

Component 1, Section B: Creative prose writing

In Section B of Component 1, you will be asked to write creatively and imaginatively. You will choose one creative writing task from a choice of four. You will need to narrate or describe a story in a creative, engaging way with careful use of grammar, punctuation and spelling.

What exactly must I do?

You will have 45 minutes to write your story, with 10 minutes spent on planning and 35 minutes writing. You should aim to write about 450–600 words. You need to use language creatively and imaginatively, organise your story clearly and use grammar, punctuation and spelling as correctly as possible.

You will have four options to choose from. Some of these will be a very open title, such as 'The Celebration' or 'Winning the Prize'. Others will give you a scenario, such as, 'Write about a time when you were embarrassed'. Another option may be a story opening, such as 'Write a story which begins "I hadn't been to this particular shop before and I was starting to realise why ..."'.

Planning

Your plan should allow you to sequence and organise your work. For narrative writing, a good plan should consider the following elements:

- 1 Opening (this should immediately engage the reader)
- 2 Development of events (something happens)
- 3 Main event (the events that occur as a result of Point 2)
- 4 Result (the end of the main action)
- 5 Ending (a reflection on the events or a link back to the beginning).

Here are some example writing tasks:

- a) 'The Test'
- b) 'My Big Moment'
- c) Write about a time when you had to speak in front of others.
- d) Write a story that begins: 'The parcel was waiting for me when I got home. I had no idea who had sent it.'



ACTIVITY 1

Practise planning for one of the writing tasks above. Use separate paper if you want to practise all four.

● Opening

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● Development of events

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ACTIVITY CONTINUES ➔

- Main event

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- Result

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- Ending

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Openings



ACTIVITY 2

Practise the opening of your story in different ways.

1 Open with a line or two of dialogue.

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2 Open with a descriptive passage.

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3 Open with a dramatic moment from somewhere in the story (flash forward).

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Endings



ACTIVITY 3

Now practise the ending of your story in different ways.

- 1 End with a line or two of dialogue.

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- 2 End with a summary of how you felt at the end (linking back to the start if possible).

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- 3 End with a hint that the story is not quite finished.

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Character



ACTIVITY 4

Take a character from your plan and make notes on the following:

- 1 Their appearance

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- 2 Their personality

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- 3 The way they speak

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4 How they behave

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5 What others think of them

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ACTIVITY 5

Now take one idea from each category in Activity 4 and think about how you can show the reader rather than tell them about this trait. An example has been provided to give you the idea.

Character trait	Show don't tell version
<i>Ross was tall.</i>	<i>Ross' head sported a permanent bruise as a result of a lifetime of bumping it on the top of door frames.</i>

Narrative perspective



ACTIVITY 6

Try writing a section of your story from the first person ('I ...') and from the third person (He/She ...) perspective.

1 First person

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2 Third person

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3 What are the differences between the two approaches?

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Using dialogue

Remember that if you use dialogue in your story it should be limited and should be punctuated correctly. Note where the commas and full stops appear in this template:

'First person's line of dialogue,' <FIRST NAME> said/murmured/shouted, etc.

<SECOND NAME> retorted/replied, etc., 'Second person's line of dialogue.'

'First person's second line of dialogue.'

'Second person's second line of dialogue.'



ACTIVITY 7

Now write some dialogue that you could include in your story. Use the template above if you need to.

The senses



ACTIVITY 8

Think about where your story will be set. (Limit this to one or two settings.) Focusing on the senses below, write a sentence to indicate the setting you have chosen.

1 Sounds

2 Smells

3 Touch

Vocabulary



ACTIVITY 9

Add some interesting adjectives, verbs and adverbs to this passage by filling in the gaps.

Ross breathed out (adverb). He really didn't want to go to this party.

He knew that everyone would stare at him and he would end up

(verb) in the corner, smiling (adverb) at people who

..... (verb) past, keeping their heads down to avoid his gaze.

No. It wasn't worth it. He made up his mind.

'I've decided,' he (verb) to his (adjective)

mother. 'I'm not going.'



ACTIVITY 10

Think of five things your characters will do (verbs). Think of improved vocabulary choices for each of them and also add an adverb. An example has been provided.

Verb	Improved verb	Adverb
walked	sauntered	confidently



ACTIVITY 11

Read the following sentence from a student's story. Identify the incorrect uses of tenses and alter them so that the story is all in the present tense. (Cross out the wrong tenses and write the corrected version above each one.)

And so, here I were a week later, waiting at the front of the hall (so much smaller than in my mind) sat awkwardly on a primary school chair that was significantly too small for me.

**ACTIVITY 12**

Below are some common mistakes that students often make when writing narrative pieces. Read the six sentences below.

- 1 All the mothers were chatting as they waited for the children to emerge through the school gates.
- 2 The delicious stench from the canteen drifted over my salivating nostrils.
- 3 The shouting of teenagers. The screams of girls. Adults trying to keep control.
- 4 The playground was suddenly overrun with zombies. They chased the terrified children around the confined space, hungry for flesh.
- 5 All I could see were the bright lights. I could hear loud music. I could smell delicious hot dogs and onions.
- 6 The hectic, buzzing and energetically lively playground was vibrantly, delightfully and ecstatically alive with the spirited piercing screams of excited and screechy children.

In the table below match the sentences with these common mistakes:

- a) 'Overblown' writing
- b) Inappropriate or inaccurate vocabulary
- c) Verbless sentence
- d) Unrealistic and inappropriate details
- e) Generalisation
- f) Overreliance on the senses as a 'formula' for writing

1	2	3	4	5	6

Grammar, punctuation and spelling

**ACTIVITY 13**

- 1 Write three simple sentences (one clause each) to show someone who is nervous about entering an abandoned building.

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- 2 Write two compound sentences (simple sentences linked by a connecting word such as 'and', 'but', 'so', etc.) to describe the abandoned building.

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ACTIVITY CONTINUES



- 3 Write a complex sentence (using clauses that would not make sense on their own) to show how the person feels when exploring the abandoned building.

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- 4 Write a question that could be used in the description of the above.

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- 5 Write a three-word sentence that sums up how they feel.

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- 6 Write a sentence containing a simile or metaphor to show how anxious and nervous they are.

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- 7 Write one line of speech that could be included.

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- 8 Write a sentence that ends in an ellipsis ...

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Extended practice

Use the exercises in Activity 13 to write a short paragraph about someone entering an abandoned building. Mix up the sentence types, but include them all. Reflect on whether it is effective and if you could use some of these in your exam writing.

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ACTIVITY 14

- 1 Add the capital letters, full stops and commas to this student's paragraph.

When we got back home the whole family was there to greet us a huge banner had been placed across the front of the house announcing my arrival aunts uncles and cousins i barely recognised hugged and kissed me it was all rather sickening

- 2 Write the correct use of the apostrophe by rewriting the word in the gap provided.

He couldn't believe his luck! The day of the exam and the alarm clock hadn't gone off! His mother's voice bellowed up the stairs: 'Sam! Your going to be late!'

- 3 Put question or exclamation marks into the right places:

- No way
- Are you sure
- How's your head this morning
- Stop right now
- Will you listen

- 4 Punctuate this dialogue:

Who are you I asked

Don't you remember the woman enquired

I wouldn't ask if I did I retorted

It's me. I caused your accident.

ACTIVITY CONTINUES



5 Add colons and semi-colons to the following:

The school was deserted the classrooms were empty of noise with half-completed work on the desks overturned chairs where there had been a scramble to leave and bags and coats still under desks. As he proceeded down the corridor, Joe's footsteps echoed eerily back at him announcing one thing he was totally alone.

Extended practice

Write a description of a busy school at break time. Try to include all the punctuation marks you have practised in Activity 14.

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**ACTIVITY 15**

Test yourself by spotting the common mistakes and writing the correct version alongside the following:

- 1 definately
- 2 independant
- 3 uneccesary
- 4 embarressing
- 5 dissapear
- 6 tommorrow
- 7 arguement
- 8 seperate

ACTIVITY CONTINUES 

9. acomodation
- 10 busness
- 11 monkiez
- 12 trys
- 13 churchs



ACTIVITY 16

Circle the correct words that are needed in each sentence.

- 1 (There / Their / They're) is (to / too / two) much butter on this toast.
- 2 Are you going (to / too / two) the cinema later?
- 3 (There / Their / They're) house is the one with the (to / too / two) gates.
- 4 I need to collect (your / you're) books tomorrow.
- 5 (There / Their / They're) the best group of children I have ever taught.



ACTIVITY 17

Read the following two student responses to:

Write about an occasion when someone unexpectedly comes into some money.

[40]

Response A

The boy sat on the cracked, plastic seat of the bus shelter. His shoulders sagged and he felt the heavy weight of his head pulling his whole body forward as sleep battled to take hold. The crush of people around him only served to provide warmth and the chatter of many in the crowd was a lullaby: enticing him to sleep.

Suddenly, the boy was awake. The shelter felt different: cold and unwelcoming. He suddenly noticed the acrid stench of urine that pervaded the shelter. With a groan, he heaved himself off the hard, plastic ridged seat and as he did so, his foot knocked against a plain brown envelope. The boy's heart raced as he gingerly bent over to pick it up. His numb fingers could barely prize apart the paper, but when he did so, a flash of colour illuminated his face. Twenty-pound notes. Wads of them. He whistled involuntarily.



ACTIVITY CONTINUES



Response B

My mum was watching TV. She had her lottery ticket in her lap. She was excited as the numbers rolled out of the machine.

4 – 23 – 14 – 17 – 39 – 62.

'Oh my god!' she shouted! 'I've won! I've won!' She was so excited that I thought her head would burst.

Now we live in a huge house with 6 bedrooms and 4 bathrooms and we have everything we want.

Which is the most effective story in your opinion?

Outline three ways in which each writer has tried to engage the reader.

Response A

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Response B

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**ACTIVITY 18**

Read the following extracts from student responses to the task:

Write about something unexpected happening in an ordinary visit to the supermarket.

[40]

Response A

Unable to face the queue of dreary shoppers (particularly the mother with a towering trolley and crying baby) I knew the time had come. I had to face the self-service till. An impatient shop assistant pointed gormlessly to the vacant machine and I smiled my thanks before heading over to the mechanical menace.

'How many bags are you using?' was the first of a series of questions.

This seemed innocuous enough. None. (I only had a dry looking sandwich and an overpriced bottle of orange juice.) I punched the '0' button.

I breathed a sigh of relief. This was going well. I was gaining in confidence.

'Please scan your first item.'

I passed my sandwiches in front of the laser beam and heard the satisfying beep.

'Please place the item in the bagging area.' The monotonous, overly friendly drone was starting to grate on my nerves. Nevertheless, I complied and put my egg and cress delight on the silver plated surface.

ACTIVITY CONTINUES ➔

'Unexpected item in baggage area.' I was sure I could hear a tone of satisfaction in the electronic voice.

I swore under my breath. It had all been going so well.

Response B

The till was glowing in the dark supermarket. It looked evil, like a robot from Doctor Who. I stepped casually in front of it and it asked me to scan my goods. I did this and there was a high pitched beep. I put the item in my bag and fed my coins into the slot. I heard them fall with a clunk and I was reminded of the arcade at the seaside.

Response C

I seen the machine was a screen at eye level and a scanner below. The screen was glossy and reminded me of a computer screen I herd an electronic voice ask me to scan my item. I swung it in front and heard the beep. i put it in the bag.

Match up the responses with the comments from the examiner below. What advice would you give to the piece in most need of improvement?

Examiner comment 1

While there are some effective words and phrases used in this piece, there is an uneasy sense of place that doesn't quite seem realistic. There are some odd vocabulary choices and the language is not always well-chosen.

Which response does this match?

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How can the student's response be improved?

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Examiner comment 2

This is quite a straightforward piece of writing. There is an apt sense of description but this is quite underdeveloped. There are some basic spelling and grammar issues.

Which response does this match?

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How can the student's response be improved?

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ACTIVITY CONTINUES



Examiner comment 3

This piece really engages the reader with a strong sense of place and audience. The student uses a range of ambitious vocabulary. There is a realism about the description but slightly heightened for comic effect – this is done deliberately and with purpose.

Which response does this match?

How can the student's response be improved?

Extended practice

Go back to your original plan at the start of this unit and write a full version of your narrative.

Or, if you prefer, select a new title from the options below:

- a) 'The Journey'
- b) 'My Proudest Moment'
- c) Write about a time when you had to speak in front of others.
- d) Write a story that begins: 'When I opened that door, I had no idea what was about to happen.'

Extended practice continues ➡

Handwriting practice area with 20 sets of three horizontal lines (top solid, middle dashed, bottom solid) for writing practice.