

GCSE English Language Unit 2

Reading and Writing:

Description, Narration and Exposition

Parents and Children

Teaching and Learning

Teaching and Learning Support – Sample Assessment Materials

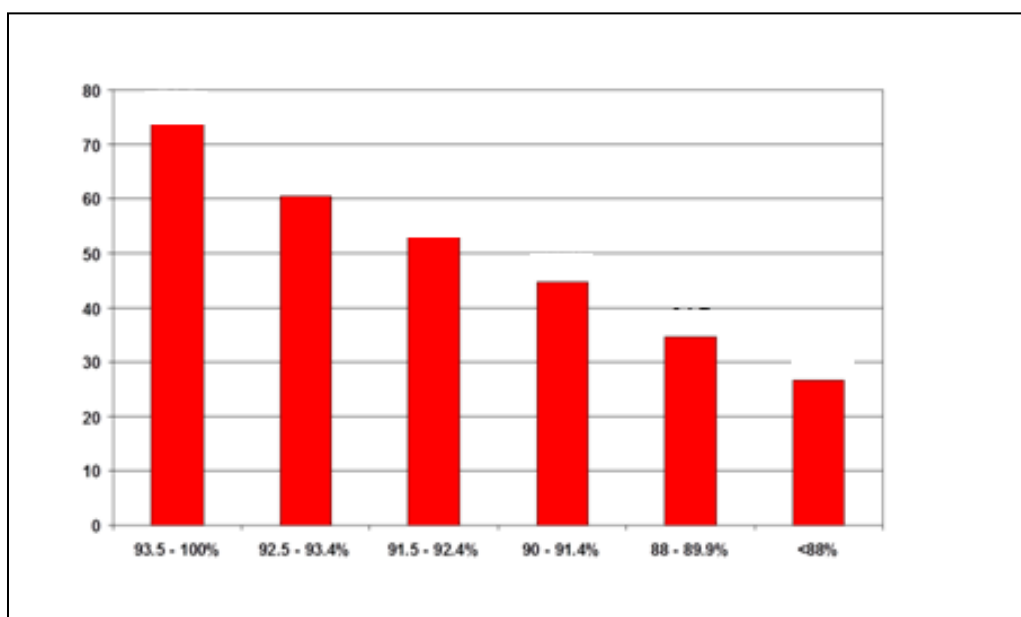
Paper 1 – Parents and Children

Reading – Section A

Exploring Non-Continuous Texts

Students should be encouraged to read all information and text in non-continuous texts.

To highlight the challenge of understanding a text without reading all of the detail, present the students with the chart below and ask them to interpret the data. Ask students what information they need to understand the data.

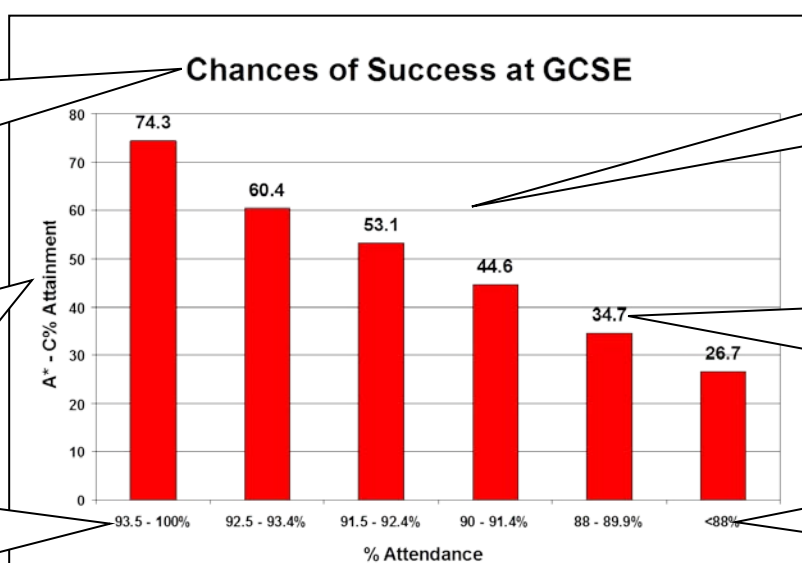


Hopefully students would suggest the following, or similar:

Title – provides information as to what is being represented.

Labelled axes – states information that has been evenly arranged.

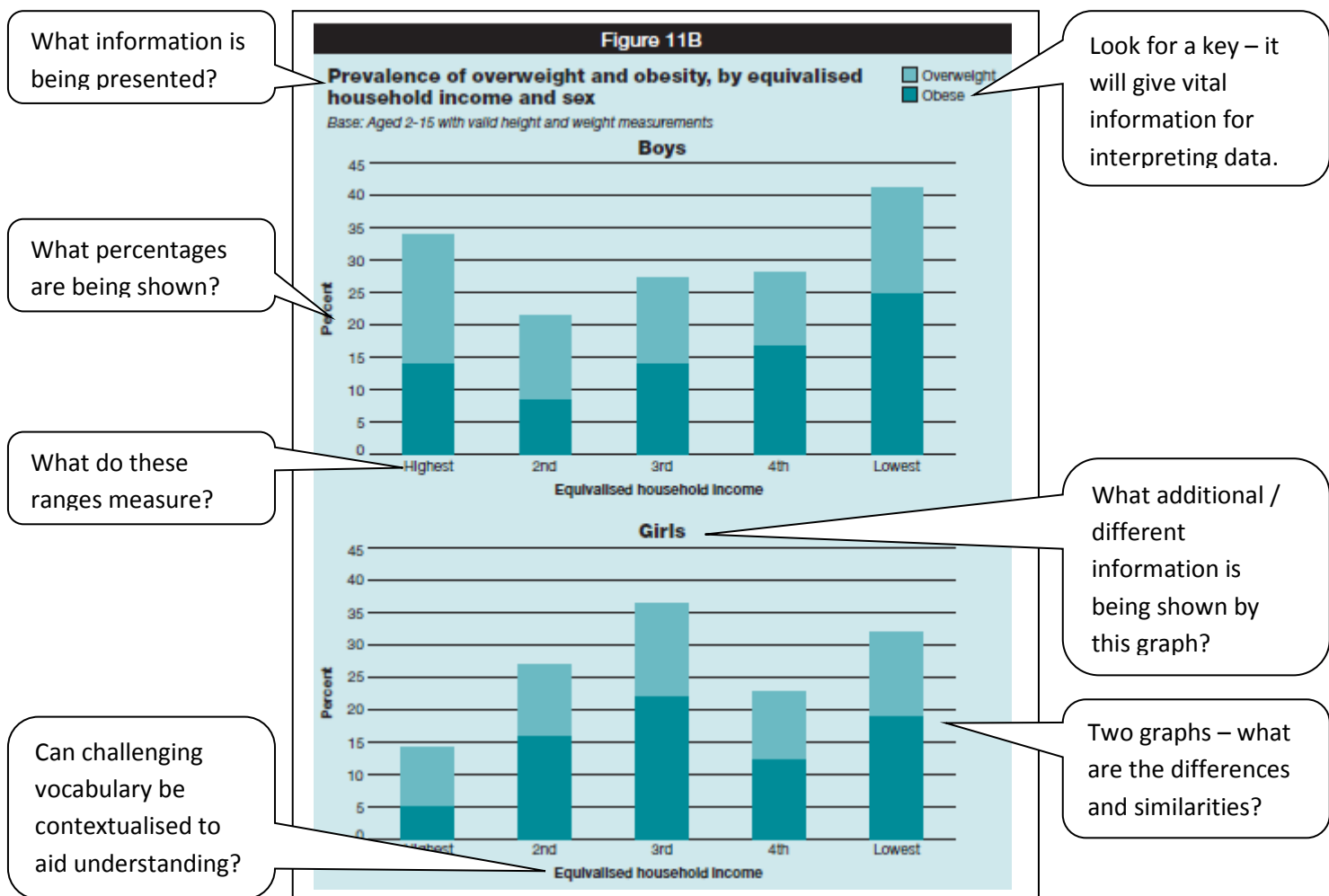
Ranges – are these all equal? What reasons are there for this?



A reference line – used to measure values.

Precise percentages given to ensure accuracy of

Need to understand symbols < and %



Reading Task:

Compare the information presented in these charts.

Encourage students to use comparative connectives for both continuous and non-continuous text comparisons:

However	Alternatively	Despite this	Likewise
In the same way	Equally	As with	Instead
Similarly	...while...	On the contrary	Equivalently

Exposition Texts

Establish PURPOSE, AUDIENCE, FORMAT and TONE with students.

Even a straightforward text can allow students plenty of opportunities for comment. Higher attaining students should not overlook the obvious.

Exposition texts provide an explanation of how things work / have been put together / interrelate. These include texts such as essays, definitions, meeting minutes, graphs, encyclopaedia entries, business letters, news articles, etc.

How could Text A be described as an exposition text?

The diagram illustrates a formal letter from a Headteacher to parents. The letter text is as follows:

Parent / Carer,

As a new school year begins, we would like to remind all parents of the importance of school attendance. Schools are being asked to make a concerted effort to raise pupil awareness of the impact that absences from school can have on their attainment and I would ask parents/carers support us in our drive to further improve the school's attendance performance.

I have attached a table and chart illustrating the relationship between attendance and achievement at school, a copy of which is also on our web site.

The rewards for good attendance are clear: pupils are more likely to enjoy school, achieve their potential and be better prepared for adult life.

We will be updating you about your child's attendance throughout the year and we ask for your continued support in encouraging your child to attend school every day.

Yours faithfully,
Mrs Elaine Stickler
Headteacher

Callouts on the left side of the letter:

- Audience – parents / guardians of school children.
- Tone – formal. Implies that this is a subject to be taken seriously.
- Gives lists of benefits – made to sound uncomplicated.
- Format – follows the conventions of a formal letter.
- Format – provides the title of the writer which reinforces significance of this issue.

Callouts on the right side of the letter:

- Purpose – reminder about attendance.
- Purpose – asking for parental support.
- Supporting evidence – proof to bolster case.
- Suggests partnership – each party will do something.
- Re-emphasises purpose support.

Writing Task:

Imagining that you are a parent, write back to the Headteacher explaining that you have already booked a family holiday in term time and would like permission for your child to be excused from school. Make sure you use the same format and tone, and are clear about the audience and purpose for your writing.

Students then look at Text D and discuss examples from the text that suggest the Purpose, Audience, Format and Tone.

Child obesity: Why do parents let their kids get fat?

By Denise Winterman BBC News Magazine

The health risks for obese children may be even greater than previously estimated, new research suggests. So why do parents let their children get fat?

Obesity experts say parents are struggling with a multitude of problems when it comes to their child's weight. They range from a lack of education about food, limited cooking skills and limited money to buy healthier food to longer working hours and marketing campaigns for junk food aimed at kids.

But the more sedentary lives children now lead is also creating huge problems. Last week a study suggested that up to 75% of junior school children preferred to stay at home than go to their nearby park.

While the problems parents face might be increasing so is evidence about the dangers of obesity. So why do they let their children get so fat?

Katy's son weighed over 23 stone (147kg) by the age of 15. She knew the reason - he ate too much and did too little exercise.

"A lot of his eating habits were out of my control," says the mother-of-two from Buckinghamshire. "He would eat too much when he was at school and then come home and eat whatever was around, even cook big meals for himself.

Some parents know they are a bigger part of the problem. Tracey says she allowed her daughter to pick up her own bad eating habits. Admitting to having a "complicated relationship" with food herself, she says she used it to bond with her daughter.

"We would snack together in the evening while watching television and treat ourselves with sweets and puddings. It was like our special time together," says the mother-of-one from Shrewsbury.

"I could see she was carrying a few extra pounds but she seemed happy. I didn't want to mention it because I didn't want her to feel negative about herself.

The daily emotional battle around food can also be fraught between a parent and a child.

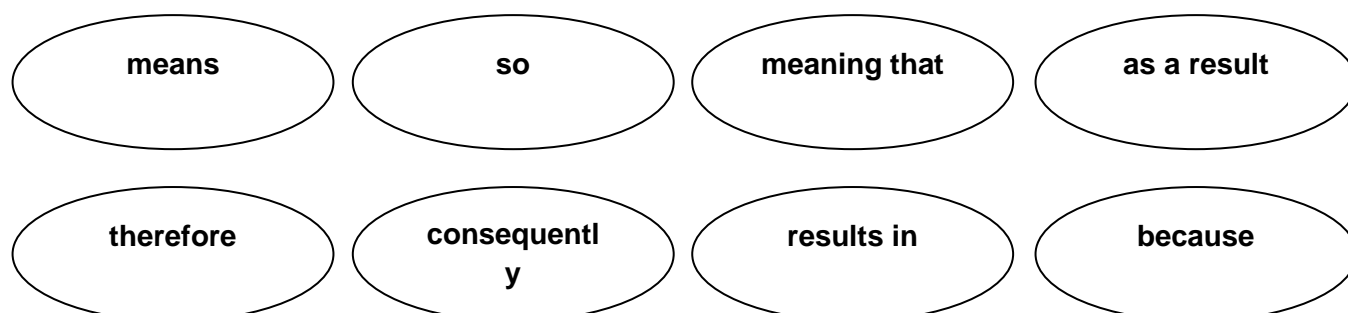
From a very early age children are very good at using a "whole set of behaviours" to get what they want, say experts. It's easy to judge but nearly every parent in the land has caved in to some sort of emotion blackmail from their child. It just might not be about food.

How could Text D be described as an exposition text? Are there any similarities with Text A?

Identifying main points of an explanation – underline or highlight all of the main points in Text D. Then add these to the table below and complete the second columns:

Point from the text	Effect / Consequence
"a lack of education about food"	children do not make healthy choices about what to eat

Explanations are all about 'cause and effect'. It is therefore helpful for students to have the vocabulary to explain these relationships:



Oracy Task

Group discussion: What should parents do to ensure that their children do not become obese?

Narrative Texts

A narrative text is characterised by the following features:

- when/what sequence;
- character behaviour;
- subjective point of view;
- selection and emphasis of details;
- recording actions and events.

In what ways does Text B demonstrate these characteristics?

Close focus

When/What sequence: Highlight in yellow temporal connectives or references to the passing of time in Text B that show the progression of the narrative thread. (This provides opportunities for students to practice careful tracking).

Character Behaviour: Highlight in blue examples of behaviour that indicate something of the character to the reader. (Students should be encouraged to think about characters in terms of i) appearance, ii) behaviour, iii) what they say and how they say it – all of which should reveal aspects that suggest what the characters are like).

Subjective Point of View: Underline in red examples that show this is the narrator's perspective. (Students should then be able to evaluate how reliable a narrator/writer is or identify any bias).

Selection and Emphasis of Details: Underline in green specific details that the writer has chosen to include, thinking about why they may be significant, and any examples of emphasis. (This provides opportunities for students to hone inference and deduction skills).

Recording Actions and Events: The way in which actions and events are recorded – the language and techniques used by the writer to capture them – provides a platform for students to evaluate the effectiveness of the writing from a critical distance and give their own personal responses based on their knowledge of this type of text.

Pat started school.

The uniform he had to wear should have made him look grown up. The grey V-necked sweater, the white shirt and the yellow tie should have made him look like a little man. But they didn't.

The formality of his school clothes only underlined the shocking newness of him. Approaching his fifth birthday, he wasn't even young yet. He was still brand new...

And now I had to let my beautiful boy go out into the world. At least until 3.30. For both of us, it felt like a lifetime.

He wasn't smiling now. At breakfast he was pale and silent in his pastiche of adult's clothing, struggling to stop his chin trembling and his bottom lip sticking out, while over the Coco Pops I kept up a running commentary about the best days of your life...

Then it was time to go.

As we drove closer to the school I was seized by a moment of panic. There were children everywhere, swarms of them all in exactly the same clothes as Pat, all heading in the same direction as us. I could lose him in here. I could lose him forever.

I took Pat's clammy hand and we joined the throng. We were just going through the gates to join them when I noticed the lace of Pat's brand new black leather shoes was undone.

'Let me get your lace for you, Pat, I said, kneeling down to tie it.

Two bigger boys rolled past, arm in arm. They leered at us. Pat smiled at them shyly.

'He can't even do his shoes up,' one of them snorted.

'No,' Pat said, 'but I can tell the time.'

They collapsed in guffaws of laughter, holding each other up for support, and reeled away repeating what Pat had said with disbelief.

It was time to leave him. Although there had been a few emotional goodbyes before he dropped out of nursery school, this time felt a bit different. This time it felt as though I were being left.

He was starting school, and by the time he left school he would be a man and I would be middle-aged. Those long days of watching Star Wars videos at home while life went on somewhere else were over. Those days had seemed empty and frustrating at time, but I missed them already. My baby was joining the world.

Focused Questions:

1. When/what sequence – Summarise what happens in this extract.
2. Character behaviour – What do we learn about Pat and Harry?
3. Subjective point of view – How reliable a narrator is Harry?
4. Selection and emphasis of details – How does the writer show what Harry feels about Pat's first day at school?
5. Recording actions and events – How does the writer make this story interesting?

Oracy Task:

Give an individual talk about your first day of school. Make sure that you follow the characteristics of a narrative:

- You should ensure that there is a logical sequence about what happens and when – use temporal connectives to guide your listeners.
- Make sure that you describe your behaviour, appearance and dialogue to indicate how you were feeling to the listeners – Show, not tell!
- Keep the first person perspective throughout. It is important to include bias as it reveals your point of view.
- Select specific details that are significant – leave out the boring stuff! – and think about techniques that could help you emphasise important details (e.g. repetition, varied sentence structures, onomatopoeia, etc.)
- Think carefully about the language and techniques you will use – you must keep your listeners entertained and interested.

Description Texts

These texts present information from a subjective point of view and could include diagrams, manuals, illustrations, diaries, travelogues, catalogues and so on.

In what ways is Text C a description text?

Students track through the text and highlight the verbs that are used to describe:

The morning came, without any warning, when my sisters **surrounded** me, **wrapped** me in scarves, **tied up** my bootlaces, **thrust** a cap on my head, and **stuffed** a baked potato in my pocket...

They **picked me up** bodily, **kicking** and **bawling**, and **carried** me up to the road.

The playground **roared** like a rodeo, and the potato **burned** through my thigh. Old boots, ragged stockings, torn trousers and skirts went **skating** and **skidding** around me. The rabble **closed in**; I was **encircled**; grit **flew** in my face like shrapnel. Tall girls with frizzled hair, and huge boys with sharp elbows, began to **prod** me with hideous interest. They **plucked** at my scarves, **spun me** round like a top, **screwed** my nose, and **stole** my potato.

From looking at the verbs the writer uses, how is Laurie's point of view presented?

What other techniques does the writer use to suggest Laurie's feelings?

Technique	Example	Implies/Suggests...
Adjectives	"Old"	
	"ragged"	
	"torn"	
	"Tall"	
	"frizzled"	
	"huge"	
	"sharp"	
	"hideous"	
Similes	"playground roared like a rodeo"	
	"grit flew in my face like shrapnel"	
	"spun me round like a top"	
Lists	"surrounded me, wrapped me in scarves, tied up my bootlaces, thrust a cap on my head, and stuffed a baked potato"	
	"plucked at my scarves, spun me round like a top, screwed my nose, and stole my potato"	
Active/Passive	"They picked me up"	
	"They plucked at my scarves"	

Writing Task

Write an introduction for your school prospectus, describing the school in a positive light.

Before you begin writing think about the Purpose, Audience, Format and Tone, along with some of the techniques explored in Lee's autobiography.