

GCSE ENGLISH LANGUAGE

CPD AUTUMN 2017

COMPONENT 1 EXEMPLAR MATERIAL
(UNANNOTATED)

Answer 1

A3

The writer shows that Megan does not enjoy the journey through the use of continual negative description. For example, she says the station was 'grimy.' Also she uses alliteration and similes together 'like a cattle car' to convey how Megan felt about this experience of squashing into a train. The writer also incorporates varied sentence lengths like 'nobody spoke' to draw attention to the fact that Megan thought that was quite weird. The writer also shows that Megan did not enjoy the journey by saying she was 'swallowed instantly by a churning mass of people'. The writer emphasises that Megan 'had never seen so many people' to show that she is very new to this environment of lots of people and so the reader understands how she is feeling. She did not enjoy it because she is by herself. The writer describes the scene at the station almost like a horror story as there were 'doors slamming, whistles shrieking.' This intensifies Megan's feeling of not enjoying this journey.

Answer 2

A3

In these lines we see that Megan thinks London is a rather strange and scary place. She clearly did not like the number of people rushing around her. Because so many passengers squeezed on to one train she describes the train as some sort of `cattle car`. Megan is probably wondering why everybody boards the same train and surely it was easier for some to wait for the next train.

`Megan stepped down onto the platform and was swallowed instantly`. This shows how busy London actually is and also shows us that Megan is not a fan of being around so many people at once. `Someone bumped into her, hard, and gave her an exasperated look.` I think this is where Megan feels most afraid because she isn't used to such an open and overcrowded environment.

Answer 3

A3

The writer shows that Megan does not enjoy the journey to London by the use of negative, graphic vocabulary to describe its features such as 'the grimy station', which present a rather unappealing and unwelcoming image. The writer adds to this by presenting Londoners as cold people as they 'stood hard up against each other' yet 'nobody spoke', showing how self-absorbed and uncommunicative they are. The 'fat man' who sits beside her leaves his legs 'sticking out sideways' into the aisle and the writer presents him as a rather intrusive, intimidating character.

The writer presents the journey as uncomfortable by referring to the people as a 'churning mass' and the train is so packed that it resembles a 'cattle car'. The use of alliteration and simile implies the vast quantity of people and their actions as they 'surged towards the door' create an idea of them being like an opposing force against Megan who is 'swallowed instantly.'

The repetition of 'worse, much worse' emphasises Megan's feelings about the noise and the writer uses a simile to describe it as 'like an assault' on her senses. The succession of verbs with violent connotations such as 'slamming', 'shrieking', 'booming', 'groaning' and 'rumbling' serves to make the description more vivid and reinforces the bustle and chaos of the city which Megan finds so unfamiliar.

The writer makes Megan seem alone, lost in the 'vast, echoing cavern' of the station and the size of it – 'colossal' – emphasises this. Megan's reaction – 'stunned and breathless' – describes how she feels so overwhelmed and her discomfort and confusion are shown when someone bumps into her but gives her 'an exasperated look' as if it was her fault.

Answer 1

A5

At the beginning of this section in the passage, Megan realises that Cora's house isn't what she expected it to be as it had three doorbells but didn't look big enough to be divided into three flats.

At this point I felt sorry for Megan as her experience of England just keeps going downhill with many disappointments. However, she is still excited to see Cora as she was 'smiling in anticipation'. This is a nice moment, as it presents that even though it hasn't been a good journey, as soon as she sees Cora it will be worth it.

However, when there is no response she realises she has made a 'foolish mistake'. We learn at this point that Cora never got back to Megan to tell her it was alright to come and see her. This made me realise instantly that her 'foolish mistake' could be foreshadowing other things that may be about to go wrong. As it was 'still raining' and 'cold' she decided to leave her suitcase on the steps and find a coffee shop. This seems to be a risk but I feel sympathy for her as she has to find warmth and shelter somewhere and the suitcase is very heavy.

The 'sweet smell' made me imagine the feeling of coming out of the cold rain into warmth and it made me feel glad for Megan at this point. When she left the coffee shop, she saw the lights on at Cora's house and she feels a rush of 'relief' as she is finally going to meet her friend. I felt happy for her here but the passage ends abruptly when we learn that her friend had left the flat a couple of weeks ago. The short sentence 'Megan felt sick' leaves an atmosphere of suspense and also left me wanting to find out what happened to Cora.

Answer 2

A5

In these lines Megan is surprised that the house is divided up and my reaction to this is slightly sarcastic because it highlighted her naivety towards England which she had shown throughout the passage. She then 'smiles in anticipation' as she waits for her friend. Then Megan reveals that hadn't waited for a reply from Cora before setting off for England and this makes me quite annoyed because she didn't think to ask anyone and makes me believe that Megan is living in some sort of dream world. Megan then recalls her decision to come to England in the first place saying that she could have delayed her flight but didn't because she'd already told everyone she was leaving and didn't want 'fate' stopping her.

Again, I think this reiterates the poor choice Megan has made by uprooting her life with so little to go on. It also evokes a negative reaction towards Megan as she shouldn't have been so stupid.

She then decides to walk to a café whilst leaving her suitcase on the doorstep as she thinks it is too heavy to get stolen. When she is drinking coffee by herself it makes me feel sympathetic because in the end she is alone in an unfamiliar place and that can't be easy for anyone. At the very end when the lady who opens the front door tells her Cora has left weeks ago and Megan 'felt sick' I can't help but feel disappointed for her.

Answer 3

A5

All the way through this passage I felt sorry for Megan because her high expectations of England have not been met. She is perhaps naïve and unrealistic but she must be feeling let down.

When she finally reaches Cora's house, she rang the bell and waited in anticipation of her friend which builds suspense. After she gets no reply and attempts to look for a key but fails to locate one I did feel sorry for her but also slightly apprehensive because the situation seems to be getting worse.

When the writer revealed that Megan had not received any correspondence from Cora before her departure from Canada, this shocks me because she had thrown herself into an unpredictable situation. We learn she did this in fear that 'fate' would step in and stop her which is intriguing but also makes me feel that she has been very foolish. She admits that she has made a 'foolish mistake' in not waiting for a reply and, although I sympathise with her, she has been reckless.

I once again feel sorry for her due to the situation she was in. The writer presents us with a choice: Megan either had to 'freeze to death or risk losing the luggage' which makes me feel as conflicted as she must be. She decides to find a café which adds warmth and comfort into the atmosphere, making me feel calm and glad she is in a suitable place.

Megan begins to walk back and hears music 'thudding' which makes me feel both comforted in knowing someone is there but apprehensive to see how this person may react. Megan is greeted by a stranger who she asks about Cora, only to find out that she left a couple of weeks ago. Megan felt 'sick' which emphasises the dramatic atmosphere and makes me feel equally as nauseous because Megan is now completely alone in a strange city.

Answer 4

A5

As this passage develops I think of Megan as rather naïve and she appears to be a character who judges things before actually seeing them and has preconceptions. She is perhaps rather unrealistic and easy to deceive but I also feel sorry for her as her expectations have been consistently undermined. The country of Shakespeare and Dickens was 'grey' and 'ugly' and even Cora's house, which she thought would be 'overlooking a park', was a disappointment. When Megan declines the taxi driver's offer to stay, she is alone on the doorstep in an unfamiliar place and this gives me a feeling of sympathy. However, I am also uneasy and have a sense of foreboding as she drags her heavy suitcase up to where she thinks her friend lives, and rings the bell, waiting in 'anticipation'. This evokes my curiosity, as I am eager to find out who her friend is, and why Megan has come to see her. The writer intrigues us by deliberately withholding information.

However, my expectations were undermined, leaving me as disappointed as Megan as there was 'no response' and Cora does not appear to be at home. Megan checks the doormat for a key, which ends with a negative result and realises she has made 'a foolish mistake' by leaving Canada to come to England before hearing from her friend. This leads me to think of her as rather silly and impulsive as she was 'desperate to leave'. I do feel sympathy for her but also curiosity as to the reason behind her decision to leave home.

Megan sits on her suitcase and thinks about what to do next, recognising her own stupidity and trying to reassure herself that it was a weekday and 'everyone would be at work'. This evokes my sympathy as everyone can relate to someone making a silly mistake. I also feel sorry for her as she is stuck outside where it is raining and cold. When the writer tells us she decides to leave her suitcase and sets off to look for a café, this seems very naïve and reckless but she is faced with a difficult choice. I feel relieved when she finds a café as at least she is safe and warm, although I feel apprehensive about her leaving the suitcase despite the fact that Megan insists that it is too heavy to steal.

When Megan finally leaves the café, she sees that doorstep on which she left her suitcase is empty and this makes me feel that something bad has happened, despite the fact that the lights were on and her feeling of 'relief'. Her relief sparked some hope in me but this is undermined by the loud music 'thudding out from the house'. Megan knocks at the door and it is opened by a girl with 'white lipstick and huge eyelashes', which leads me to feel hope that this is Cora. However, we are disappointed as we find out that Cora 'left a couple of weeks ago. This makes me feel dread on behalf of Megan who feels 'sick' as she has nowhere to go. The writer's choice of the word 'sick' emphasises her feelings of nausea as she realises she is in a strange city and has lost all of her possessions.

She may have been naïve and unrealistically optimistic in her expectations and behaviour but at the end we do feel overwhelming concern and sympathy for her.

Answer 1

The Competition

High School. We all know that High School is full of girls who compete to be the most popular or the girls who have the most followers on Instagram or even the Girls who have the most boyfriends. Girls you say why have you mentioned just girls? I'm sure most of you have seen or at least heard of the film 'mean girls'. We are all pests who live off the flesh of popularity. I am almost certain that in every school there is a group of girls who have nothing better to do than laugh about other people's insecurities or in my opinion positives. We all at least know a group of girls who think they are better than anything and everything on this planet. You think I am exaggerating? Trust me, come to my school and you will see the shallowness of half the girls in my year, but in my opinion they only downgrade other people to make themselves feel better but little do they know that they are only downgrading themselves and why? Only to gain more into their group of 600 friends. I feel we need to stop the 'competitions'. Come on, we are all victims you may laugh but you think that just because you are part of some 'group' you are not a victim? Course you are they are probably on the phone now talking about the prom dress you just sent into the group chat telling you that you 'legit stay'. Then two minutes later laughing about the colour. They are all like Barbie dolls fake waiting to find their 'Ken' and their 'dream house', that will probably never happen. Do you realise that in ten years time you will either forget everything that happened in high school or regret everything because you were involved in a group of fake friends and because it was all just popularity competition

317 words

Answer 2

Write a story which ends: ...and I knew everything would work out somehow.

Today wins the award for the worst day of my life. It's probably very insignificant in the wider scale of things, after all I'm a tiny speck in the giant hellhole that is the universe, but I can wallow in my own misery if I want.

It all started like this.

I was up until goodness knows when trying to work on this case for my boss and naturally, I fell asleep at my desk, nowhere near my alarm clock. I woke up half an hour after I was due at work, completely exhausted with drool running down my chin. Of course, because I'm so incredibly lucky, my phone was out of charge so I couldn't check my e-mails on the train and halfway to the office, I noticed the rip across my pencil skirt. I'd used my emergency outfit last week.

But worst of all, more important than anything else, was that I missed my morning coffee. Anyone who knows me knows that I cannot be fully human unless I've had my two espressos for breakfast and a coffee in work. I may have a slight caffeine addiction.

So, there I was, all alone and lost. The case I was up half the night working on got deleted by my boss' secretary before the presentation, the coffee machine was broken and I was forced to walking home because I lost my purse.

I was just waiting for another awful thing to happen to me to prove that the universe really hates when the rain starts. I should've known. I was walking down a street I've never heard of in my life with a huge set of papers that dwarfed me entirely and no defences against the liquid barrage facing me. It's almost like the last thud of the battering ram before the doors open and the enemy leader mount my head on the castle walls.

But since I'm stronger than breaking down in the street and bawling my eyes out, I ran towards the girl with the ridiculous yellow duck umbrella and thrust my papers under it, personal space be damned. The girl in question looked at me, bewildered before a sudden gust of wind flew towards us forcing the umbrella out of her hands and ruining my life. We both stared at it fly away, my last beacon of hope shining like the sun against the gloom of the city before it disappeared from sight. The girl suddenly grabbed my wrist and tugged me under the roof of a closed café.

I looked towards my saviour, truly a knight in shining armour and find that most of her clothes and hands are covered in paint. The only part of her that appeared to have escaped it is her short auburn hair and her coat, there's even spots of green on her nose and cheeks like freckles. After making that discovery, I realised her free hand had been extended towards me for an embarrassingly long time, the other hand grasping what appeared to be a wrapped painting. I quickly shook her hand as she introduced herself as Rose. I replied rather shakily and listened as she explained that she 'couldn't really move as she couldn't afford to get her commission wet. I glanced towards the heavy rain, realising there was no way I could return home not knowing where I was when I realised she had been asking me a question. 'What was that?' I mumbled. 'Oh, I said would you like a pizza? I've got a feeling we'll be here for a while'. Looking at her earnest eyes, all the stress escaped me and I knew everything would work out somehow.

613 words

Answer 3

The Competition

Ana may be considered by some to be unambitious. She never felt the urge to go the extra mile; she never felt the need to try harder and she most certainly never experienced the sense of competitiveness that so many of her friends craved every day.

Even from a young age her friends would constantly encourage her to be something she wasn't: competitive.

During the primary school hula-hoop competitions, the highlight of lunchtimes, her friends would push their bodies to their limits all in the hope of winning the competition. Ana was content to come last. Perhaps Ana never wanted to experience the buzz of adrenaline flowing through her veins, throbbing as though they have a mind of their own and feeling as though her mind was controlled by a supernatural creature.

As a twenty-six year old Ana was still happy to be unambitious.

Although her friends were no longer competitive about winning hula-hoop competitions they were now obsessed with marathon times.

'Ana, are you coming training with us today?'

'Come on Ana!' They would constantly heckle her over her lack of motivation for the upcoming marathon. Now don't mistake Ana for

a lazy slob who would sit on the sofa all day watching the shopping channel. Oh no! Ana would train for her marathons except she would not push her body to its limit.

Perhaps she may be described as cautious but nevertheless she was content.

What set Ana and her friends apart were their views about competitions. Whilst Ana's friends were trying to win at the competition of life they failed, like so many do, to enjoy their life because you never know when it may all come to an end.

You never know when you may cross the finishing line and it all comes down crashing down. Ana knew that life was not about winning every competition. It's about living every moment.

315 words

Answer 4

Write a story which ends: ...and I knew everything would work out somehow.

I didn't know if I had the courage to do this. Just the thought of stepping through those deceptively heavy double doors sent shudders through me. No. I couldn't do it – not a chance in hell. I could see it happening right in front of me. I'd walk down the echoing corridor - eerily empty, as if an alien spaceship had whizzed down to Earth and robbed the school of its students – and everything would be just fine. But as soon as my clammy hands would make contact with the cool, supposedly calming blue door handle, I'd freeze. I couldn't face the disgusted stares and the accusing looks. The whispered taunts, the mocking jeers, the glances of pure, undisguised pity – a wave of nausea washed over me at the notion.

No. Stop it Lily. I shook my mind from the bottomless pit it had sunken in to. A new beginning, remember? A fresh start, they said. Now, remember what the doctor told you – don't panic. In and out. In...and out. Deep, soothing breaths, like the motion of a small dinghy boat, gently bobbing up and down on the rippling waves.

Until a hurricane tears the sky from out of nowhere, and tosses the helpless boat around, a toddler playing with its toy, until it crashes with a tragic thud against some jagged rocks, sending shards of splintered wood showering everywhere. Leaving destruction in its wake. My mind was seriously messed up. What was wrong with me? Why couldn't I just get on with it like everybody else? For goodness sake Lily, get a grip. Why do I have to be the 'weird girl', the freak, the outcast? The nutcase. No! I wouldn't let this happen again. Not another breakdown. Not now. Not yet. I thrust my body forward with renewed determination, mechanically placing one stiff foot in front of the other, my heartbeat growing more erratic with each step until I arrived at the entrance to hell. Alright, maybe that was a tad overdramatic. But I had my reasons. Bile rose to the top of my throat, accompanied by the acrid, bitter taste of stomach acid, threatening to overflow.

Wouldn't that make a great entrance? Swinging the door open with an extravagant flourish, like a cowboy about to swagger into a bar in a western and watching everyone's faces as they get sprayed with a lovely, lukewarm shower of vomit. There, that cheered me up.

'You can do this,' I told myself.

'No you can't,' came a voice from somewhere inside my head. I ignored it and tentatively nudged the door open with my foot but my plan for a silent entrance backfired as it gave an embarrassing groan. How typical. Damn this ancient school and its rusty hinges. But there was no turning back now.

The cacophonous roar of chattering teenagers came to an immediate halt, and twenty seven pairs of eyes snapped up to meet me.

'L-Lily?' a faceless voice asked. 'Is that you?'

I wasn't quite sure who was the owner of the voice but I fought back the Niagara Falls forming behind my eyeballs to answer. 'Yeah, it's me...' I broke off, forcing a weak, watery smile, which probably looked just as unconvincing as it felt.

Before I could register any movement, arms encircled me, the force almost bowling me over and leaving me gasping for breath, like a fish out of water.

'Oh my gosh Lily. I missed you so much. How are you? You look good.' An overpowering tide of greetings was launched at me. An odd, almost unfamiliar feeling, which I hadn't felt in a long time, surged through my veins and my facial muscles, unused for the past several months, quivered under the strain of the colossal grin that broke out on my face.

'Hey guys,' I began. 'I'm glad to be back.'

Voices once again attacked me, a convoy of ships seeking their target.

'So how was the crazy house?' I heard George quip.

'It was all right actually, I'm better now,' I chuckled in reply. George had never been one to beat about the bush, which I was thankful for. I laughed happily, realising just how much I had missed the light-hearted banter I shared with my friends. My friends. What was I thinking? Of course they wouldn't turn their backs on me. And that's when it dawned on me. I wasn't alone and I knew everything would work out somehow.

741 words

Example Narrative Writing Tasks

- 1) The Return.
- 2) Write a story which ends: ... and that wiped the smile off her face.
- 3) Write a story which ends: She gave a small wave, turned and walked away.
- 4) Write about a time when you tried to mend something.
- 5) Write a story which begins: We were now late and Mum had started to panic.
- 6) The Medal.
- 7) Caught!
- 8) Write about a time when you went on a school trip.
- 9) Write a story which begins: He held the box tightly and carefully.
- 10) Write a story that ends: It was the perfect end to the perfect day.
- 11) The Gamble.
- 12) The Stranger.
- 13) Write about a time when you felt ashamed of yourself.
- 14) Write a story which begins: I tried to look pleased but it wasn't the present I was hoping for.
- 15) Write a story which ends: It now looked as good as new – well, almost.
- 16) Write about an occasion when you lost your temper.
- 17) Write a story which begins: I was really looking forward to this ...
- 18) Write a story which ends with the following: I picked up the pen and signed my name.
- 19) The Complaint.
- 20) Write about an occasion when you felt proud of someone else.