



EdExcel IGCSE English Language A Paper 1 - Question 4 Anthology Texts - Rapid Revision Guide

TEXT	KEY THEMES & IDEAS	IMPORTANT QUOTES	LANGUAGE & STRUCTURAL METHODS	WRITER'S PERSPECTIVE / HIDDEN IDEAS	BIG COMPARATIVE IDEAS
The Explorer's Daughter	Humanity vs nature; survival; cultural differences; moral dilemma	<i>"My heart also urged the narwhal to dive, to leave, to survive"</i>	In medias res creates immediacy; metaphor "glittering kingdom"; emotive imagery	Herbert is torn between sympathy for the hunters and empathy for the narwhal	Nature is beautiful but survival forces harsh decisions
	Arctic survival	<i>"Hunting is still an absolute necessity in Thule"</i>	Declarative sentence emphasises certainty; factual information adds realism	Western audiences may judge Inuit hunting unfairly	Different cultures have different moral frameworks
	Danger & desperation	<i>"It was crucial to her that her husband catch a narwhal"</i>	Emotive language surrounding the women watching	Hunting is not sport – it is survival	Humans are dependent on nature
Chinese Cinderella	Desire for parental approval; power; identity; emotional neglect	<i>"For once, he was proud of me"</i>	Structural shift from hope → disappointment; direct speech; symbolism	Adeline craves love and validation from her father	Success becomes linked to self-worth
	Gender expectations	<i>"You will go to medical school"</i>	Repetition and imperatives show control	Her father values obedience over individuality	Family power structures suppress identity
	Escape & ambition	<i>"I only had to stretch out my hand to reach the stars"</i>	Metaphorical imagery creates hope	Education symbolises freedom and escape	Achievement can become emotional survival
A Passage to Africa	Realities of war; suffering; journalism; observer vs observed	<i>"a thousand hungry, lean, scared and betrayed faces"</i>	Graphic imagery; rule of three; detached tone	Alagiah critiques both war and journalism itself	Constant exposure to suffering causes desensitisation
	Moral conflict	<i>"the journalist observes, the subject is observed"</i>	Structural shift after the smile; rhetorical questions	The smiling man forces Alagiah to question himself	Human dignity survives even in suffering
	Emotional awakening	<i>"I would write the story... with all the power and purpose I could muster"</i>	Single-line paragraph emphasises turning point	Journalism becomes a moral responsibility	Stories humanise suffering
Explorers or Boys Messing About?	Immaturity vs maturity; social responsibility; media criticism	<i>"boys messing about"</i>	Rhetorical question in title establishes bias	Morris mocks the explorers from the beginning	Adventure becomes selfish when others pay the price
	Public cost & irresponsibility	<i>"the taxpayer would pick up the bill"</i>	Facts and statistics add realism; opinion presented as fact	The article criticises reckless masculinity	Exploration is portrayed as foolish rather than heroic
	Bias in journalism	<i>"farce" / "drama"</i>	Tone is sarcastic and critical throughout	Morris manipulates reader opinion	Journalists shape public attitudes
127 Hours	Man vs nature; survival; confidence vs desperation	<i>"the rock smashes" / "crushes" / "ensnares"</i>	Present tense creates immediacy; active verbs	Nature is presented as powerful and dangerous	Human control is fragile
	Expertise vs vulnerability	<i>"I come to another drop-off"</i>	Detached tone early on shows confidence	Ralston initially underestimates danger	Experience can create overconfidence
	Fear & panic	<i>"I'm frantic, and I cry out"</i>	Shift from passive to active voice	Terror destroys his calm professionalism	Survival strips humans to instinct
H is for Hawk	Grief; identity; emotional escape; obsession	<i>"I was falling through space"</i>	Fragmented reflections mirror grief	Macdonald projects emotions onto the hawk	Nature becomes emotional refuge
	Control & healing	<i>"I wanted to lose myself"</i>	Introspective first-person narration	The hawk symbolises wildness and freedom	Grief destabilises identity
	Isolation	<i>"her eyes are black holes"</i>	Dark metaphorical imagery	The hawk becomes a mirror for grief	Emotional pain distorts perception
A Game of Polo with a Headless Donkey	Colonialism; absurdity; violence; entertainment	<i>"headless donkey"</i>	Dark humour; juxtaposition; anecdotal narration	The narrator quietly criticises colonial attitudes	Violence becomes normalised
	Privilege & carelessness	<i>"everyone laughed"</i>	Juxtaposition between humour and brutality	Humour exposes discomfort	Outsiders treat suffering as spectacle
	Moral absurdity	<i>Polo imagery throughout</i>	Symbolism of the game	Colonial society is disconnected from reality	Civilisation can hide cruelty



Edexcel IGCSE English Language A Paper 1 - Question 5 Comparison - Rapid Revision Guide

COMPARISON AREA	WHAT TO COMPARE	ANTHOLOGY TEXT EXAMPLES / HIDDEN MEANINGS	USEFUL COMPARATIVE SENTENCE STARTERS	GRADE 9 FOCUS
Main Ideas & Themes	What big ideas do both writers explore?	<i>Chinese Cinderella</i> + <i>H is for Hawk</i> : identity and emotional escape . <i>127 Hours</i> + <i>Explorer's Daughter</i> : survival against nature . <i>A Passage to Africa</i> + <i>Explorers or Boys Messing About?</i> : responsibility of journalists .	"Both writers present..." / "Similarly..." / "In contrast..."	Compare WHY writers present similar themes differently
Writer's Perspective	What does each writer think or feel?	In <i>A Passage to Africa</i> , Alagiah becomes morally conflicted . In <i>Explorers or Boys Messing About?</i> , Morris is sarcastic and openly critical from the start.	"The writer of Text One appears..." / "Whereas Text Two..."	Focus on attitude, bias and viewpoint
Tone	Emotional feeling or atmosphere	<i>Chinese Cinderella</i> shifts from fear → joy → disappointment . <i>A Game of Polo with a Headless Donkey</i> mixes humour with discomfort . <i>127 Hours</i> becomes increasingly desperate .	"Both writers adopt a..." / "However, the tone in Text Two..."	Explain HOW tone shapes reader response
Language Methods	Imagery, metaphors, emotive language, repetition, sensory detail	<i>A Passage to Africa</i> uses graphic sensory imagery to confront suffering. <i>H is for Hawk</i> uses metaphorical imagery to mirror grief. <i>Explorer's Daughter</i> uses emotive imagery to create sympathy for the narwhal.	"The writer uses..." / "This suggests..."	Analyse effect , not just identify technique
Structural Methods	Shifts, endings, contrasts, focus, narrative structure	<i>Chinese Cinderella</i> structurally shifts after the father praises Adeline . <i>A Passage to Africa</i> changes after the smiling man . <i>127 Hours</i> becomes more frantic as time progresses .	"Structurally..." / "The shift from...to..."	Explain WHY the structure matters
Presentation of People	How are people shown? Victims? Heroes? Weak? Strong?	In <i>A Passage to Africa</i> , victims maintain dignity despite suffering. In <i>Chinese Cinderella</i> , Adeline is emotionally vulnerable but ambitious .	"Both writers present people as..."	Explore morality, dignity and humanity
Presentation of Conflict or Struggle	Emotional struggle, survival, war, pressure	<i>127 Hours</i> explores physical survival . <i>Chinese Cinderella</i> explores emotional struggle within family expectations . <i>A Passage to Africa</i> presents suffering caused by war and famine .	"The writers both explore..."	Compare internal vs external conflict
Role of Society / Authority	Family, government, journalists, culture	<i>Chinese Cinderella</i> critiques patriarchal authority . <i>Explorers or Boys Messing About?</i> criticises media glorification of explorers. <i>A Game of Polo with a Headless Donkey</i> quietly critiques colonial attitudes .	"Both texts suggest..."	Explore hidden social criticism
Emotional Impact	Reader reactions	<i>A Passage to Africa</i> shocks readers with graphic suffering . <i>H is for Hawk</i> creates emotional intimacy through grief . <i>127 Hours</i> creates tension and fear through immediacy .	"This makes the reader..."	Link emotions to writer intention
Ending / Final Message	Final perspective or lesson	<i>Chinese Cinderella</i> ends with grateful obedience despite disappointment. <i>A Passage to Africa</i> ends with reflection and humility . <i>127 Hours</i> suggests survival changes perspective forever.	"Ultimately..." / "Overall..."	Explain the writer's final message
Nature & Environment	How nature is presented	<i>127 Hours</i> presents nature as dangerous and overpowering . <i>Explorer's Daughter</i> shows nature as beautiful but deadly . <i>H is for Hawk</i> presents nature as emotional refuge .	"Both writers use nature to..."	Nature often symbolises emotional or physical struggle
Power & Control	Who has power? How is it used?	In <i>Chinese Cinderella</i> , the father controls Adeline's future . In <i>A Passage to Africa</i> , poverty removes people's agency .	"Power is presented as..."	Explore imbalance and helplessness
Identity & Belonging	Search for identity or acceptance	<i>Chinese Cinderella</i> links success to parental approval . <i>H is for Hawk</i> explores identity through grief and obsession . <i>Explorer's Daughter</i> explores inherited identity through exploration .	"Both writers explore identity through..."	Identity is often shaped by relationships or trauma
Hidden Messages / Deeper Meanings	What larger message is the writer communicating?	<i>A Passage to Africa</i> : suffering should not become normalised . <i>Explorers or Boys Messing About?</i> : society romanticises recklessness . <i>Chinese Cinderella</i> : achievement becomes emotional survival .	"This implies..." / "The writer may be suggesting..."	Explore what the text says about humanity or society



Edexcel IGCSE English Language A Paper 1 - Section B Transactional Writing - Rapid Revision Guide

FORMAT	QUICK STRUCTURE	DIRECT ADDRESS	RHETORICAL QUESTIONS	FACTS / STATISTICS	EMOTIVE LANGUAGE	TRIPLETS	IMPERATIVES	PERSONAL / INCLUSIVE PRONOUNS	COUNTER ARGUMENT	STRUCTURAL / STYLE TIPS
SPEECH	Greeting → Hook → Main Arguments → Counter-Argument → Emotional Ending	<i>"Students, we cannot ignore this issue any longer."</i>	<i>"How much longer must we wait?"</i>	Use believable statistics to sound authoritative	Strong emotional appeals work very well	<i>"Unsafe, unfair and unacceptable."</i>	<i>"Act now." "Think carefully."</i>	Heavy use of "we", "us", "you"	Acknowledge concerns before rebutting	Dynamic tone. Short sentences for impact. Build momentum throughout.
ARTICLE	Headline → Introduction → Main Ideas → Balanced View → Conclusion	<i>"Many of us experience..."</i>	Excellent for headlines and subheadings	Blend facts naturally into argument	Emotional but controlled	Great in openings and conclusions	Use sparingly	Use "we" to engage readership	Very effective for balanced discussion	Use headline + optional strapline. Feels polished and professional.
LETTER	Greeting → Purpose → Arguments → Counter-Argument → Final Appeal → Sign Off	<i>"You must consider..."</i>	Effective when challenging reader	Helps sound mature and credible	Emotional appeals should remain controlled/formal	Excellent for persuasive conclusions	Strong for recommendations /demands	<i>"We deserve..." "Our community..."</i>	Essential for high-level balance	Clear logical progression. Formality depends on the recipient.
LEAFLET	Heading → Intro → Subheadings → Advice/Tips → Conclusion	<i>"If your child is struggling..."</i>	Useful in headings	Facts help advice feel trustworthy	Softer emotional tone	Useful for summaries/tips	Excellent for advice	<i>"You can help by..."</i>	Less argumentative, more reassuring	Use subheadings + occasional bullet points. Clear and organised.
GUIDE	Title → Intro → Step-by-Step Sections → Recommendations	<i>"You should always..."</i>	Good for engaging reader	Facts make advice practical	Usually lighter/less dramatic	Helpful for summaries	One of the BEST formats for imperatives	Direct "you" throughout	Usually minimal	Feels instructional and supportive rather than persuasive.
REVIEW	Introduction → Positives → Negatives → Overall Judgement	<i>"You immediately notice..."</i>	<i>"What makes this place special?"</i>	Use details/examples rather than statistics	Strong descriptive and/or emotional language	Effective for praise/criticism	Rarely used heavily	Personal voice works well	Compare positives and negatives	Balanced judgement throughout. Personal but controlled tone.

DEVICE	PURPOSE	QUICK EXAMPLE
Direct Address	Engages audience personally	<i>"You deserve better."</i>
Rhetorical Question	Forces audience to think	<i>"Is this really the future we want?"</i>
Emotive Language	Creates emotional reaction	<i>"Children are suffering silently."</i>
Facts & Statistics	Adds credibility	<i>"70% of students report stress."</i>
Triplets	Creates rhythm/emphasis	<i>"Exhausted, anxious and overwhelmed."</i>

DEVICE	PURPOSE	QUICK EXAMPLE
Imperatives	Commands audience	<i>"Take action now."</i>
Inclusive Pronouns	Builds unity	<i>"We must work together."</i>
Anecdotes	Makes writing personal/realistic	<i>"Last year, my younger brother..."</i>
Counter-Argument	Shows maturity/balance	<i>"While some argue..."</i>
Hyperbole	Adds dramatic emphasis	<i>"A mountain of pressure."</i>