

English Notes

Questions:

Before anything else...READ THE QUESTION:

- You should never lose marks for not answering the question.
- Think about the following when you read EVERY question:
 - **What kind is it?**
 - Identify
 - Explain
 - Describe
 - **What do they ask you to do?**
 - Don't generalise or assume
 - What **exactly** is requested?
 - **What are the marks awarded for?**
 - Either 1 for each point you make
 - Give 2 examples from the passage (2 marks)
 - Or 2 for point and explanation (however many times)
 - Explain which 1 action of Peter annoyed Wendy (2 marks)
 - 1 point and explanation
 - Explain why the boys find Peter annoying (6 marks)
 - 3 points and explanations
 - Sometimes marks will be awarded strangely, just answer the question with *enough* detail.

Own Words:

- The only time to copy the text is if the question asks you to quote or a quote is necessary for your answer to make sense.
- Some guides:
 1. Keep quotes as short as possible
 2. A quote does not suffice as an explanation
 3. Only quote when absolutely necessary or requested

Example of key details to pick out of a question:

- Re-read paragraph 7, then explain in your own words two things about Peter's personality that Wendy dislikes. (4 marks)
 - Only paragraph 7
 - In my own words
 - Two points and explanations
 - Peter's *personality* that Wendy dislikes is my focus

Exercises:

Do the same for the following:

1. Re-read the first sentence in paragraph 1. In your own words, explain clearly the way in which one of Peter's directions to Neverland does not make sense. (2 marks)
2. Explain in your own words what causes Wendy to be anxious, in paragraph 3.
3. From the second paragraph, find and write down: Two details which tell us that Judge Miller's place would be comfortable in hot weather.

4. Re-read paragraphs 8 - 15. This part of the passage tells us a good deal about Merlin's character. explain in detail your impression of his personality. You may quote from the passage if you wish, but you must also explain in your own words what you think about him. Make four separate points.

Identification:

- Complete sentences are still necessary.
- Make short sentences.
- All of these marks are a steal.

Explanation:

- You need to pick up on what the passage indirectly implies.
- DO NOT just copy what happens in the passage and expect this to be an explanation.

Remember ICE

Implicit meanings
Connotations
Effects

An explanation ALWAYS involves a reason.
This is a reason for something being the way it is.
Just saying something is the way it is does not constitute as a reason.
You need to tell us why.

Example 1 :

Question:

Explain 1 thing about Peter's personality that Wendy dislikes. (4 marks)

Poor answer:

Wendy dislikes that he does things at the very last moment. She dislikes Peter showing off when he sleeps while flying. (0 or 1 mark)

Model answer:

Wendy dislikes Peter's arrogant and self-centred personality which is shown by her aggravation to the fact that he only helps others "at the last moment" to not only show his skill but also enjoy himself despite the strong emotions of fear and anxiety this creates in Wendy and the children. His arrogance is further portrayed when he "sleep[s] in the air without falling" as he only does so to show-off his impressive skills and tease out jealousy in the children. (4 marks)

- With the model answer above:
 - What is different in the answers?
 - What is good about the model answer?
 - What can you do to recreate this kind of answer?

Exercises:

1. Akbar has a friend with him and everyone is in high spirits. They play Indian film music and sing at the top of their voices. Before they have driven half an hour Mansur has eaten the first packet of biscuits and drunk two Cokes. He feels free. He wants to scream and shout, and sticks his head out of the window.

Identify and explain why they are in "high spirits" (4 marks).

Explanation

An explanation is a statement about how or why something is the way it is.

2. Harley had dreaded Lorraine Smart's house, imagining matching tea-cups that she would chip, and polished tables that she would scratch, and a Master Bedroom with the private shape of someone else's feet still in the shoes, and the troughs made by other people's lives still in the mattress.

Explain why Harley 'had dreaded' staying in Lorraine Smart's house. Give three reasons, supported by quotations. (6 marks)

3. "It's a piano!" The black lacquered monster loomed in the doorway, my father and Uncle Tony grinning from behind its immense bulk, red-faces from exertion and lunchtime pints. I lifted the lid and pressed a key. It boomed, roomy and industrial, like a sledgehammer striking a girder. Mother said "Take it back, please, I'm begging you."

Explain why the mother may dislike the piano. (4 marks)

4. Just before the 800m final in Prague, I drank one more sip of water. With buckets of adrenaline and his coach's stirring words ringing in my ears, I went off, as the Australians say 'like free beer'.

Explain what is meant by 'like free beer' (2 marks)

5. Improvement comes from being totally brutal in self-assessment. There was no room for making excuses following my performance in Prague. I knew that if I wanted to beat Ovet, Beyer and other in future, I had to run more miles, improve my strength, refine the track work and increase my conditioning work and that it had to be done in a more structured way.

Explain how does the author convey determination in this runner. (2 marks)

Description:

Descriptive essays:

- Descriptive writing must be purely **descriptive**: do not make a story of it.
- Go **over the top** to describe things.
- Give both a **wide** and **close-up** description
 - i.e. focus on both the general environment and the details
- Write in complete sentences
- Be creative in:
 - **Vocabulary**
 - Sentence **structures**
 - Forms of imagery (i.e. **similes, metaphors, senses** etc.)
 - Forms of language (i.e. **alliteration, direct/indirect meanings** etc.)
- Check for silly errors.

- What/how to describe:
 - Use modifiers such as adjectives and adverbs (but not simple ones)
 - Colour
 - Senses
 - Feelings/atmosphere
 - Personification
 - Metaphors
 - Similes
 - Personal reactions
 - Vary sentence type/length
 - Inventive vocabulary

What NOT to do:

- Don't just use **fancy words** and expect this to be an adequate description.
 - The mesmerising view created a vivid picture.
 - This tells me nothing and doesn't describe anything.
- Don't write **similar words**.
 - e.g. The harmonious and melodious sound.
 - Your two adjectives are too similar here.
- Don't use the word **vivid**.

Example:

Question:

Describe a trip to the amusement park.

Poor answer:

We went there and saw lots of radiant and alive faces as they were queuing up for a whole variety of exciting rides. They were eating delicious treats that made my mouth water. I could hear the crowd shouting around me as they ambled around while children dragged their reluctant parents by the hand.

Model answer:

Looking up, I saw rollercoasters effortlessly swirling through the sky like a horde of dragons with steam hissing out of their noses. The piercing screams of their victims echoed throughout the park.

The hands of every child were slapping wisps of cotton candy or chocolate marshmallows on their face that ultimately lead to their cheeks sticky with sparkling sugar in all its sickly sweet forms.

Description

A detailed account of the certain or salient aspects, characteristics, or features of a subject matter or something seen, heard, or otherwise experienced or known.

Exercises:

1. Describe a royal garden.
2. Describe a farmhouse.
3. Describe the feelings of someone who is just about to sit an important exam.
4. Describe a school trip to a history museum.
5. Describe an instance of feeling fearful.

Understanding Descriptions:

- All descriptions have an **intention**, an image to create in your head.
- It is your job to find out what this is.

Authors write **EVERYTHING** for a **REASON**.

Example:

- *Million Golden Arrows* (describing the sunlight)
 - Yes, this can mean many strips of bright sunshine.
 - BUT, why did the author write it in this form?
 - Stress the intensity of light (million)?
 - Piercingly bright (arrows)?
 - Warming light (golden)?
- *The jacket which was coloured like snow.*
 - What colour is snow?
 - White
 - What is special about snow compared to other whites?
- *There was a real phoenix.*
 - Why include the word real?

Exercises:

Explain the following descriptions:

1. The boy waddled like a penguin.
2. The path ahead looked like a ribbon laid down on the hills.
3. The sheer rock cliff.
4. The trees in the mist looked like the ghosts of soldiers.
5. The fridge door, speckled with rust as if it had measles.
6. The villages in the ruins rear up in the landscape like skeletons.
7. The sea was surging like a pack of terriers.
8. A lone rebellious cherry tree that survived the bombs.
9. The monster was installed in our tiny apartment, looming impressively over the settee like an angry drunk. (This is talking about a piano).
10. The strings on the guitar looked like strands of rich brunette hair.
11. His stirring words ringing in my ears.
12. The wind struck and rippled the water like a black sheet.
13. Gunfire of thunder.
14. I was forced to scale the cliff edge as the sea drew me in.