FREE SAMPLE: THE FIRST 3 QUESTIONS

Question 1 (10 marks)

TEST

Answer the following questions by putting a tick in the relevant box. Tick one box only for each question.

(a) Why does the reviewer say the ghost storyline is disappointing?

[2 marks]

- ☐ The ghost was too frightening for the story.
- ☐ The film built up dread and then explained the ghost away.
- ☐ The ghost appeared too rarely on screen.

(b) Which word describes the reviewer's opinion of Maeve Corrigan's performance best?

[2 marks]

- ☐ uneven
- ☐ convincing
- ☐ exaggerated

(c) What does the reviewer mean by saying the sounds ‘make the building feel like a living thing’?

[2 marks]

- ☐ The sound effects make the lighthouse seem to have a life of its own.
- ☐ The film was shot with real animals inside the building.
- ☐ The lighthouse was built by the production team.

(d) What is the reviewer’s harshest criticism of the film?

[2 marks]

- ☐ The sea scenes are filmed badly.
- ☐ The film is too long and some scenes could have been cut.
- ☐ The actors speak too quietly.

(e) Which word describes the reviewer’s overall tone in the verdict best?

[2 marks]

- ☐ dismissive
- ☐ appreciative
- ☐ bored

Question 2 (25 marks)

Write a review of a film that you have studied, following the format used in the review in Question 1. Support your views with reference to the film using the prompts below:

- The Good
- The Mixed
- The Bad
- The Verdict.

[25 marks]

Title of film:

Optional rough work

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SECTION B · APPRECIATING CHARACTER, SETTING AND STORY

40 marks · suggested time 30 minutes

Read the following extract from the opening of a children's adventure novel. In it, a girl called Tilda Flint discovers that something strange has happened to the sea near her home. Answer the question that follows.

PROSE EXTRACT

Tilda Flint and the Clockwork Tide

This extract is from the opening chapter of a children's adventure novel written for this practice paper.

On the morning that the sea went missing, Tilda Flint was eating a boiled egg and trying not to think about her cousin Barnaby, who had once put a boiled egg in his sock for a bet.

"Tilda!" called Gran from the porch. "Come here at once. I think the sea has gone."

Now, you would imagine that a sea cannot simply go. It is rather large, for one thing, and for another it has been in the same place since before anyone thought to write it down. But when Tilda reached the porch, there was no mistaking it. Where the grey-green water had slapped against the harbour wall the evening before, there was nothing but a long stretch of rippled sand, glittering like a spoon somebody had forgotten to put away. Boats lay on their sides in the mud like sleeping dogs. A single gull stood on the seabed with the baffled air of a person who has gone to the wrong party.

"Don't just stand there with your mouth open," said Gran, who was already pulling on her wellingtons. "You'll catch a crab."

Tilda's heart began to thud, not from fear, but from something far better. Far out, where the sand dipped into shadow, something was glinting: a round, brass thing, the size of a dustbin lid, half-buried and ticking. Tick. Tick. Tick. It was the loudest, most wonderful sound she had ever heard.

"Gran," she whispered, "the sea hasn't gone. Somebody's switched it off."

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Question 3 (15 marks)

Analyse three aspects of the above extract that you think make the text an appealing one for younger readers. Explain your suggestions with reference to the extract.

[15 marks]

Optional rough work

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THE WORKED ANSWERS TO THOSE 3 QUESTIONS

Question 1 (10 marks)

(a) Why does the reviewer say the ghost storyline is disappointing?

Answer: The film built up dread and then explained the ghost away.

The reviewer says the ghost ‘is explained away as a trick of the lamp’s reflections’, which feels ‘like a cheat’ after so much dread.

> **KEY TAKEAWAY**
> In a review, look for the word that signals criticism (here, ‘cheat’) and ask what exactly the reviewer is complaining about.

(b) Which word describes the reviewer’s opinion of Maeve Corrigan’s performance best?

Answer: convincing

She gives ‘a performance of such quiet strength’ that the reviewer forgot they were watching an actress: the performance is convincing.

> **KEY TAKEAWAY**
> To choose a word for an opinion, test each option against the reviewer’s evidence and keep the one the evidence supports.

(c) What does the reviewer mean by saying the sounds ‘make the building feel like a living thing’?

Answer: The sound effects make the lighthouse seem to have a life of its own.

The creaking lamp, hissing spray and gulls’ screams make the lighthouse seem alive: this is a figurative way of praising the sound design.

> **KEY TAKEAWAY**
> Figurative phrases are not literal: ask what effect the writer is describing, then choose the option that matches that effect.

(d) What is the reviewer’s harshest criticism of the film?

Answer: The film is too long and some scenes could have been cut.

Under ‘The Bad’ the reviewer says the film is ‘simply too slow’ and that scenes ‘could have been removed’; it ends with the need for ‘a tighter edit’.

> **KEY TAKEAWAY**
> The harshest criticism is usually in the section headed ‘The Bad’; find it, then check the other options do not appear there.

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(e) Which word describes the reviewer's overall tone in the verdict best?

Answer: appreciative

The verdict says the reviewer would 'happily see' the film again and praises its 'beauty and atmosphere': the tone is appreciative, even though the film is not perfect.

> **KEY TAKEAWAY**
> The tone of a verdict comes from its overall balance: a few jokes about flaws do not outweigh strong praise.

Question 2 (25 marks)

Write a review of a film that you have studied, following the format used in the review in Question 1. Support your views with reference to the film using the prompts below: / • The Good / • The Mixed / • The Bad / • The Verdict.

What earns the marks

- Follows the four-part review format (The Good, The Mixed, The Bad, The Verdict) and keeps a clear, consistent voice.
- Gives specific evidence from the film for each view: named characters, scenes, techniques such as camerawork, sound, music or acting.
- Balances praise and criticism so that the verdict follows logically from what has been said.
- Writes accurately and expressively, with varied vocabulary and sentence structures suited to a review.

Model response (about 310 words)

Finding Nemo (2003)

The Good

Pixar's Finding Nemo is one of the most beautiful animated films ever made. The ocean glows with colour, from the bright coral of the reef to the soft green light of the open sea, and the animators make the water feel real. Marlin, the overprotective clownfish father, is brilliantly played by Albert Brooks, and his love for his only son is the film's emotional centre. Dory, the forgetful blue tang voiced by Ellen DeGeneres, is hilarious and warm, and Crush, the relaxed sea turtle who treats his children as free spirits, is another highlight. Thomas Newman's gentle, playful score matches the mood of every scene.

The Mixed

The film is exciting, but it can be frightening for younger viewers. The barracuda attack at the start, in which Marlin loses his wife and almost all of his eggs, is shocking in a family film. However, this scene is vital, because it explains why Marlin cannot let Nemo out of his sight. The humour of the sharks who chant that fish are friends, not food, lightens the mood, but it also turns a dangerous scene into a joke, and not every viewer will enjoy that change of tone.

The Bad

The one weakness is that some of the supporting characters, such as the fish in the dentist's tank, are not given enough time to develop. The plan to escape the tank is complicated, and the film slows down a little while it is explained. I also felt that the ending, after such a long chase, was resolved a little too quickly.

The Verdict

Finding Nemo is funny, moving and clever. It teaches that love means trusting those we care about to take risks, and Marlin's journey from fear to trust is deeply satisfying. I would recommend it to

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anyone, and I would happily watch it again.

> **KEY TAKEAWAY**
> A strong review keeps to its headings, gives a specific example (a character, scene or technique) for every opinion, and ends with a verdict that follows from the evidence.

SECTION B · APPRECIATING CHARACTER, SETTING AND STORY

Question 3 (15 marks)

Analyse three aspects of the above extract that you think make the text an appealing one for younger readers. Explain your suggestions with reference to the extract.

What earns the marks

- Identifies three clear aspects (for example humour, mystery, a relatable main character or vivid description): 1 mark each for the aspect.
- Explains why each aspect would appeal to a younger reader: 2 marks each.
- Supports each point with a short, accurate reference or quotation from the extract: 2 marks each.
- Shows control of expression and organisation (one paragraph for each aspect).

Model response (about 240 words)

The first aspect that appeals to young readers is the humour of the narrator's voice. The opening sentence is funny because it places a world-changing event beside a silly detail: Tilda is 'trying not to think about her cousin Barnaby, who had once put a boiled egg in his sock for a bet'. The narrator also speaks directly to us ('you would imagine that a sea cannot simply go'), which makes the story feel like a joke shared with the reader, and comic comparisons such as the gull with 'the baffled air of a person who has gone to the wrong party' keep a child smiling.

Second, the extract has an exciting mystery that makes us want to read on. A missing sea is impossible and therefore irresistible. The description of the harbour, with boats lying 'on their sides in the mud like sleeping dogs', makes the strange scene vivid and almost friendly, and the discovery of the 'round, brass thing' that is 'ticking' ends the extract on a cliffhanger.

Third, Tilda is a character young readers can relate to and admire. She is curious and brave: her heart begins to thud 'not from fear, but from something far better'. Gran, who warns that 'You'll catch a crab', is a warm and funny companion, so the adventure begins in a cosy and safe way. Tilda's whispered last line, that 'Somebody's switched it off', shows the kind of imagination a child would love.

> **KEY TAKEAWAY**
> Name each aspect clearly, explain its effect on a young reader, and prove it with a short quotation: aspect, effect, evidence in every paragraph.

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