Your notes

GCSE English Language: revision notes

Comparing writers' viewpoints

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The task

- (AQA) Paper 2 Question 4 (16 marks) asks you to compare how two writers convey their different feelings and **perspectives**, using the whole of both sources. Spend about 20 minutes.
- One source is from the 19th century and the other is from the 20th or 21st century.

Viewpoints and perspectives

- A **viewpoint** is the writer's opinion or attitude, such as being enthusiastic about travel or critical of zoos.
- A **perspective** is the position the writer is writing from, shaped by their time, age, background, culture and experiences.

Methods to compare

- **Tone** (for example, formal, humorous, angry or nostalgic), language (emotive words, **anecdotes**, rhetorical questions, statistics and direct address) and structure (how each text opens and ends, and how it develops the argument).

How to structure it

- Start with a short overview: what does each writer feel, and where are they writing from?
- Then write three paragraphs, with both writers in each: their different views first, then the method that shows each view.
- Example: 'The inspector is confident and formal, whereas the parent has a weary, personal **tone**...'.

- Comparing words for differences: whereas, however, on the other hand, in contrast, unlike. For similarities: similarly, likewise, both, in the same way.
- Use **context** in a phrase or two, to explain why the views differ.

Exam tip

- Lead with feelings and ideas. Methods are how you prove them.
- Compare the endings: how a text finishes often shows the writer's final attitude.

Common mistakes

- Writing about one source and then the other.
- Listing a method from each without saying what feeling it conveys.
- A long paragraph of history. **Context** is a phrase or two.

On your exam board (Edexcel, OCR and Eduqas)

- (Edexcel) Paper 2 Question 7(b) (14 marks) asks you to compare how the writers of two 20th- and 21st-century non-fiction texts present their ideas and **perspectives**.
- (Eduqas) Component 2 compares a 19th-century and a 21st-century non-fiction text.
- (OCR) Component 1 asks you to compare two non-fiction texts.

Key terms

Viewpoint	A writer's opinion or attitude on a topic.
Perspective	The position a writer writes from, shaped by their time and experiences.
Tone	The attitude shown in a writer's voice, such as angry or nostalgic.
Context	The time and circumstances in which a text was written.
Comparative connective	A linking word that compares, such as 'whereas' or 'similarly'.
Emotive language	Words chosen to make the reader feel strong emotions.
Anecdote	A short personal story used to make a point.

Quick questions

Cover the answers and test yourself: remembering is what makes it stick.

1. How many marks is Paper 2 Question 4 worth? (AQA)
2. What is a writer's viewpoint?

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3. What shapes a writer's perspective?
4. Which comparative connective shows a difference?
5. Which comparative connective shows a similarity?
6. What is tone?
7. Why should you use context in Question 4? (AQA)
8. What is an anecdote?

Answers

1. 16
2. Their opinion or attitude towards a topic
3. Their time, background and experiences
4. In contrast
5. Likewise
6. The writer's attitude shown through their voice, such as angry or nostalgic
7. It can explain why the writers' perspectives differ
8. A short personal story used to make a point

What to do next

Practise 12 questions on this topic

Try 4 exam questions, with mark schemes

Read the lesson, one step at a time

Free revision for GCSE and KS3 at lycolearn.co.uk. Some notes are for one exam board only, and say so in brackets.

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