

Updated for
2026 exams

AQA GCSE

English Language Paper 2

EXAM SKILLS
PACK

- Four paired non-fiction text extracts
- Reading and writing sections for each theme
- Exam-style questions with suggested answers

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Teacher introduction

This GCSE pack is designed to help students prepare and revise for AQA GCSE English Language **Paper 2: Writers' viewpoints and perspectives**, which assesses students' skills in reading and writing non-fiction texts.

The pack focuses on the following assessment objectives:

A01	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify and interpret explicit and implicit information and ideas. Select and synthesise evidence from different texts.
A02	Explain, comment on and analyse how writers use language and structure to achieve effects and influence readers, using relevant subject terminology to support their views.
A03	Compare writers' ideas and perspectives, as well as how these are conveyed, across two or more texts.
A05	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Communicate clearly, effectively and imaginatively, selecting and adapting tone, style and register for different forms, purposes and audiences. Organise information and ideas, using structural and grammatical features to support coherence and cohesion of texts.
A06	Candidates must use a range of vocabulary and sentence structures for clarity, purpose and effect, with accurate spelling and punctuation.

This pack is structured around four broad themes: **the sea, travel, money and the environment**.

Each theme has a reading and writing section to reflect the structure of the exam. Each section contains a variety of activities focusing on different assessment objectives and questions, with accompanying 'answers' where applicable. Each section also has a practice paper with suggested answers. The structure of the pack is designed to be flexible; each unit can be completed in any order and each can be used stand-alone as complete units.

Each non-fiction text extract has a thematically linked partner text. The text extracts are paired as follows:

- **Source 1A:** 'Revealed: How to stay safe at the beach' by Karl West (2017)
- **Source 1B:** 'The Pleasures of Life' by John Lubbock (1890)

- **Source 2A:** 'The *Guardian* view on over-tourism: an unhealthy appetite for travel' (2018)
- **Source 2B:** Francis Kilvert's diary from the 1870s

- **Source 3A:** *A Girl Called Jack* by Jack Monroe (2014)
- **Source 3B:** Letter from George Dunlop (1813)

- **Source 4A:** 'Squids and octopuses thrive as "weeds of the sea" warm to hotter oceans' by Alan Yuhas (2016)
- **Source 4B:** *The Voyage of the Beagle* by Charles Darwin (1839)

Our thanks go to our contributor Helen Millman Jones who has written this pack.

Disclaimer: The suggested approaches and sample questions in this exam skills pack have been written to complement the teaching of the specification. AQA have not endorsed the sample questions or approved the content.

Paper 2: Reading (Section A)

These reading activities will focus on Section A of Paper 2. The extracts are on the theme of **the sea**. The following reading objectives are assessed in Section A:

AO1: Reading comprehension and evidence

In order to succeed in this assessment objective, you need to:

- Identify the correct bit of information in a text.
- Understand explicit and implicit information and ideas.
- Select appropriate evidence from different texts.

AO2: Language and structure

In order to succeed in this assessment objective, you need to:

- Analyse the effects of a writer's choice of language.
- Analyse the effects of a writer's choice of structural features.
- Use relevant terminology to support your points.

AO3: Comparing ideas and perspectives

In order to succeed in this assessment objective, you need to:

- Compare the ideas and perspectives in two texts.
- Compare how the ideas and perspectives are presented in two texts.

Source 1A: 21st-century non-fiction



This extract is from the online version of *Coast* magazine and was published in 2017. In the website content below, the writer Karl West advises the reader how to stay safe on Britain's coastline.

Revealed: How to stay safe at the beach

Britain's coastline is blessed with stunning seaside spots for all the family to enjoy, but the sea is powerful so refresh your memory about the hidden dangers and how to deal with them.

According to the two biggest beach safety and drowning prevention charities in Britain - the Royal National Lifeboat Institution (RNLI) and the Royal Life Saving Society UK (RLSS) - the greatest threat to a typical family trip to the seaside probably won't come from sharks or jellyfish, but from rip currents, tides and offshore winds. These may not sound as menacing, but each year more visitors to Britain's beaches get into trouble because of them than anything else.

Beware rip currents

Rip currents are like powerful rivers in the sea that usually rush back from the shore and out to deeper water. They are dangerous because they are stronger and faster than even the best swimmer and can quickly sweep unwary swimmers, surfers and body-boarders out to sea. These rip currents may appear as dark water, as calm areas in between waves, or as choppy areas. Any time you see beach debris, such as seaweed, and foam floating out to sea, chances are you have spotted a rip current. It's always best to choose a beach with lifeguards but if this isn't possible avoid the area, and, if in doubt, don't go out.

It is easy to get caught in a rip current. Experts reckon it happens most often in waist-deep water. Both the RNLI and RLSS advise those caught in a rip current to stay calm and conserve energy. A rip current is like a giant water treadmill that you can't turn off, so it does no good to try and swim against it. If you find yourself in a rip, raise your hand and shout for help. Stronger swimmers can try to escape by swimming sideways across the rip, which is usually parallel with the

beach. As a last resort, if you float or tread water you will eventually wash out of the current as the rip moves to deeper water and you can swim back to shore taking a diagonal line to avoid going back into the current. For more info go to ripcurrents.co.uk.

Check the tides

Incoming tides isolate rocks and sandbanks from headlands and the shore. So, before strolling out to a secluded headland, find out what time the tide rolls back in. Be vigilant if you are going to venture into such areas - the tide can quickly come in, and without realising it you've been cut off.

Free tide tables are readily available at most beaches or displayed on the lifeguard tower. Stay off rocks and small, enclosed beaches and know the tide times to avoid getting stranded. Also, rocks can be slippery, even when it isn't raining, so keep to paths and avoid walking close to cliff edges in high winds.

Understand offshore winds

Offshore winds blow across the land and towards the sea. They are favoured by surfers as they produce better waves - but they can be dangerous for unassuming beach-goers who just want to paddle around the bay in an inflatable dinghy or on a lilo. Children using inflatables should always be accompanied by an adult standing in the water, who can hold on to them. These air beds and inflatable boats are a well-known hazard.

Drownings occur when people don't pay proper attention to the wind direction, as inflatables are easily blown far out to sea. The RLSS advises against their use in open water and recommends that they should only be used in sheltered and confined spaces, such as rockpools or seaside lidos, if permitted.

Teachit Sample



Practise your skills

Before you read the extract

- Using the title of the article, try to predict what some of the writer's advice might include.

Write a list using imperative verbs. For example:

- **Avoid** swimming out of your depth.
- **Look** for the red and yellow flags, as these indicate safe places to swim.

After reading the article, compare your suggestions with those offered in the article.

Understanding the vocabulary

- Underline all of the **imperative verbs** used by the writer. For example:

Britain's coastline is blessed with stunning seaside spots for all the family to enjoy, but the sea is powerful so refresh your memory about the hidden dangers and how to deal with them.

- What do these verbs tell you about the purpose of the text?
 - What effect do these verbs have on the tone of the text?
- The article uses a range of **adjectives** which might be unfamiliar.

Match the following adjectives with their meaning:

Adjective
A. menacing
B. unwary
C. parallel
D. secluded
E. vigilant
F. unassuming

Meaning
1. looking out for danger
2. side by side
3. reserved or unconfident
4. not cautious or aware
5. dangerous or threatening
6. sheltered and private

Spotlight on AO1 in question 1



In order to answer question 1, you will be selecting four statements which are true from a specific part of the text.

Top tips for the exam

- Mark off the section for question 1 and all of the other questions when you first read over the paper. Take care to respond to the relevant section for each question.
- Put a pencil mark next to the statements you think are true and then check them before you commit to shading the circle.

4. Practise using the last two paragraphs of Source 1A.

Choose four statements below which are **true**. Show your choices by writing a T in the boxes.

A. Offshore winds blow across the sea and towards the land.

B. Offshore winds are popular with surfers.

C. Offshore winds don't affect those who just want to paddle.

D. Children using inflatables should be supported by an adult.

E. Inflatables can be dangerous.

F. The RLSS suggests that it is best to avoid inflatables on the open sea.

G. The RLSS recommends inflatables on open water only.

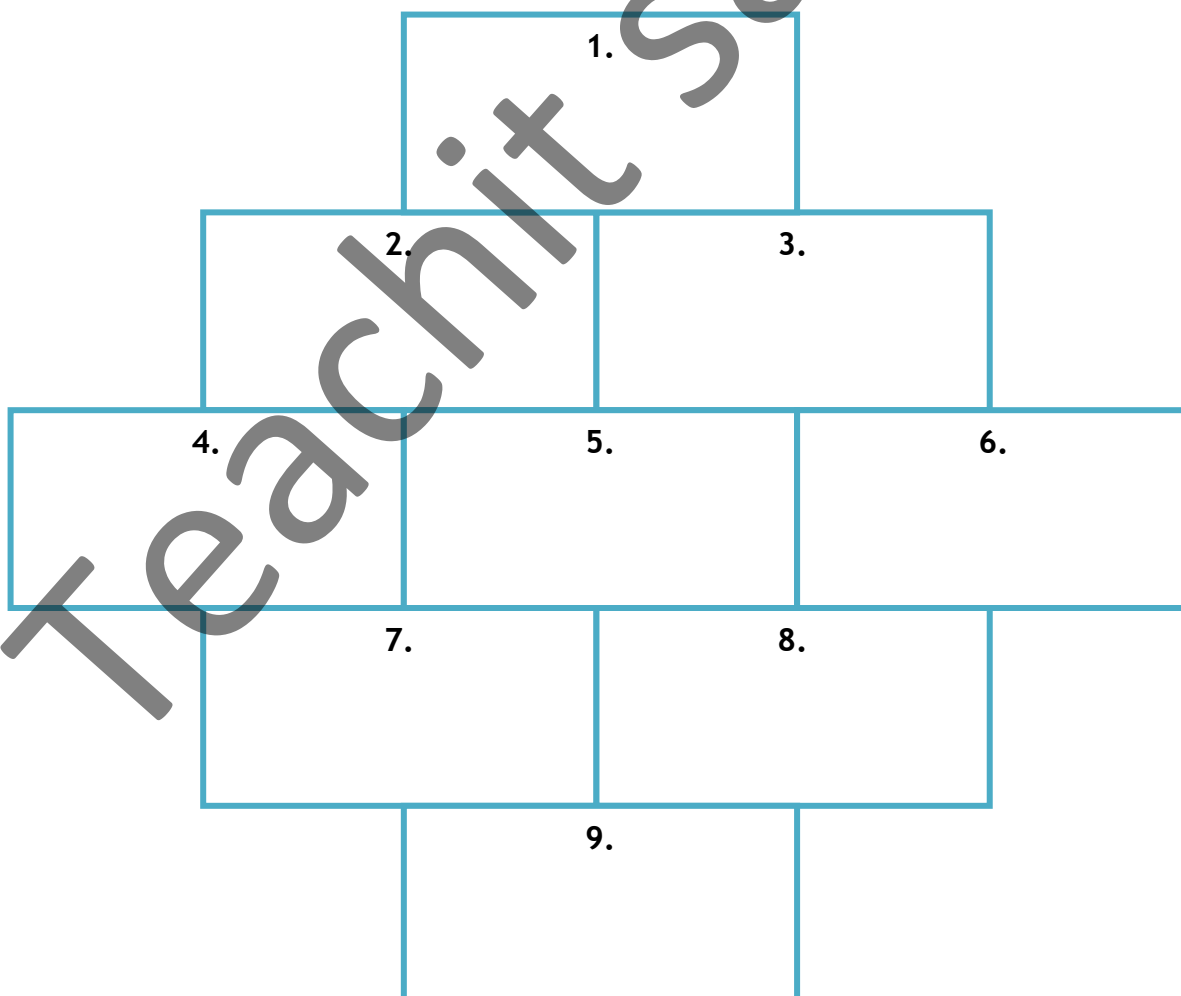
Spotlight on AO3 in question 4



Before comparing this text with its partner source, consider the perspective and feelings of this writer towards the subject of **the sea**.

5. What are Karl West's perspectives and feelings about the sea? Arrange these words on the diamond-nine diagram from most relevant to least relevant.

enchanted	respectful	advisory
apprehensive	positive	in awe
knowledgeable	excited	cautionary



Extend your thinking

Why is your top choice the most relevant word? Explain your choice.

Which part of the text demonstrates this feeling most clearly?

Choose another part of the text which demonstrates a different feeling - perhaps the one you ranked second or third.

Teachit Sample