Your notes

GCSE English Language: revision notes

Evaluating a text

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The question

- (AQA) Paper 1 Question 4 (20 marks) gives a statement about part of the source, then asks 'To what extent do you agree and/or disagree with this statement?'. It's half of the reading marks on the paper, so spend about 20 minutes.
- (AQA) Since 2026 the statement doesn't come from 'a student', and you're told which part of the source to use. You could consider your impressions, comment on the **writer's methods** and support your response with references.
- It tests evaluation: giving your own judgement, and proving it from how the text works.

How to answer

- Decide your view in one sentence before you write. 'Partly' is often the strongest, but you can fully agree if you really argue it.
- Plan three points in 2 minutes, each with one or two short quotations from the named lines.
- Begin each paragraph with your opinion on the statement. Then use the writer's language or structure as your evidence.
- Keep using the statement's own words, and judging words: 'convincingly', 'it's hard to agree that', 'the more telling detail is'.

How it's marked (AQA)

- Level 4 (16 to 20 marks): a convincing, **critical** view, with real insight into the methods and well-chosen references.
- Level 3 (11 to 15 marks): a clear, relevant view, with clear comments on the methods and relevant references.

- Level 2 (6 to 10 marks): some attempt to judge, with general comments on ideas and methods.
- Level 1 (1 to 5 marks): simple comments and impressions.

Exam tip

- Write as yourself. 'I think' and 'I'd argue' push you into judging, which is what's being marked.
- Save your strongest idea for last: it's what the examiner reads before deciding on a mark.

Common mistakes

- A language answer with 'I agree' at the top.
- Using the wrong part of the source.
- Making the same point three times.

On your exam board (Edexcel, OCR and Eduqas)

- (Edexcel) Paper 1 Question 4 and Paper 2 Question 6 (15 marks each) name an effect, such as creating tension, and ask you to **evaluate** how successfully it is achieved.
- (OCR and Eduqas) There are evaluation questions on your papers too. The approach is the same: give a clear judgement, and support it with short quotations and explanations of the **writer's methods**.

Key terms

Evaluate	To judge how well something is done, and explain why.
Critical	Showing careful, thoughtful judgement.
Interpretation	A way of understanding a text.
Writer's methods	The language and structural choices a writer makes.
Reader response	How a text makes the reader think or feel.
Embedded quotation	A short quotation built into your own sentence.

Quick questions

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

1. How many marks is Paper 1 Question 4 worth? (AQA)
2. What does 'evaluate' mean?
3. How should an answer to Question 4 begin? (AQA)
4. What must you support your ideas with?
5. What do 'the writer's methods' include?

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6. Can you disagree with the statement?
7. What makes an evaluation 'perceptive'?
8. About how long should you spend on Question 4? (AQA)

Answers

1. 20
2. Judge how well the writer achieves an effect
3. With a clear view on how far you agree with the statement
4. Short, relevant quotations
5. Language and structural choices
6. Yes, if you explain your view with evidence
7. Insightful ideas that consider other interpretations
8. About 20 minutes

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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