YEAR 10

Edexcel Paper 1: Reading Fiction

Pitched at Pearson Edexcel GCSE English Language. Three parts that get harder: how the paper works, the skills on a real extract, then top-band thinking. The extract is real Dickens, from 1861, as Paper 1 always uses a 19th-century text.

From Great Expectations by Charles Dickens, published in 1861. Pip, a young orphan, is visiting his parents' graves in the churchyard near his home on the Kent marshes.

Ours was the marsh country, down by the river, within, as the river wound, twenty miles of the sea. My first most vivid and broad impression of the identity of things seems to me to have been gained on a memorable raw afternoon towards evening. At such a time I found out for certain that this bleak place overgrown with nettles was the churchyard; and that Philip Pirrip, late of this parish, and also Georgiana wife of the above, were dead and buried; and that Alexander, Bartholomew, Abraham, Tobias, and Roger, infant children of the aforesaid, were also dead and buried; and that the dark flat wilderness beyond the churchyard, intersected with dikes and mounds and gates, with scattered cattle feeding on it, was the marshes; and that the low leaden line beyond was the river; and that the distant savage lair from which the wind was rushing was the sea; and that the small bundle of shivers growing afraid of it all and beginning to cry, was Pip.

"Hold your noise!" cried a terrible voice, as a man started up from among the graves at the side of the church porch. "Keep still, you little devil, or I'll cut your throat!"

A fearful man, all in coarse grey, with a great iron on his leg. A man with no hat, and with broken shoes, and

with an old rag tied round his head. A man who had been soaked in water, and smothered in mud, and lamed by stones, and cut by flints, and stung by nettles, and torn by briars; who limped, and shivered, and glared, and growled; and whose teeth chattered in his head as he seized me by the chin.

"Oh! Don't cut my throat, sir," I pleaded in terror. "Pray don't do it, sir."

"Tell us your name!" said the man. "Quick!"

"Pip, sir."

Name: Date: Score:

A. Warm-up

Know the paper: four reading questions, stepped from 1 mark to 15.

1. Paper 1 Section A is reading an unseen extract from
   (a) a modern newspaper article
   (b) a poem
   (c) a 19th-century novel or story
   (d) a Shakespeare play

2. How many marks is Question 4, the evaluation question?

3. How many marks is Question 3, on language and structure?

4. In Question 3, if you write about language only and not structure,
   (a) you lose no marks
   (b) you still get full marks if the points are good
   (c) the answer is not read
   (d) your mark is capped at a low level

5 Question 1, worth 1 mark, asks you to
(a) pick out a word or phrase from the given lines
(b) write a full paragraph
(c) compare two texts
(d) write a story

B. Where you should be now

Questions 1 and 2: find precisely, then give two clear ways.

6 From paragraph 1, which phrase shows the churchyard is unwelcoming?
(a) down by the river
(b) this bleak place overgrown with nettles
(c) twenty miles of the sea
(d) Philip Pirrip, late of this parish

7 At the end of paragraph 1, how does Pip describe himself?
(a) a terrible voice
(b) a fearful man
(c) the small bundle of shivers
(d) the low leaden line

8 Question 2 style: which pair are both ways the man is made frightening in paragraph 3?
(a) He wears a fine hat; he speaks kindly
(b) He is clean; he is calm
(c) He is rich; he smiles
(d) He has a great iron on his leg; he glares and growls

9 'a great iron on his leg' tells a Victorian reader the man is
(a) an escaped prisoner
(b) a blacksmith
(c) a soldier
(d) a farmer

10 Paragraph 1 is one long sentence built from ‘and that’. The structural effect is
(a) it hurries the reader to the end
(b) Pip piles up the bleak details as he realises them, ending on himself
(c) it shows Pip is bored
(d) it introduces the convict

11 “Hold your noise!” opens paragraph 2. This structural shift
(a) slows the story down
(b) returns to the start
(c) breaks the quiet description with sudden danger
(d) explains the setting

C. Stretch

Questions 3 and 4: language AND structure, then judge how well it works.

12 ‘the distant savage lair from which the wind was rushing’ presents the sea as
(a) a calm harbour
(b) a busy town
(c) a warm home
(d) a wild animal’s den

13 Paragraph 3 repeats ‘A man’ and lists what he has suffered. The effect is
(a) to show how much he has suffered and how wild he looks
(b) to show he is a gentleman
(c) to slow the reader with facts
(d) to make him seem funny

14 Why does Pip call his younger self ‘the small bundle of shivers’?
(a) Someone else is speaking
(b) The older narrator looks back on himself as small and helpless
(c) Pip is wrapped in a blanket
(d) It is a different character

15 Which word best describes the atmosphere of paragraph 1?

(a) Cheerful

(b) Busy

(c) Desolate

(d) Luxurious

16 Which is the best opening for a Question 4 evaluation?

(a) Dickens uses lots of techniques in this extract.

(b) This extract is about a boy called Pip.

(c) I think the extract is good because it is scary.

(d) Dickens successfully makes us fear for Pip by setting a tiny, crying child against a vast, savage landscape.