

## **Standard Grade Close Reading: Some Advice**

### **Own Words questions:**

Never copy words that can be changed. For example:

The boy had a sullen expression and a pig-like nose.

He had a sad face and a nose that stuck up the way.

Go through the following steps:     Underline the section you think the answer is in.

Change the words that can be changed- in your head

Check that the MEANING is still the same

Check that there are no copied words

### **Explain fully/explain in detail questions:**

You must give as much information as possible, again using as many of your own words as possible. If you quote you will receive no marks! This question is usually broken down into 2-1-0 and it is very easy to lose quite a few marks for not writing the full answer. Keep reading on until you are sure you have all the information you require.

### **Write down a word/an expression:**

This is the only time you are allowed to copy from the passage. You MUST quote! If it asks for one word then only one should be written. If you write more than a word then you will score nothing! The box in the exam paper will usually remind you of this:

However, if you are asked to write down an expression, then you need to quote 2-3 words. Any more and you score nothing- so be very careful.

### **Understanding the meaning questions:**

These are the most straightforward. They are literally testing that you understand what the author is writing about. They come in many different forms, like 'in your own words' (see above) but can also be written as follows:

Write down three things that show the girl was happy with school.

In this case you would need to find the three things and write them all down- trying to use some of your own words if you can.

The marks work as follows:

All 3 things correct = 2 marks / 2 things correct = 1 mark/ 1 thing correct = 0 marks

In recent papers the examiners have been asking for 4 things in some questions!

### Sentence structure questions:

These are expecting you to identify common features of sentence structure and depending on whether it is Credit/General/Foundation suggest why the feature(s) have been used. The most common are:

- Long (complex) sentences to create a build up of suspense (climax) or to convey a relaxed mood or slow pace. For example:

The man walked up the stairs, creak by creak, opened the first door, waited for the tapping to stop and then entered the darkened room.

- Short sentences or minor sentences: These can be used to create suspense or produce a climax to what has come before. A minor sentence is one that does not contain a verb. For example:

Nothing. ← There was nothing left.

- Listing can also be used to build up suspense. It is used at times to show a lot of something. For example:

'She had many chores to do: wash the clothes; mend the socks; clean the floor and scrub the bathroom.'

Show how the writer's sentence structure creates the impression of how busy Daisy was. 2-1-0

You would answer that a list was used, introduced by a colon. The items in the list were separated by semi-colons and the number of them conveyed the idea that she had a lot to do.

You must know what colons and semi-colons are used for.

### **Other punctuation features:**

- The single dash - This can create a pause, cut off speech or add extra information at the end of a sentence to create more impact.
- The double dash acts as brackets (also known as parenthesis).
- Parenthesis can look like: ( ) or , , or - -

Remember that.

Parenthesis (brackets, two commas or two dashes) are used to add extra information about the main topic of the sentence.

For Credit and General you must state what that information is and what it relates to. For example:

*"My mother (whose name is Linda) has a flower shop." Brackets are used here to add extra information about the mother's name.*

- Exclamation Marks! Used to show strength of feeling – passion, anger, annoyance and when someone is surprised or is shouting.
- Ellipsis: The three dots ... These can be used at the end of a paragraph or passage to show that things might continue, or to encourage the reader to think more about/beyond what the writer has said.

They can also be used in the middle of a sentence to show a pause or some confusion/indecision on the part of the narrator. For example:

I got up...yes, I got up...I think at three. Then I felt...well...kind of dizzy...

- Repetition: Words or the structure of a sentence can be repeated. This is usually to reinforce the content of what is being said, or to create a certain mood or feeling.

Sad. I felt sad. What made me sad was the rain.

How does the writer emphasise the character's feelings?

*The writer uses a minor sentence and repetition to focus on the fact that he felt unhappy.*

- Inversion: When the word order in a sentence is opposite to what you would expect. This changes the focus of the sentence. For example:

1. The flames leapt up and up.    2. Up and up leapt the flames.

In number one the focus is the flames. In the second sentence the focus is the way they moved.

### **Other Language Features:**

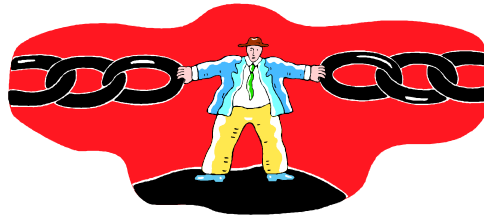
- Jargon- fancy or technical language used by the writer to convey necessary information about a topic. For example: hard drive, memory key, back-up system- all jargon to do with computers.
- Hyperbole- a major exaggeration. 'My bag weighs a stone.' 'He is as light as a feather.' This is used to create emphasis on the point being made and sometimes to add humour.
- Simile/Metaphor/Onomatopoeia/Alliteration/Personification

Be sure of what these are. If you are asked why an image/simile etc is effective you must explain what the literal object or situation actually is and compare that to the simile.

*The football team are described as though they are an army of soldiers heading into battle. The similarities are that they are both in 'uniform', both on a field and both ready to win.*

### Linking Sentence Question

Sometimes you will be asked about the **FUNCTION** of a sentence as a **LINK** to two separate parts of the passage. Image it like links in a chain:



The linking sentence is the man- pulling both parts of the passage together. Imagine that you are reading a passage about football.

The first section is about the history of the game and the second focuses on the game today. You might see a sentence something like this:

‘While football originated in muddy fields centuries ago, the game today has much more hype and celebrity about it.’

Show how the function of this sentence acts as a link.

You must (a) find the quote that talks about what has been

‘While football originated in muddy fields’

Then, state what it refers back to. In this case: the origin/history of football

Then (b) find the quote that mentions what is about to be spoken about

‘the game today has much more hype and celebrity about it.’

Then, state that it introduces the new topic/argument. In this case, modern day football.

For full marks you should have → ‘quote’ refers back to + what topic was

→ ‘quote’ introduces + what new topic is.

### End Question - ‘the passage as a whole...’:

If you are asked to give ‘close reference to the text’ it means quote from the passage and comment in appropriate detail on the quote.