



AQA GCSE English Language Paper 1

Model Answer

AQA GCSE English Language Paper 1 - Explorations in creative reading and writing

2. In this extract, the writer uses vivid and striking language to show how overwhelming the heat has become for Mary. The heat is described as "an obsession", suggesting that it controls not only her physical comfort but also her thoughts, becoming a dominating and intrusive force in her daily life.

Moreover, the description of "heat-waves beating up out of the hot stone" uses the violent verb "beat" to present the heat as aggressive and almost alive. This makes the environment feel hostile. The simile "like flames", used to describe the colourful lizards darting across the rocks, reinforces this sense of burning intensity. The lizards' bright colours create a surreal atmosphere, as though the heat distorts reality around her.

Inside the house, the heat is described as "sapping" and "undermining", two present participles that emphasise its steady, draining nature. It is not a sudden discomfort but something continuous, wearing her down emotionally and physically. The dogs' "panting" and "whining" add sensory detail that shows how all living creatures are suffering; even the normally energetic animals have been subdued by the heat.

Mary's desperation is further shown through the image of her pouring water from a petrol tin. This detail suggests improvised survival and highlights how extreme the heat has become. The floor "hissed with dryness" personifies the brick, making the environment seem so parched that it reacts as though alive. The hissing sound creates an impression of danger and further emphasises the hostile atmosphere.



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The sentence structures also help to communicate the heaviness of the heat. Longer, descriptive sentences slow the pace, mirroring Mary's exhaustion, while shorter statements convey her immediate struggle and inability to cope.

Overall, through vivid imagery, strong vocabulary and careful use of sentence forms, the writer presents the heat as an oppressive, almost antagonistic force that dominates Mary's surroundings and steadily destroys her sense of comfort and stability.

3. At the beginning of the source, the writer focuses our attention on Mary's physical suffering and restlessness in the heat. We see her moving between rooms with nothing to do, which immediately creates a sense of frustration and monotony. This introduces a tense, uncomfortable atmosphere that hooks the reader.

As the extract develops, the writer shifts the focus outward to the surrounding environment, describing the "giant boulders", heat-waves and bright lizards. This widening of perspective shows how the entire landscape feels harsh and oppressive, not just Mary's home. The movement between inside and outside mirrors Mary's own inability to escape the heat, reinforcing her sense of entrapment.



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The focus then narrows to smaller details, such as the dog's panting and Mary pouring lukewarm water over herself in secret. These domestic moments reveal how desperate she is becoming, and they increase the reader's concern for her.

Towards the end, the focus shifts again to conflict when Dick discovers Mary's use of water. This change in pace, from description to argument, keeps the reader engaged by adding emotional tension. The extract ends with Dick apologising, creating a circular structure: just as Mary's day repeats, so does the pattern in their relationship.

Overall, the writer maintains interest by shifting focus between Mary's internal state, the hostile environment, and moments of conflict, creating a sense of pressure and instability throughout the source.

4. I agree largely that Dick's anger is unfair and that the writer presents Mary as powerless. Mary's actions come from genuine suffering: she is overwhelmed by the heat, and pouring water over herself is her only escape. The reader understands this, so Dick's reaction with "incredulous horror" seems excessive and insensitive. His rhetorical challenge, "What are you using it for?", positions her as someone who must justify herself, highlighting the imbalance in their relationship.

Dick's long explanation of the cost of water and the labour involved firmly shifts the power towards him. His repeated command, "Listen to me", shows him asserting authority, speaking "angrily" in a way he has never done before. Mary, on the other hand, is given no space to argue back; the structure of the dialogue is dominated by Dick's voice, emphasising her lack of control.



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The emotional dynamic also reinforces her powerlessness. Although she becomes "furious", she cannot express her anger because Dick quickly apologises. This sudden shift traps her in a cycle of forgiving him instead of resolving her own feelings. The ending, where his apology "soothed her", suggests she has learned to accept small gestures instead of any real change. This circular pattern mirrors her lack of agency throughout the extract.

Overall, the writer strongly encourages the reader to view Dick's anger as unjustified and to see Mary as trapped in a relationship where she has little emotional or practical influence.