STUDENT QUESTION AND ANSWER BOOKLET

AQA-style Paper 2 - Beyond the finish

GCSE English Language | 8700/2 · 2026 question approach

Standard time	With approved 25% extra time
1h 45m	2h 11m 15s

80 marks | Section A: 40 marks | Section B: 40 marks

Original Exam Stash questions and indicative teacher guidance. This is an independent practice paper, not an AQA or Eduqas publication or endorsement. Open both linked sources before starting. The source texts remain in their original publicly available Eduqas PDFs and are not reproduced here.

Read the source guide on the following page before you start. You need the original Eduqas source file(s) alongside this booklet. Source texts are linked separately and are not reproduced here.

Use the printed reading references specified in each question. The original Eduqas questions, instructions and timings do not apply to this practice paper.

Full-source practice: use the complete Sally Minty-Gravett article and Arthur Payne account identified below, approximately 635 and 528 body words respectively. The question sequence, marks and suggested time follow AQA Paper 2's 2026 approach. The linked texts have no printed line numbers, so our questions use the paragraph guide below. This reference adaptation is deliberate; the questions have not been standardised by an awarding body. Do not convert these practice marks into a GCSE grade using past grade boundaries.

Name: _____

Class / date: _____

Answer all Section A questions and the Section B task(s) as directed. Write in this booklet. Use your agreed access arrangements and leave time to check your writing.

Source guide

Source A: Sally Minty-Gravett and Channel swimming - Lucy Griffiths

Eduqas GCSE English Language Component 2, June 2024, resource material: read the complete newspaper article on PDF pages 2-3. Its body has nine paragraphs. A1-A5 are on PDF page 2; A6-A9 are on PDF page 3. On page 2, A2 is the tall paragraph to the right of the photograph. Read that paragraph before the full-width paragraph beneath the photograph.

Open the original Eduqas source file

A1: The opening news paragraph reports Sally's latest record, her age, the crossing's distance and its duration.

A2: The paragraph beside the photograph describes Sally's lifelong relationship with sea swimming, her childhood experience of pools and the sensations of entering and leaving cold water.

A3: The next full-width paragraph traces her childhood swimming milestones and increasing competitive ambition.

A4: The paragraph about the Windermere race explains her coach's encouragement, training and first Channel crossing.

A5: The final paragraph on PDF page 2 recalls the fog and her feelings when the first crossing ended.

A6: The opening paragraph on PDF page 3 summarises later crossings, a storm, the two-way swim and her MBE.

A7: Sally explains the mental strategies she uses and how she feels while swimming.

A8: The next paragraph describes the planned retirement crossing, the favourable day and the welcome in France.

A9: The closing paragraph considers a possible future crossing, other activities she wants to learn and her willingness to return to swimming.

Source B: Captain Matthew Webb's Channel crossing - Arthur Payne

Eduqas GCSE English Language Component 2, June 2024, original question booklet: read only the complete Arthur Payne account on PDF page 3. The introductory two-line context is not B1. The four body paragraphs beneath it are B1-B4. Ignore the original questions on PDF pages 2 and 4.

Open the original Eduqas source file

B1: The first body paragraph describes preparations, Webb's departure, his appearance and initial swimming pace.

B2: The next paragraph follows the afternoon and evening, including dolphins, darkness and a sting.

B3: The third paragraph describes the approach to France, fatigue, the turning tide and the loss of hope.

B4: The final paragraph follows the exhausted swimmer towards shore, the crowd's response, his arrival and the assistance he receives.

Reading instructions

Use 1 hour 45 minutes as the standard practice time. For an approved 25% extra-time arrangement, the calculated total is 2 hours 11 minutes 15 seconds. Your centre confirms the arrangement used by an individual pupil.

Allow about 15 minutes to read the sources. Spend about 45 minutes answering Questions 1-4 and about 45 minutes on Question 5, including planning and checking.

Answer all five questions. Write in the answer booklet or on separate paper. The original Eduqas questions and its two-hour timing do not apply to this paper.

Source A is the modern article on PDF pages 2-3 of the separate resource booklet. Source B is the nineteenth-century account on PDF page 3 of the original question booklet. These are two different downloads.

For references in our questions, number Source A's nine body paragraphs A1-A9 and Source B's four body paragraphs B1-B4 in their printed reading order. Do not count headings, introductions, bylines, page numbers or copyright footers. Use the descriptive paragraph guide provided with each source.

Section A - Reading

Question 1 | 4 marks

Read Source A, paragraphs A1-A2 only. Choose FOUR statements below which are true. Shade the circle beside each of your choices. Choose a maximum of four statements; clearly cancel any choice you change.

- ○ A. Sally's latest crossing set a world record.
- ○ B. Sally had completed only one Channel crossing before the swim reported here.
- ○ C. Sally was 65 when she completed the crossing reported here.
- ○ D. Sally learnt to swim in one of Jersey's indoor swimming pools.
- ○ E. Sally regards sea swimming as more than a casual pastime.
- ○ F. Sally finds winter sea swimming wholly unpleasant.
- ○ G. When she first tried a swimming pool, Sally still preferred open water.
- ○ H. The latest crossing reported here was a 42-mile swim.

Section A - Reading

Question 2 | 8 marks

Refer to Source A and Source B. Both swimmers receive help or encouragement from other people. What can you infer about the differences between the support the swimmers receive? Support your ideas with evidence from both sources.

Section A - Reading

Question 3 | 12 marks

Read Source A, paragraph A2 only, beside the photograph on PDF page 2. How does Griffiths use language to show how intensely Sally experiences sea swimming? Support your response with relevant examples from this paragraph.

Section A - Reading

Question 4 | 16 marks

Refer to the whole of Source A and the whole of Source B. Compare how the writers convey their different attitudes towards the dangers and rewards of Channel swimming. In your answer, you could compare their attitudes, comment on the methods they use to convey those attitudes, and support your response with references to both texts.

Question 4 continued

Section B - Writing

Question 5 | 40 marks

Section B - allow about 45 minutes, including planning and checking. A local council is discussing how to spend its sports budget. One resident argues: ‘Public money should help more people enjoy everyday sport, rather than pay for a few people to chase sporting records.’ Write a speech for a community meeting in which you argue your view. You may agree, disagree or develop a qualified position. You do not need to refer to either reading source.

Planning space (not marked)

Question 5 - write your answer

Question 5 continued