GCSE
ENGLISH LANGUAGE
Paper 1 Explorations in creative reading and writing

Marking guidance

Maximum mark: 80

Use best fit to select the band and the mark. Credit valid alternative readings supported by the text.

Question 01 [4 marks]

Read again the first part of the source, from lines 1 to 6. Answer all parts of this question. Choose one answer for each question.

Award one mark for each correct selection: 1: In a hole; 2: Wedge-shaped; 3: It vanishes; 4: He quickens it. No mark if more than one answer remains selected for an item.

All four answers are explicit in lines 1-6.

Question 02 [8 marks]

How does the writer use language here to convey Mole's growing fear?

The directional movement from behind to ahead and then both sides denies Mole a reliable escape route. The description makes a faint sound feel widespread.

The exclamation about unnamed pursuers turns an uncertain noise into organised readiness. Explore the difference between what is heard and what Mole assumes.

The repeated he and the sequence alone, unarmed and far from help isolate him; closing night adds pressure. Reward analysis of language effects within these lines, not outside events.

Marks	Description
0	Nothing relevant to the question.
1-2	Simple, relevant comment with a reference or example; effects may be asserted rather than explained.
3-4	Some explanation of relevant choices and effects, supported by appropriate examples.
5-6	Clear, developed explanation of how the writing achieves the specified effect, using well-selected references.
7-8	Perceptive, detailed analysis of choices and their effects, supported by precise, judicious references.

Question 03 [8 marks]

You now need to think about the structure of the source as a whole. This extract comes from a novel. How has the writer structured the text to create a sense of increasing danger?

Repeated short announcements introduce faces, whistling and pattering in successive stages. Each new sensory threat adds to the previous one.

The viewpoint stays close to Mole's uncertain perceptions: movement away from faces takes him off the path, worsening his position rather than resolving the problem.

The rabbit's urgent appearance interrupts the gathering noises and seems to confirm danger. Pace accelerates as sounds become pursuit and Mole runs without direction.

The tree hollow slows the action but safety remains conditional. The final naming of the Terror retrospectively gathers the earlier impressions into a single feared experience. Explain progression and effects rather than treating structure as sentence length alone.

Marks	Description
0	Nothing relevant to the question.
1-2	Simple, relevant comment with a reference or example; effects may be asserted rather than explained.
3-4	Some explanation of relevant choices and effects, supported by appropriate examples.
5-6	Clear, developed explanation of how the writing achieves the specified effect, using well-selected references.
7-8	Perceptive, detailed analysis of choices and their effects, supported by precise, judicious references.

Question 04 [20 marks]

For this question focus on the later part of the source, from line 24 to the end. Mole's terror seems understandable, even though he cannot be certain what is pursuing him. To what extent do you agree and/or disagree with this statement?

There is no required position. A qualified answer can find the fear reasonable while questioning how far imagination turns uncertain sounds into definite pursuers.

The sound grows, multiplies and seems to surround him. The rabbit's warning and visible distress lend external support to Mole's alarm.

The forest appears to hunt; questions and indefinite things keep the pursuers unidentified. The frantic movement can make his vulnerability convincing without identifying an actual attacker.

Shelter offers only perhaps safety. His exhaustion and trembling sustain the fear, while the final naming partly validates his experience within the narrative. Evaluate the effects of methods with references from the specified range; apply AO4 bands by best fit.

Marks	Description
0	Nothing relevant to the question.
1-5	A simple judgement with limited textual support; little explanation of how the writing shapes the response.
6-10	Some supported evaluation, with some explanation of relevant writing choices.
11-15	Clear, sustained evaluation of the statement, with developed explanation of methods and well-selected references.
16-20	Convincing, perceptive evaluation of the statement, with detailed consideration of methods and judicious evidence.

Question 05 [40 marks]

A magazine is inviting entries for a creative writing competition. Write a description of a path through a wood. You may use the picture for ideas. OR Write the opening of a story in which someone thinks they are being followed.

Mark the chosen response independently of Section A. It need not retell the source or use its characters. Treat the two options as equally valid.

AO5 (24 marks): judge the effectiveness of communication for the chosen description or narrative opening; appropriateness and control of tone, viewpoint and vocabulary; development of selected details; and purposeful organisation. Do not require a complete plot for the narrative opening.

AO6 (16 marks): judge sentence control and variety, grammar, punctuation and spelling separately from AO5. Reward accuracy and deliberate variation, not a count of unusual words or techniques.

Use the original practice band summaries below as indicative guidance and moderate against the current official writing criteria. This guide has not been standardised by AQA.

AO5

Marks	Description
0	No relevant response.
1-6	Simple communication with limited development or organisation.
7-12	Some successful communication and development, with some organisation and appropriate choices.
13-18	Clear, effective and developed communication, with controlled organisation and vocabulary.
19-24	Compelling, convincing communication, developed detail and assured, purposeful organisation and language.

AO6

Marks	Description
0	No creditable technical control.
1-4	Limited control of sentences, grammar, spelling and punctuation.
5-8	Some secure control, with some sentence variety; errors remain evident.
9-12	Generally accurate and controlled sentences, grammar, spelling and punctuation, with effective variety.
13-16	Consistently secure, deliberate control of varied sentence structures, grammar, spelling and punctuation.

Kenneth Grahame, The Wind in the Willows (1908).