ORIGINAL PRACTICE QUESTIONS

AQA-style Paper 1 - The hiding place

GCSE English Language | 8700/1 · 2026 question approach

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

Total: 80 marks. Write answers on separate paper.

Original Exam Stash practice, independently written. Not an official paper and not endorsed by AQA, Eduqas or OCR. Read the linked original source booklet alongside these questions. The source text is not reproduced here. Use the printed source line numbers, not the PDF viewer line count.

Shorter-source practice: this uses a shorter reading selection than a full examination would normally use. Question skills, marks and suggested timing follow the named board, but this is not a full specification-equivalent mock. Do not apply past grade boundaries to this practice paper. Suggested timing: about 60 minutes reading/Section A and 45 minutes Section B.

Source booklet - open before starting

Source A: The Thirty-Nine Steps — John Buchan (1915)

OCR November 2017 J351/02 Reading Insert, PDF page 4, Text 1, printed lines 1–30. Ignore Text 2 for this practice paper.

Open the original source booklet

Freely accessible OCR source booklet checked 15 November 2026. The literary work dates from 1915; the OCR adaptation and layout are linked rather than reproduced.

Instructions

Answer all Section A questions. Write responses on separate paper. Read the source booklet before starting; its original board instructions and timing do not apply to this practice set. Use the standard time unless a different arrangement has been agreed. The 25% figure is a practice planning aid for pupils with approved extra time.

Question 1 | 4 marks

Read Source A, lines 1–10. Answer each of the four questions below. Shade one circle for each question. Each correct answer earns 1 mark.

1(a) What has damaged the floor of the mill?

- ○ A. Flood water
- ○ B. Rats
- ○ C. Fire

1(b) What can Hannay see escaping from the house?

- ○ A. Smoke
- ○ B. Water
- ○ C. Birds

1(c) Why does Hannay reject the mill as a hiding place?

- ○ A. It is too far from the house.
- ○ B. Someone is already hiding there.
- ○ C. His pursuers are likely to search it.

1(d) What does Hannay hope his enemies will assume?

- ○ A. He has joined their search.
- ○ B. He has escaped into the open country.
- ○ C. He is waiting beside the stream.

Question 2 | 8 marks

Focus on lines 17–20. How does Buchan use language to convey the physical difficulty of Hannay’s climb? Support your response with short quotations and relevant terminology where helpful.

Question 3 | 8 marks

Think about the whole of Source A. How has Buchan organised the extract to create suspense? You might consider the initial problem, changes in Hannay’s position or awareness, the pace, and what is revealed or withheld.

Question 4 | 20 marks

Focus on lines 21–30. “Although Hannay has found somewhere to hide, the ending leaves him with very little control over what happens next.” How far do you agree and/or disagree? Evaluate how the writing shapes your judgement. Refer closely to this part of the source.

Question 5 | 40 marks

Section B — allow about 45 minutes. Choose ONE task. EITHER describe an abandoned building immediately after somebody has left it. OR write the opening of a story in which a character must decide whether to stay hidden or reveal themselves. You may invent the place and people. Plan briefly and leave time to check your work.