not all of your paragraphs have to be this long. The length of your paragraphs will always depend on the length of the quotation you are using. This is an example of a way you could respond to satisfy our assessment objectives in detail but remain concise and focused without wasting words.

So how does this response satisfy Assessment Objective 3?

Let's take a look at these highlighted parts.

The isolation and fear that Jane feels in the red-room climaxes when she sees the light from the lantern. 'My heart beat thick, my head grew hot;' emphasises the pure terror that she endures as she imagines that it is her dead uncle's spirit visiting her. It conveys her absolute fear as she is deeply distressed and alone; thus, creating great sympathy for her. 'I was oppressed, suffocated;' emphasises her isolation as the pronouns 'my' and 'I' remind us she is alone and vulnerable. She is physically suffering here as she cannot breathe; emphasising her panic and helplessness. 'rushed' reinforces these feelings of terror as she reacts in a sudden and uncontrolled way. 'shook the lock in desperate effort.' highlights her fear as she has lost control and battles to open the door even though she knows it is securely locked. The contrasting long vowel sounds and harder consonant sounds convey her loneliness and fear as they add a soft, but urgent helplessness to her tone. This long sentence, with its sudden pauses of punctuation, adds a jerky tension and breathlessness that helps convey her fear too.

- Recognised ways in which the writer has used language to create and shape meanings and effects

Notes

- Appreciated how the writer has used language to create and shape meanings and effects
- Recognised ways in which the writer has used structure to create and shape meanings and effects
- Appreciated how the writer has used structure to create and shape meanings and effects

In these parts you can see that the candidate has:

- in yellow, recognised ways in which the writer has used language to create and shape meanings and effects
- in green, appreciated how the writer has used language to create and shape meanings and effects
- in pink, recognised ways in which the writer has used structure to create and shape meanings and effects
- in blue, appreciated how the writer has used structure to create and shape meanings and effects.

The introductory sentence is an explanation and helps satisfy Assessment Objective 1 and Assessment Objective 2 more than it does Assessment Objective 3. In addition, the whole paragraph 'communicates a sensitive and informed personal response (of the writer's intended meanings and ideas)' thus satisfying Assessment Objective 4 too.