

**GCSE (9–1)**  
*Teacher Guide*

# ENGLISH LANGUAGE

J351  
For first teaching in 2015

## Writing Skills

Version 1



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# INTRODUCTION

This guide has been produced to support teachers in their understanding of the skills that learners are required to demonstrate in the writing sections (Section B) of the OCR GCSE English Language examination papers:

Component 1 J351/01: Communicating information and ideas

Component 2 J351/02: Exploring effects and impact

Guidance is given on the assessment requirements for the writing sections with reference to the wording of the Assessment Objectives and mark scheme level descriptors. This guide can be used in conjunction with a range of support materials already available on the GCSE (9-1) English Language J351 webpage ([www.ocr.org.uk/gcseenglishlanguage](http://www.ocr.org.uk/gcseenglishlanguage)) including:

- [Effective Writing skills](#) lesson element
- [Improving spelling, punctuation and grammar](#)
- [Non-fiction and creative writing skills](#)

The sample assessment materials for [Component 1 J351/01](#) and [Component 2 J351/02](#) are also referred to later in this guide.

# WRITING TASK REQUIREMENTS

GCSE English Language specifications should enable learners to:

- write effectively and coherently, using Standard English appropriately
- use grammar correctly, punctuate and spell accurately
- acquire and apply a wide vocabulary, alongside a knowledge and understanding of grammatical terminology and linguistic conventions for writing.

In order to meet the above requirements, learners should develop the following writing skills throughout the GCSE course:

**Producing original texts in a variety of forms:** this will include both non-fiction and creative writing forms. In Component 1, learners will be given a non-fiction writing task. The form that learners' writing should take will be clearly given in the wording of the task: the form will always be non-fiction and could include, for example, articles, newspaper reports, speeches and letters. In Component 2, at least one writing task will be a more open creative writing task, where a clear form may not be given, instead learners may be asked to produce a piece of descriptive writing, a piece of personal writing or a narrative, for example. In these types of tasks, learners can keep the form of their writing open, or they are free to decide on the specific form that their writing will take.

**Producing clear and coherent text:** this involves writing effectively for different audiences and purposes, such as writing to describe, narrate, explain, inform, instruct, argue and persuade. Learners should think about the audience and purpose of each writing task and try to select and adapt their vocabulary, grammar, structural and organisational features carefully to reflect the audience, purpose and context. As part of this, learners will need to use language imaginatively and creatively. They should try to maintain a consistent viewpoint in their writing to give coherence and consistency.

**Writing for impact:** through practising different writing techniques, learners should explore how vocabulary and grammatical features can be used to achieve particular effects. This may include creating an emotional impact by using language creatively, imaginatively and persuasively, including rhetorical devices, (such as rhetorical questions, antithesis and parenthesis). Learners should also develop the skills to select, organise and emphasise key facts, ideas and points to pertinently support their views. Throughout the course, learners should be encouraged to apply the knowledge and understanding of techniques they have identified through the reading of a wide range of non-fiction and fiction texts, and recreate these in their own writing to achieve specific effects.

## The writing tasks

The assessment of writing skills is worth 50% of GCSE English Language and so the writing section (Section B) is worth 40 marks out of the total 80 marks for each component.

For each component, learners will be given a choice of two writing tasks and they respond to **one** of these. This task is worth the full 40 marks for the section.

In Component 1 Communicating information and ideas, learners will be given a choice of non-fiction writing tasks, where the form, audience and purpose of the writing will be given in the task. In the J351/01 sample assessment materials, the choice of writing tasks is:

Write a **speech for your class** in which you **argue** that violence is not the solution to conflict between people. In your speech you should:

- explain why peaceful solutions are better than violent ones
- give some examples to support your argument
- convince your audience that violence does not solve conflict

**OR**

Write an **article for a teenage magazine**, which **gives advice** to young people on how to cope with the pressures and stresses of modern life. You are not required to include visual or presentational features. In your article you should

- identify some of the pressures and stresses that young people face
- suggest why these issues may be difficult to deal with
- explain some of the ways they can be managed

Over time, the writing tasks will ask learners to write in different forms and for different purposes for a prescribed audience.





In Component 2 Exploring effects and impact, learners will be given a choice of more creative writing tasks. At least one writing task will be a more open writing task, where a clear form and/or audience may not be given. This gives learners the option of being more imaginative in the writing they produce. In the J351/02 sample assessment materials, the choice of writing tasks is:

Imagine you are writing your autobiography. **Describe your experiences** of starting a new school.

You could write about:

- the people who made the biggest impression on you
- the ways in which you behaved
- the way you feel about those events now

**OR**

*The Outsider*

Use this as a title for a **story or piece of personal writing**

In your writing you should:

- choose a clear viewpoint
- describe the setting
- explore what 'being an outsider' means

Over time, the writing tasks will ask learners to write in different styles which could include narratives, personal writing and descriptive pieces. These tasks will appeal to a range of familiar experiences, such as starting a new school, being an outsider, making choices, making a difference, childhood, courage, deceit, fear, journeys etc.

The writing tasks in both components will be loosely related to the theme of the reading section to provide a clear pathway through the each exam paper. Each writing task will include bullet points which suggest pointers to both content and style to make the tasks more accessible to the range of learners taking GCSE English Language.

Both of the Assessment Objectives for writing, AO5 and AO6, are assessed in each writing task. AO5 is concerned with the content of the writing, the way that it is organised and structured, and how the form, language and tone has been adapted to suit the task, AO6 is concerned with the range of vocabulary and sentence structures that are used, and the accuracy of spelling and punctuation. Out of the 40 marks available for the writing task in each component, 24 marks are available for AO5 and 16 marks are available for AO6. Further guidance on the writing Assessment Objectives is given later on in this guide in the 'Assessment Objectives and Level Descriptors' section.

Learners should consider spending about 45-50 minutes of the two hour exam time on the writing section; this includes the time taken to choose the task they will respond to and to plan their response. It is important that learners take time to carefully read through the requirements of both tasks so that they can decide on the task which best suits them. It is equally important that learners plan their response before they begin writing. This will help them to organise their ideas in order to make their writing coherent and to give it a clear structure. It also gives them some space to consider the language techniques they may use to meet the purpose of the task.

Throughout the course, learners should become familiar with the range of writing forms that they could encounter in the GCSE English Language J351 exams. They should be given plenty of opportunity to practise writing in different styles and in different forms, for different audiences and purposes and to apply and practise the skills discussed in this guide. Wide reading can also be used to develop writing skills; learners should be encouraged apply the understanding of linguistic and literary methods they have gained from reading a variety of texts to inform and improve their writing.

# ASSESSMENT PREPARATION: GETTING READY TO WRITE FORM

Whilst the form of the non-fiction writing in Component 1 is differentiated and stated very clearly in the task, as mentioned above, this may not always be the case for personal, creative writing tasks in Component 2.

Learners' skills to write in specific forms such as newspaper and magazine articles, reports, speeches and many more of the like, can all be developed with the use of discrete models. Over the years it is clear that learners can write very effectively when they are given a specified form, audience and purpose to work with; if they want to argue a case and win the opinions of others over in their favour, for example.

Personal writing is a good deal less easy to quantify. Short stories and personal narratives that describe a range of emotions, and make creative use of language for 'emotional impact' are more challenging because they pose the questions 'what shall I write about?' and 'where shall I go for it?' before much thought can be given to the form that is to be used. It can also be challenging to teach a range of narrative/descriptive forms in the abstract: so that literary models are needed for emulation and stimulus. The problem then may become one of fitting the chosen content into a pre-conceived format, or trying to grapple with content that might fit a pre-selected format. For these types of writing tasks, learners need to develop a confident sense of a basic, simple and above all flexible narrative/descriptive structure, which can be readily manipulated to create linguistic effects that flow from their preliminary response to the task.

In simple terms, planning for creative writing needs the stimulus and support of plenty of varied reading and thinking. Diaries and blogs can be very helpful here to help generate ideas and techniques.

## CONTENT

Whereas the content for non-fiction writing tasks in Component 1 are more likely to be straightforward and objective: waste, homework, technology and so on, the tasks, if not the prescriptions for creative writing, make it clear that the content for these types of task needs to be derived from reflection and personal, and emotional experience. For this reason, adapting, lifting, following or copying what others have written will often lead to work which is unoriginal, obviously derivative and lacking a sense of freshness and creativity. Parody and satire are high order skills rarely seen at GCSE. Much work that is popularly read by learners is outside the range of their own experience and therefore tends not to translate well to their own writing.

Settings and characters that are exotic/ criminal /very violent/ psychologically disturbed/ extra-terrestrial (to name but a few) are less likely to convince than those that are closer to home. This specification encourages learners to use wide reading to inform their writing, what is meant here is that learners will consider what is effective in the texts they have read, and take this on board to achieve impact in their own writing, rather than suggesting that learners try to copy content or ideas which are not their own.

Learners' responses to the creative writing tasks could be real or imagined. Learners who transpose a real experience into narrative fiction tend to be more successful: the 'imagined' is a prompt suggesting 'what if that had happened to me' or 'what if that had happened within my range of experience' so that something that has been understood (for example the break-up of a friend's family, a sibling's success, suffering an illness) can be imagined and developed in a personal way.

Some learners may choose to base their writing on what they have read in the reading section of the exam: there is no requirement to do this, nor is there a penalty for doing so, but as in the guidance above, they should try to be original in their response. The writing tasks will be loosely based on the reading theme in order to give a clear pathway through the papers. Learners may want to draw on the reading texts to help generate ideas and techniques, but it is not intended that the writing task is a direct extension of the reading section.





## VOICE

This always needs careful consideration, the first of which is that of the audience it is directed to.

The non-fiction writing tasks will always provide an audience; the Head Teacher, a possible future employer, readers of magazines and newspapers, peers, parents etc.

Creative writing will rarely come with a specified audience but the need for learners to know who they are addressing is important to maintain coherence and consistency. In the short term, the work they produce is for their teacher and perhaps a slightly wider audience of other students, teachers, siblings and parents. In the examination that all goes: and it can be confusing. The audience then becomes the examiner. It is important to see that this should be an advantage. The examiner does not know and will never know the learner: the work is totally anonymous and so is the centre it has been produced in. This may have (and indeed has often had) a liberating effect on learners who are in a position to write about things they may not have wished to share previously.

Learners may wish to construct an audience as an integral part of their work, 'my granddad asked me to explain...' 'my five year old daughter asked me what it was like when I started school...', 'the police sergeant looked very forbidding when I said that...'. This can be a good approach so long as learners are able to sustain the voice in relation to this audience throughout their writing.

Many learners like to adopt a persona other than their own. This can be prey to the same weaknesses of copying and derivation mentioned above, but it can be done successfully. However, it also adds a layer of extra difficulty that some learners may not want to add in to the task and so they should consider whether or not they will be able to keep this voice consistent and effective throughout the response. Other learners are adept at constructing twin, overlapping narratives, which contrast narrative voices and may be very effective.

The golden rules are that the narrative voice should be clear, consistent and above all confident throughout the piece. Whether the work is couched in the first person or the third, careful attention needs to be paid to the tone of voice (of the narrator and the characters); their accent, vocabulary and points of view.

Tone also involves mood and to an extent style. Learners often have great success using irony, bathos, exaggeration, hyperbole, understatement and so on. They need to recognise that these are all part of the narrative voice as well as the overall structure, and both need to be carefully planned before starting to write.



## STRUCTURE

Some of the weakest exam writing is that which is directionless from the outset or changes direction once or several times in its course. Some of this work may be unclear at the outset and fail to reach any kind of conclusion: or vice versa.

A clear sense of an overall structure and links between its constituent parts can enhance learners' work significantly. The use of flashback, flash forward, starting at the linear conclusion and working back to the beginning, twists and surprises, can all bring a great deal of creative originality to straightforward content. This will be marked by the use of paragraphs as the building blocks of the overall structure. Paragraphs of varied length, topic and linking sentences are all marks of thoughtful, well-planned work.

Also important is the opening of the writing. It should be one that engages the reader and prompts them to want to read on and find out what happens next. Learners should develop the skills to create an effective opening and try to produce more than a sentence that seems to plod through the content, story or description. Equally as important is the conclusion: which can be suggested earlier in the writing, of course. The end of the piece is where the writer and reader have been heading for throughout and, as stressed elsewhere, this needs to be very carefully planned before the writing starts and remain at the forefront of the learner's mind as the piece develops. The best writing responses will always have an informing sense of a cohering structure and overview in which the work becomes greater than the simple sum of its parts.

Length is an important aspect of structure. As a general guideline, an exam essay does not need to be more than three sides of the answer booklet. Indeed much can be accomplished, including the highest marks, in less. As always, the quality of the response is all-important. Work of half a side or less will more than likely penalise what the learner can be awarded as it is unlikely to include enough evidence of what the learner can do in relation to the task. On the other hand, lengthy 'sagas', multi-part narratives, overly long descriptions, unnecessary dialogue and irrelevance should all try to be avoided. It is likely that learners who produce overly long pieces of work will be unable to sustain effectively all the previously mentioned elements of writing. Learners that produce a pithy, intense piece of writing, which is more than the sum of its parts, are more likely to reach the higher levels of the mark scheme.

## ACCURATE USE OF LANGUAGE

The assessment requirements for the writing tasks also focus on mechanical accuracy and ambitious use of vocabulary and sentence structures. Learners need to develop a confident and controlled command of English syntax, grammar, spelling (particularly of commonly occurring words, both simple and complex), punctuation and sentence structure. To reach the highest levels of the mark schemes, they should be able to use all those constituents to enhance their writing and give it more of an impact.

Much can be done in a fairly straightforward way with this aspect of writing, so long as the basics have been clearly understood. For example, a change from the past to the present tense is often effective; the use of unusual/original vocabulary, and of lists, often of synonyms and/or antonyms can enhance the effects of learners' writing. Varied sentence lengths and the judicious use of direct/indirect speech and commentary also tend to work well. The use of single sentence paragraphs can be an effective addition, as long as learners are careful not to overdo it.

The best writing response will be often marked by varied, fluent, confident use of a range of grammatical and syntactical structures; ambitious and aptly chosen vocabulary which may often differentiate effects subtly; and which has been chosen to suit and enhance what is intended, rather than to draw attention for its own sake.





# ASSESSMENT OBJECTIVES AND LEVEL DESCRIPTORS

## AO5

**Communicate clearly, effectively and imaginatively, selecting and adapting tone, style and register for different forms, purposes and audiences.**

**Organise information and ideas, using structural and grammatical features to support coherence and cohesion of texts.**

AO5 is assessed in both writing tasks. There are 24 marks available for AO5 in Component 1 and Component 2.

For the writing tasks, there are six band levels in the mark schemes for AO5. Let's look at the key terms in each of the level descriptors:

### Level 6:

- The form is **deliberately**<sup>1</sup> adapted to **position**<sup>2</sup> the reader, showing a **sophisticated control**<sup>3</sup> of purpose and **effect**<sup>4</sup>.
- Tone, style and register are **ambitiously**<sup>5</sup> selected and **deployed**<sup>6</sup> to enhance the **purpose**<sup>7</sup> of the task.
- There is a **skilfully**<sup>8</sup> controlled overall structure, with paragraphs and grammatical features used to support **coherence and cohesion**<sup>9</sup> and achieve particular effects.

<sup>1</sup> A degree of careful thought/planning, shows a deep understanding of the task.

<sup>2</sup> Enables the reader to appreciate the writer's context and perspective.

<sup>3</sup> Sophisticated: a synthesis of polished and accomplished; control: achieving what is aimed for – this is demanding and ambitious.

<sup>4</sup> Reader response matches the writer's intentions.

<sup>5</sup> The key word for this level.

<sup>6</sup> Used effectively.

<sup>7</sup> Refers to the learner's take on the task and intentions in developing their response.

<sup>8</sup> The structure is deliberately (not necessarily obviously) used to suit the purpose of the task; points build on each other and support overall coherence; the opening and conclusion is effective. Paragraphs and grammatical features are secure and consistent.

<sup>9</sup> Consistent narrative and voice which is easily followed; the best work will be greater than the sum of its parts.

### Level 5

- The form is **confidently**<sup>1</sup> adapted and shows a secure understanding of purpose and audience.
- There is a **sustained**<sup>2</sup> use of tone, style and register to fulfil the purpose of the task.
- There is a **controlled**<sup>3</sup> overall structure, with paragraphs and grammatical features used to support coherence and cohesion and achieve particular effects.

<sup>1</sup> Shows a good understanding of the task.

<sup>2</sup> The use of tone, style and register is consistent throughout the piece and creates an impact which suits the purpose of the task.

<sup>3</sup> We lose the 'skilfully' here.

**Level 4:**

- The **form is adapted**<sup>1</sup> to show a clear understanding of purpose and audience
- Tone, style and register are chosen to **match**<sup>2</sup> the task
- There is a well-managed overall structure, with paragraphs and grammatical feature used, mostly securely, to support coherence and cohesion, and sometimes for effect.

<sup>1</sup> The learner's choice form and the way it is customised and developed shows a secure understanding of the task. Note the difference here compared to the emphasis on adaptation in the higher levels.

<sup>2</sup> So that the work has consistency. The use of tone, style and register is more straightforward.

**Level 3:**

- The form is sustained and shows clear awareness of purpose and audience.
- Tone, style and register is appropriate for the task, with some inconsistencies.
- There is a clear overall structure, with paragraphs and grammatical features used, **mostly securely**<sup>1</sup>, to support coherence and cohesion.

<sup>1</sup> We're moving away from the use of grammatical features to create impact as described in the levels above.

**Level 2:**

- The form, which is mostly appropriate for purpose and audience, is **generally maintained**<sup>1</sup>.
- There is **an attempt**<sup>2</sup> to use a tone, style and register appropriate to the task.
- There is some evidence of overall structure, with **some use of paragraphs and grammatical features**<sup>3</sup> to support coherence and cohesion.

<sup>1</sup> Narratives don't become descriptions, arguments don't become narratives, and so on.

<sup>2</sup> These elements may not always be directed to the task

<sup>3</sup> Writing should still show evidence of being controlled

**Level 1:**

- There is **some attempt**<sup>1</sup> to use a form appropriate for purpose and audience.
- There is a limited attempt to use a tone, style and register appropriate for the task.
- There is some attempt to structure the response, with **limited evidence of paragraphs or grammatical features**<sup>2</sup> to support coherence and cohesion.

<sup>1</sup> The form is identifiable but not maintained

<sup>2</sup> Writing appears generally uncontrolled

## AO6

**Use a range of vocabulary and sentence structures for clarity, purpose and effect, with accurate spelling and punctuation.**

AO6 is assessed in both writing tasks. There are 16 marks available for AO6 in Component 1 and Component 2.

AO6 encompasses four different elements: vocabulary choice, sentence structure, accurate spelling and accurate punctuation. Learners' relative performance in all four elements will be considered when deciding on a level and mark: there is a balance to be had between ambitiousness and accuracy.

For the writing tasks, there are four band levels in the mark schemes for AO6. The key terms in each of the level descriptors is given below:

### Level 4:

- An ambitious range of sentence structures is used to shape meaning and create **impact**<sup>1</sup>. Accurate punctuation is used to enhance clarity and achieve particular **effects**<sup>2</sup>.
- Vocabulary is precise and **subtle**<sup>3</sup>, expressing complex ideas with clarity. Spelling of irregular and **ambitious**<sup>4</sup> words is accurate, with **very occasional lapses**<sup>5</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> As discussed above.

<sup>2</sup> As discussed above.

<sup>3</sup> Cleverly used for effect without being too obvious.

<sup>4</sup> The key term for this level

<sup>5</sup> Almost all of the writing is so clear and confident that errors do not occur.

### Level 3:

- A wide range of sentence structures is used for deliberate purpose and effect. Punctuation is consistently accurate and is used to **achieve clarity**<sup>1</sup>.
- Vocabulary is sometimes ambitious and used convincingly for purpose and effect. Spelling, including complex regular words, is accurate; there may be **occasional errors with irregular and ambitious words**<sup>2</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> Not necessarily for deliberate effect.

<sup>2</sup> Note, not simple words.

### Level 2:

- A range of sentence structures is used, **mostly securely**<sup>1</sup>, and sometimes for purpose and effect. Punctuation is generally accurate with occasional errors.
- Vocabulary is appropriate and shows **some evidence**<sup>2</sup> of being selected for deliberate effect. Spelling is generally accurate with occasional errors with common and more complex words.

<sup>1</sup> The central question examiners will ask is 'is the writing secure?'

<sup>2</sup> The writing may be clumsy and unsubtle but it's trying to do as asked

### Level 1:

- Simple sentences**<sup>1</sup> are used with some attempt to use more complex structures. Some punctuation is used but there is a **lack of control and consistency**<sup>2</sup>.
- Vocabulary is straightforward and relevant with mostly accurate spelling of **simple**<sup>3</sup> words.

<sup>1</sup> At Level 1, simple sentences are expected as the norm.

<sup>2</sup> This could include instances of no punctuation.

<sup>3</sup> Commonly occurring, simple words.

# EXEMPLAR RESPONSES

Below are some authentic learner responses to the second writing task in the sample assessment materials for Component 2 Exploring effects and impact. The annotations on each script have been provided by the learners' teacher. An examiner commentary is also provided for each response.

The task learners responded to is:

## *The Outsider*

Use this as a title for a story or piece of personal writing

In your writing you should:

- choose a clear viewpoint
- describe the setting
- explore what 'being an outsider' means

[40 marks]

### Learner Response 1 - on page 13

Commentary

AO5: Level 3

AO6: Level 3

This is a solid Level 3 response with some touches of individual detail and a strong and consistent, if simple and straightforward narrative, which push it towards but not into Level 4. The writing is reasonably secure and the vocabulary aptly chosen and varied. There is a clear and consistent first person narrative voice sustained throughout.

### Learner Response 2 - on page 15

Commentary

AO5: Level 2/3

AO6: Level 2

This response is on the cusp of Levels 2 and 3. This is a straightforward anecdote, which is developed with some colourful local detail. The narrative is less assured than the previous response and tenses are insecure. Attention has been paid to engaging the reader with an intriguing opening and narrative structure. Voice and tone are less certain.

### Learner Response 3 - on page 17

Commentary

AO5: Level 5

AO6: Level 4

This is a stronger piece of writing, which adapts form confidently and has a secure voice and sense of audience. The register is clearly marked and pointed in lyrical fashion. It is coherent, cohesive, taut and concise. It is very accurate. However, it is insufficiently developed for Level 6 for AO5.



## LEARNER RESPONSE 1

## An Outsider

As the day loomed closer the day others were excited for, the day I was dreading, the first day of secondary school in a new town with all new people. I'd never been fond of change or meeting new people. <sup>in fact</sup> I was terrified of having to completely reintegrate with new people in a new place.

As the car got ever closer <sup>I</sup> I grew more and more anxious. When we arrived I nervously stepped out of the car and made my way towards the tall building. I wasn't quite sure where to go which made the experience all the more frightening. Just as I was about to start ~~wandering~~ aimlessly wandering in hope of finding where I needed to go, I saw a group of people who looked about my age, so I waited for a short while and followed them from a distance. A short while later they entered a building and I followed.

I continued to follow them until they split up into separate rooms then I went to look to see if any of them were where I was supposed to be, as I went past the first two doors they weren't the right one I started to ~~get~~ ~~worry~~ worry if this was the right building at all, but <sup>to my relief</sup> the next door was the right one. <sup>taking a moment to compose myself</sup> I walked in.

As I walked in the <sup>teacher</sup> teacher greeted me and asked me what my name was. I froze I had spent much time going over every situation

you could  
the price  
really well  
there.

again, all  
desirable.

that could possibly happen, once I realised what he had asked me I mumbled my name and he asked me to take a seat. I sat there quietly taking in my surroundings as more and more people arrived, people were chatting to each other getting to know each other, and I just sat there in silence. Once everyone had arrived the Teacher introduced himself and asked us one by one to stand up, introduce ourselves and tell everyone something about ourselves as if we were closer and closer to being my turn. I grew more anxious, when it got to me I reluctantly stood up <sup>timidly</sup> said my name and my favourite sport as I couldn't think of anything better to say, and I sat back down and silently waited for it to be over. When everyone was finished he gave us all our timetables and split us up into lessons. I desperately was peering over people's shoulders to see if any of them had the same lesson as me, but I was too afraid to ask people. When I saw someone who had the same lesson as me I waited until they left then once again I followed.

Once we were outside I think he saw his friends and he jogged over to the mass of people, not wanting to appear as if I was following him I didn't jog, just walked a bit faster. I had lost sight of him so I just followed the crowd and I would get worried everytime people split off from the group and I would frantically check to see if he was among them. All this time I was also constantly ~~concerned~~ <sup>concerned</sup> that the person I was following didn't know where he was going.



## LEARNER RESPONSE 2

## An Outsider

Harry Bristow

As He walks through the gates he <sup>lovely opening.</sup> sees kids running around in the play ground, they were all shouting and screaming having fun but George was dreading going to a new school. ~~Once~~ Once he's walked through the gates there's no escaping until the end of the day. Also he finds it very hard to start a conversation with people he doesn't know. ~~he finds it very hard to start a conversation with people he doesn't know.~~ <sup>I have the sense of mystery here.</sup>

George walks down the steps towards the play ground and nearly slips flat on his back because of the mossy metal steps. Some kids turn around and start laughing at him, but he <sup>puts</sup> ~~puts~~ on a brave face and starts laughing with them so he doesn't look embarrassed, but inside he feels so torn and upset but he doesn't want to show it because he wants to make a good first impression and not ~~to~~ look like a complete and utter ~~idiot~~ idiot for nearly slipping over.

crept with your senses.

The playground <sup>fence.</sup> was so vast and open, <sup>that</sup> if he wanted to get away from all the hassles of the <sup>other</sup> kids he couldn't because there was no where ~~for~~ for him to hide and let out all his steam. <sup>lovely paragraph.</sup>

billab's shift.

Gradually George made his way to the rest room and it was then that he realized that the school ~~was~~ was a tip and he never wanted to go back. The toilets ~~stank~~ <sup>stank</sup> every imaginable smell known to mankind it was vile. There were swear words written ~~all~~ all over the walls and inappropriate images everywhere. The floor was like a lake where other kids had blocked the drain so the sinks flooded.

George was trying to find his way to his

First lesson and he had no idea where he was going, so he decided to ask a boy in the year above him who was in the ~~or~~ ~~corridor~~ ~~for~~ corridor, where class room 15 was. The boy just started laughing and taking the mick because George was stood right next to the class room. This was just one step ~~too~~ far for George and what the other kid didn't know was that George had anger management. George's face started to turn bright red and he was clenching his fist so tight that his knuckles ~~were as white as~~ turned white. The boy in the year above turned away and started walking down the corridor chuckling to himself but George was having none of it so he ran up behind him and swung a huge right hook from behind, blood and saliva came flying out his mouth along with a tooth. He was out cold.

What an ending!

nice twist



## LEARNER RESPONSE 3

## An Outsider

that  
pencil  
opening.

Alone. She was surrounded by all these people, but she was still alone. From the minute she arrived at her new school she knew she didn't fit in, despite her best efforts to integrate with her ~~new~~ classmates.

real  
sense of  
voice  
emerging

Surrendering,

They were in front of her, running and shoving each other like a herd of animals. Whatever species they were, she didn't ~~understand~~ understand them. They were loud. No, not just loud, they were overwhelming.

~~She~~ <sup>she</sup> let herself get swept up and carried along in the flow of overexcited students, ~~but~~ <sup>and</sup> felt like she was drowning. This was so new to her. Before, she had friends. Before, she had a place. Now, she felt like she had never set foot in a school before. ~~Everything~~ Everything was new, bigger, harsher, scarier. <sup>story is of painful</sup> ~~fun~~ <sup>fun</sup>.

interesting  
line.

Although she ~~was~~ was silent, her thoughts were so loud. They bounced around her head trying to find a way out. She would never dare to let them out, no matter how much she wanted to. Once she had said one thing, how could she stop herself from saying everything? She couldn't. She couldn't and the thought of ~~not~~ making herself vulnerable to these animals was more terrifying than being here all alone. <sup>lovely imagery</sup>

Maybe with time she would learn to fit in. That's what she told herself. ~~But~~ <sup>As</sup> she lowered her head, looking at the ground, it felt impossible to believe. The floor was familiar ~~to her~~ now, after so many hours watching it and hoping nobody would notice her.

Luckily, they never did. Maybe she was as invisible as she felt. Maybe somebody, somewhere, was trying to protect her. Whatever the reason, her fear lessened every moment that she was left alone. But it was difficult, having nobody to talk to. It was a constant choice - ~~to~~ <sup>talk</sup> and talk and risk rejection, or stay quiet and stay safe.

Of course,

~~she~~ <sup>she</sup> did the latter much more often than she did the former. ~~Of course. It was her survival instinct making her do it.~~ Talking silently to herself felt ~~much~~ <sup>more</sup> sensible - throwing herself into a

cage of wild <sup>beasts</sup> ~~animals~~ didn't. But no matter what she decided  
✓ to do, things would never change. She was - and always  
would be - an outsider. *brilliant understated ending.*



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