

13+ PAST PAPER PACK

Winchester College 13+ English 2023

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WINCHESTER
COLLEGE

Winchester College Entrance and Election Examination 2023

ENGLISH

Time allowed: 90 minutes

Answer TWO questions:

Either Section A (Prose) OR Section B (Poetry)

AND

Section C (Extended Writing)

Total marks available: 70

Each section is worth 30 marks.

You will also be marked out of 10 for the quality of your spelling, grammar, and punctuation.

Read all questions carefully.

You may make notes around the texts, and/or underline them.

You are advised to spend 45 minutes on each question.

SECTION A: PROSE COMPREHENSION

Choose **EITHER** this section **OR** Section B (Poetry)

This extract is from a short story 'The Entrance' by Gerald Durrell. The author has gone to visit some friends who are renovating a French chateau. After dinner, they send him to bed while a storm lashes the building. His host tells him they have found a curious manuscript while renovating the room he will sleep in. By candlelight, he reads about a man who some centuries ago found himself alone in the chateau.

Read the extract carefully and answer the questions that follow in full sentences.

It was then that I glanced across at the mirror opposite me and noticed that, in the reflection, the door to the salon that I had carefully closed was now ajar. Surprised, I twisted round in my chair and looked at the real door, only to find it was securely closed as I had left it. I looked again into the mirror and made sure my eyes – aided by the wine – were not playing me tricks, but sure enough, in the reflection the door appeared to be slightly ajar.

I was sitting there looking at it and wondering what trick of light and reflection could produce the effect of an open door when the door responsible for the reflection was securely closed, when I noticed something that made me sit up, astonished and uneasy. *The door in the reflection was being pushed open still further.* I looked at the real door again and saw that it was firmly shut. Yet its reflection in the mirror was opening, slowly, millimetre by millimetre. I sat there watching it, the hair on the nape of my neck stirring. Suddenly, round the edge of the door, there appeared something that at first glance I thought was some sort of caterpillar. It was long, wrinkled and yellowish-white in colour, and at one end it had a long, blackened horn. It humped itself up and scabbled at the surface of the carpet with its horn in a way that I had seen no caterpillar behave. Then, slowly, it retreated behind the door.

I found that I was sweating. I glanced once more at the real door to assure myself that it was closed because I did not fancy having the caterpillar or whatever it was crawling about the room with me. The door was still shut. I took a draught of wine to steady my nerves, and was annoyed to see that my hand was shaking. I, who had never believed in ghosts, or hauntings, or magic spells or any of that clap-trap, here I was imagining things in a mirror and convincing myself to such an extent they were real, that I was actually afraid.

It was ridiculous, I told myself as I drank my wine. There was some perfectly rational explanation for the whole thing. I sat forward in my chair and gazed at the reflection in the mirror with great intentness. For a long time, nothing happened and then the door in the mirror swung open a fraction and the caterpillar appeared again. This time it was joined by another and then, after a pause, yet another.

Suddenly my blood ran cold for I realized what it was. They were not caterpillars but attenuated yellow fingers with long twisted black nails tipping each one like gigantic misshapen rose thorns. The moment I realized this, the whole hand came into view, feeling its way feebly along the carpet. The hand was a mere skeleton covered with the pale-yellow parchment-like skin through which the knuckles and joints showed like walnuts. It felt around on the carpet in a blind, groping sort of way, the hand moving from a bony wrist, like the tentacles of some strange sea anemone from the deep sea, one that has become pallid through living in perpetual dark. Then slowly it was withdrawn behind the door. I shuddered for I wondered what sort of body was attached to that horrible hand. I waited for perhaps quarter of an hour, dreading what might suddenly appear from behind the mirror door, but nothing happened.

After a while I became restive. I was still attempting to convince myself that the whole thing was an hallucination brought on by the wine and the heat of the fire without success. For there was the door of the blue salon carefully closed against the draught and the door in the mirror still ajar with apparently something lurking behind it.

I wanted to walk over to the mirror and examine it, but did not have the courage. Instead I thought of a plan which, I felt, would show me whether I was imagining things or not. I woke Agrippa, the dog, and, crumpling up a sheet of the newspaper I had been reading into a ball, threw it down the room so that it landed just by the closed door. In the mirror it lay near the door that was ajar.

Agrippa, more to please me than anything else, for he was very sleepy, bounded after it. Gripping the arms of my chair I watched his reflection in the mirror as he ran towards the door. He reached the ball of newspaper and paused to pick it up. Then something so hideous happened that I could scarcely believe my eyes. The mirror door was pushed open still further and the hand and a long white bony arm shot out. It grabbed the dog in the mirror by the scruff of its neck and pulled it speedily, kicking and struggling, behind the door.

Questions

1. In the opening paragraph, what first startles the narrator of the story? [1]
2. Give a quotation from the second paragraph that shows the narrator views what appears around the door as unnatural. [1]
3. What do the following words mean in the context of their appearance in the extract? They have been underlined in the extract for you and they appear in the same order in the text:
 - (a) rational [2]
 - (b) attenuated [2]
 - (c) perpetual [2]
 - (d) restive [2]
4. In the third paragraph, how does Durrell reinforce the narrator's disbelief that he is experiencing the events? [3]
5. In the fifth paragraph, give a quotation that describes the horror of the narrator once he realises what the caterpillar is, and explore its effect. There is 1 mark awarded for your quotation and 1 for your explanation. [2]
6. Look at the description of the dog and the part it plays in the final two paragraphs. How does the author convey a sense of the narrator's relationship to the dog and its fate? Use evidence to support your answer. [5]
7. Using quotations from the extract as a whole and analysing Durrell's use of language for effect, discuss how the author creates a vivid Gothic picture of the scene in the salon. Avoid using material you have used in other answers. [10]

SECTION B: POETRY

Choose **EITHER** this section **OR** Section A (Prose)

Read the poem carefully and answer the questions which follow in full sentences.

There's a Hole in my Trainer

The trouble started when I noticed a hole
in the right toe of my black Nike trainers.
I managed the problem by ensuring that
I always wore a pair of black socks.

All went well until I noticed a hole
in the toe of one of my black socks.
I managed the problem by wearing
the offending sock on my left foot.

Perhaps it should come as no surprise
but I was unprepared for the shock
of discovering one morning
an unsightly hole in the other sock.

The remedy? Black nail varnish
on the peeping big toe. It worked a treat.
Enabling me to work out and jog
without drawing attention to my feet.

Sadly, when the nail bar on the high street
closed I was thrown into a dilemma.
A spot of darning? Gaffer tape on the toe?
I did as I always do: think outside the box.

Went online. Bought a new pair of socks

Roger McGough (b.1937)

Questions

1. What do the following words mean in the context of their appearance in the poem? They have been **underlined** in the extract for you and they appear in the same order in the text:
 - a) Offending [2]
 - b) Unsightly [2]
 - c) Dilemma [2]
2. What does the poet mean when he says he “managed the problem”? [2]
3. What effect is achieved by the use of the word “shock” in the third stanza? [2]
4. How does the poet shape the structure of the poem in relation to meaning, in terms of stanza organisation and any use of rhyme? [4]
5. What do the poet’s various attempts to solve the trouble that first started at the beginning of the poem reveal about his character? [6]

6. How does the poet use humour to make the situation of the poem interesting for the reader? Use quotes from across the poem, and justify your thoughts and choices. [10]

SECTION C: EXTENDED WRITING

Answer ONE question from this section.

Either

1. Here is the opening of T. S. Eliot's 'The Journey of the Magi'. I'm reminded of various winter journeys in recent years to visit family and friends at Christmas.

"A cold coming we had of it,
Just the worst time of the year
For a journey, and such a long journey:
The ways deep and the weather sharp,
The very dead of winter."

Write about a significant journey, describing it in a way that makes the reader feel as if they are living through it. Try to include the following:

- Imagery that captures the difficulties of the journey;
- Writing that appeals to the senses;
- A rich variety of vocabulary and sentence forms.

[30]

OR

2. Write a newspaper article that considers the value of reading as an activity, and books in all their various forms, as well as libraries as public spaces funded by local and national government taxes.
 - Ensure you explore the benefits of reading, and of books in as many available forms as possible.
 - Consider both sides of the argument as to whether those who read should pay for their knowledge and entertainment, or whether there is a public good which justifies the use of tax in this way.
 - Conclude with your own opinion on the matter.

[30]

Paper Notes: 13+ English Question Paper (13+ English Past Paper (2023))

Compiled by [SATs-Papers.co.uk](https://www.SATs-Papers.co.uk) to help you get the most from this paper.

Overview

This is the **Winchester College 13+ Entrance and Election Examination in English** from **2023**, a formal admissions paper for boys seeking entry to Year 9 at one of Britain's oldest and most prestigious independent schools. The paper assesses literary analysis, reading comprehension, and creative or discursive writing under timed conditions, with candidates required to answer two questions over **90 minutes**.

The examination is divided into three sections: a **prose comprehension** on a Gothic extract from Gerald Durrell's short story 'The Entrance', a **poetry analysis** of Roger McGough's humorous 'There's a Hole in my Trainer', and an **extended writing** task offering either descriptive narrative or argumentative journalism. Students must choose either the prose or the poetry section, then complete the extended writing task. **70 marks** are available in total, with 30 marks for each chosen section and an additional 10 marks awarded for spelling, grammar, and punctuation across the whole paper.

This paper is pitched at a demanding level appropriate for strong 13-year-old candidates competing for scholarship places or standard entry to Winchester College. It rewards close textual reading, sophisticated vocabulary, and the ability to write fluently and persuasively under pressure. The range of question types, from single-mark retrieval to 10-mark analytical essays, reflects the school's expectation that entrants will demonstrate mature literary understanding and polished written expression.

How this paper is organised

The paper is organised into three distinct sections, each worth **30 marks**, with a further **10 marks** for spelling, grammar, and punctuation assessed holistically across all responses. Candidates are instructed to answer **two questions** in total: they must choose either Section A (Prose) or Section B (Poetry), and they must complete Section C (Extended Writing). The rubric advises spending **45 minutes on each question**, dividing the 90-minute examination evenly.

Section A: Prose Comprehension presents an extract from Gerald Durrell's 'The Entrance', a Gothic tale involving mirrors and supernatural horror, followed by seven questions ranging from 1-mark retrieval and quotation tasks to a 10-mark analytical essay on Durrell's language and the creation of Gothic atmosphere. **Section B: Poetry**

offers Roger McGough's comic poem 'There's a Hole in my Trainer', with six questions exploring vocabulary, structure, character, and humour, culminating in a 10-mark essay on the poet's use of comedy.

Section C: Extended Writing gives candidates a choice between two 30-mark tasks: a descriptive narrative about a significant journey, inspired by T.S. Eliot's 'The Journey of the Magi', or a balanced newspaper article debating the public funding of libraries and the value of reading. Each task specifies structural and stylistic expectations, such as sensory detail, imagery, varied sentence forms, and the presentation of both sides of an argument.

Topics covered

- Close reading and comprehension of a Gothic prose extract with attention to narrative perspective, mood, and supernatural elements
- Vocabulary analysis and contextual definition of challenging words such as 'attenuated', 'perpetual', and 'restive' within a literary text
- Identification and exploration of authorial techniques in Gerald Durrell's short fiction, including figurative language, simile, and pacing
- Analysis of a contemporary humorous poem by Roger McGough, focusing on structure, stanza organisation, rhyme, and comic effect
- Character inference and deduction from poetic detail, using textual evidence to support interpretations of the poet's persona
- Extended descriptive or narrative writing with emphasis on sensory language, imagery, and varied sentence structures
- Discursive or argumentative journalism, presenting balanced debate on the funding of public libraries and the societal value of reading
- Technical accuracy across all written forms: spelling, grammar, punctuation, and formal register appropriate to task and audience

How to use this paper for revision

- Familiarise yourself with Gothic literary conventions such as mirrors, shadows, the supernatural, and the tension between rational explanation and inexplicable horror before tackling Section A.
- Practise defining challenging vocabulary in context rather than relying on dictionary meanings alone; examiners reward students who explain how a word's sense is shaped by its surrounding passage.
- For the 10-mark analytical questions, plan a short structure before you begin writing: identify three or four quotations in advance, each illustrating a distinct technique or effect.
- When analysing poetry, read the poem aloud at least once to hear its rhythm, line breaks, and tonal shifts; this is especially valuable for McGough's conversational, comic style.
- In Section C, spend the first five minutes planning your extended writing piece; jot down a structure, key images or arguments, and varied vocabulary to deploy throughout.
- Allow time to proofread your responses, particularly in Section C where spelling, grammar, and punctuation contribute 10 marks; catching careless errors can make a significant difference.
- If you struggle with one comprehension question, move on and return to it later; the paper rewards confident, complete responses to the questions you find more accessible.

Common mistakes to avoid

- Copying out long quotations without explaining their effect or relevance; examiners want concise quotation followed by close analysis of language, not passive paraphrase or description.
- Overlooking the instruction to 'use evidence to support your answer'; assertions about character, mood, or technique must be anchored in specific words or phrases from the text.
- Writing a narrative summary of the Durrell extract or McGough poem rather than analysing how the writer achieves particular effects through language choice, structure, or imagery.
- In Section C, producing generic or clichéd descriptive writing that lacks the 'rich variety of vocabulary and sentence forms' explicitly required by the question; vary sentence length and avoid repetition.
- Failing to present both sides of the argument in the newspaper article task before reaching a conclusion, which the question specifically instructs candidates to do.
- Running out of time because too long was spent on early short-answer questions; stick to the advised 45 minutes per section and move on decisively.

Exam technique

Allocate your time strictly according to the rubric: **45 minutes per section** is not a suggestion but a necessary discipline in a 90-minute paper where each section carries equal weight. Begin with whichever of Section A or B you feel most confident about; a strong start builds momentum and allows you to spend any spare minutes refining your extended writing or checking technical accuracy.

In the comprehension sections, tackle the short-answer questions first to secure quick marks, but do not linger on definitions or single-mark retrieval beyond a minute or two. For the higher-mark analytical questions (5 marks, 10 marks), identify your quotations and plan your argument in note form before writing; this prevents rambling and ensures you address the question directly. Always embed quotations into your own sentences rather than dropping them in isolation, and follow each with a sentence or two explaining how the language creates the effect in question.

For Section C, invest five minutes in planning: outline your journey or article structure, list vivid vocabulary or persuasive points, and decide on a clear opening and ending. Write fluently but keep an eye on spelling and punctuation; the 10 marks for technical accuracy are awarded across the whole paper, so consistent care pays dividends.

Leave three to five minutes at the end to proofread all your work, correcting slips in tense, agreement, or spelling that might otherwise cost you marks.

What to revise alongside this paper

To prepare thoroughly for this paper, practise close reading of both 19th and 20th century short fiction, paying particular attention to how writers establish atmosphere, manipulate time, and use objects (such as Durrell's mirror) as focal points for suspense or revelation. Revise the conventions of **Gothic literature**, including the uncanny, the double, entrapment, and the conflict between reason and superstition, as these underpin the Durrell extract and are likely to appear in future papers.

Strengthen your grasp of **poetic technique** by reading widely in contemporary poetry, especially poets who employ humour, colloquial voice, and unexpected turns (Carol Ann Duffy, Wendy Cope, and Simon Armitage are excellent companions to McGough). Practise writing both **descriptive narratives** and **argumentative articles**, experimenting with varied sentence structures, rich vocabulary, and the integration of literary or rhetorical devices; model answers from past papers or essay anthologies can help you internalise the register and sophistication expected.

Finally, revise formal grammar, punctuation, and spelling to ensure technical accuracy under pressure. The 10 marks for spelling, grammar, and punctuation can lift a borderline script into a strong pass or even a distinction, so consistent attention to these basics is as important as literary insight.

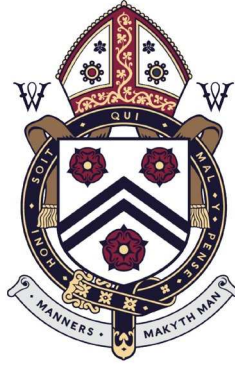
Key terms

Gothic fiction, Narrative perspective, Figurative language, Simile and metaphor, Sensory imagery, Tone and mood, Poetic structure, Stanza organisation, Comic effect, Contextual vocabulary, Discursive writing, Balanced argument, Descriptive narrative, Textual evidence, Close reading

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Name:

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WINCHESTER
COLLEGE

Entrance Examination

French Writing

Thursday 4th May 2023

Total time allowed: 35 minutes

- Write all your answers in the booklet.
- Dictionaries are not allowed.

100 marks

SECTION A

Conjugation

40 marks

1. Present tense

15 marks

Put the verbs in brackets into the present tense on the lines provided.

Example Frédéric _____ (jouer) aux jeux vidéo.
Frédéric _____ *joue* _____ (jouer) aux jeux vidéo.

1. Elles _____ (prendre) le petit-déjeuner.
2. Vous _____ (boire) du vin.
3. Je _____ (se brosser) les cheveux.
4. Nous _____ (lire) des romans.
5. Tu _____ (expliquer) le problème.
6. Il _____ (envoyer) une lettre à sa mère.
7. Elle _____ (savoir) ce qui s'est passé.
8. Ils _____ (finir) la tâche .
9. Nous _____ (remplir) un formulaire.
10. Vous _____ (avoir) peur.
11. Tu _____ (devoir) partir à l'étranger.
12. Elles _____ (vouloir) comprendre l'enjeu.
13. On _____ (suivre) les règles.
14. Je _____ (s'occuper) de cette affaire.
15. Vous _____ (aller) à la plage.

3. Future tense (futur simple)

10 marks

Put the verbs in brackets into the future tense on the lines provided.

Example Emma _____ (trouver) une solution.

Emma trouvera (trouver) une solution .

1. Ils _____ (être) ravis de coopérer.

2. J' _____ (écrire) un article sur ce sujet.

3. Nous _____ (sortir) les poubelles.

4. Vous _____ (fermer) la fenêtre.

5. Il _____ (venir) chez nous.

6. Tu _____ (dire) la vérité.

7. Je _____ (réfléchir) à votre offre.

8. On _____ (faire) tout pour gagner.

9. Nous _____ (dormir) sous une tente.

10. Elles _____ (préférer) la flexibilité.

SECTION B

Gap fill 15 marks

Fill in the blanks in the text below with the appropriate words chosen from the box.

L'été dernier, au mois de _____, nous avons célébré le centième _____ de mon arrière-grand-mère, née en 1922 ! Elle a vécu pendant la Seconde _____ mondiale ! Sa fille, ma grand-mère, avait soixante-quinze ans le jour suivant donc nous avons fait une grande _____ pour toutes les deux. Quelle journée inoubliable ! Toute la famille était _____. Nous nous sommes _____ tous à Kew Gardens et nous étions 30 personnes en tout.

D'abord, nous avons pu _____ les jardins eux-mêmes. Il faisait très beau - pas un _____ dans le ciel. La fleur _____ de mon arrière-grand-mère est la rose, donc nous avons passé un petit moment à regarder les roseraies en fleurs: les roses de toutes couleurs et des parfums _____. Après, à l'intérieur des grandes serres, nous avons vu des plantes _____ comme les palmiers énormes ! Quant à ma grand-mère, elle était particulièrement _____ de voir tous les papillons tellement jolis qui n'existent pas en Angleterre

Nous avons fait un _____ dans le jardin. Grâce à mon oncle, il y avait même des magnums de champagne pour bien fêter les 175 ans ! Je ne sais pas si je _____ vivre jusqu'à cent ans mais j'aimerais avoir une famille nombreuse autour de moi toute ma vie. Qui sait, peut-être qu'en 2112 nous _____ mon centième anniversaire !

fêterons		juillet		au	
	nuage		tous		préférée
heureuse		pique-nique		anniversaire	
	sur		moi		
là	des			voudrais	
réunis		délicieux			Guerre
	fête	il y a	visiter		tropicales

Paper Notes: 13+ English Question Paper (13+ English Past Paper (2023))

Compiled by [SATs-Papers.co.uk](https://www.SATs-Papers.co.uk) to help you get the most from this paper.

Overview

This is the **Winchester College 13+ French Writing entrance examination**, sat in **May 2023**. It is designed to assess the readiness of candidates applying for entry to **Year 9** at Winchester College, one of the oldest and most academically selective independent schools in the country. The paper focuses exclusively on written French, testing conjugation accuracy, narrative comprehension through gap-fill, and the ability to produce coherent extended prose under timed conditions.

The examination is divided into three sections: conjugation exercises across **present, perfect, imperfect, and future tenses**; a contextual gap-fill passage requiring vocabulary selection and grammatical awareness; and a short essay on the theme of holidays. Candidates are given **35 minutes** to complete all tasks, which together carry **100 marks**. The paper assumes at least two to three years of formal French study and expects familiarity with irregular verb forms, tense distinctions, and independent writing.

This paper is particularly suited to students who have been following a Common Entrance or independent-school French syllabus. The absence of dictionary support and the strict time limit mean candidates must demonstrate fluency with core grammar and vocabulary from memory. The essay component rewards linguistic range, accuracy, and the ability to sustain ideas across several prompts.

How this paper is organised

The paper comprises **three distinct sections** worth a total of 100 marks. **Section A: Conjugation** is allocated 40 marks and is subdivided into three exercises: 15 marks for present-tense verb forms (15 sentences), 15 marks for perfect and imperfect tenses embedded within two narrative passages (15 verbs in context), and 10 marks for future-tense conjugation (10 sentences). Each verb must be written in the correct form on the line provided.

Section B: Gap Fill carries 15 marks and presents a continuous text of three paragraphs about a family celebration at Kew Gardens. Candidates select appropriate words from a box of 24 options to complete 15 blanks, testing vocabulary knowledge, grammatical agreement, and contextual understanding.

Section C: Essay is worth 45 marks and requires candidates to write between 80 and 100 words on the topic of holidays, addressing five specific prompts. These prompts require the use of present, perfect, and future tenses, plus the conditional mood. The rubric reminds students to include adjectives and adverbs. Dictionaries are not permitted, and all answers must be written in the examination booklet.

Topics covered

- Present-tense conjugation of regular and irregular verbs, including reflexive forms (se brosser, s'occuper) and high-frequency irregulars (prendre, boire, savoir, aller, vouloir, devoir, suivre)
- Perfect tense (passé composé) in narrative context, selecting the correct auxiliary and applying past participle agreement where necessary
- Imperfect tense (imparfait) to express habitual past action, background description, and ongoing states contrasted with completed events
- Future tense (futur simple) formation for regular and irregular verbs, including être, écrire, venir, dire, faire, and stem-changing verbs (préférer)
- Contextual vocabulary selection and grammatical agreement within authentic extended prose, covering family occasions, natural settings, and celebrations
- Extended essay writing on the topic of holidays, requiring multi-tense narration (present, perfect, future, conditional) and descriptive language
- Use of time expressions, connectives, and sequencing devices to organise ideas coherently across paragraphs
- Application of adjectives and adverbs to enrich descriptive writing and demonstrate linguistic range
- Understanding of verb moods, including the conditional (seraient, voudrais) and the imperative in embedded instructions

How to use this paper for revision

- Drill the **present-tense forms of high-frequency irregular verbs** (prendre, boire, savoir, vouloir, devoir, aller, suivre) until you can write them instantly without hesitation, as these account for a significant proportion of Section A.
- Practise distinguishing between **perfect and imperfect tenses** in narrative passages by identifying whether an action is completed, habitual, or descriptive background; rewrite short stories toggling between the two to build instinct.
- Memorise the **future-tense stems of common irregular verbs** (être → ser-, avoir → aur-, aller → ir-, faire → fer-, venir → viendr-, voir → verr-) and practise attaching the future endings rapidly.
- For the gap-fill, read the entire passage once before selecting any words, so you understand the overall meaning and can spot clues such as gender, number, and tense markers that guide your choices.
- Plan your essay in the first two minutes by jotting down one key verb or phrase for each of the five prompts; this ensures you address every bullet point and use a variety of tenses.
- Learn a bank of **time expressions and connectives** (d'abord, ensuite, puis, enfin, l'été dernier, à l'avenir, pendant que) to structure your essay naturally and show sequencing skills.
- Revise adjective agreement rules and practise placing common adjectives correctly (before or after the noun); keep a list of BANGS adjectives (beauty, age, number, goodness, size) that precede the noun.

Common mistakes to avoid

- Confusing the endings of **-er verbs in the present tense** (e, es, e, ons, ez, ent) with those of -ir verbs (is, is, it, issons, issez, issent), especially under time pressure.
- Using the perfect tense when the imperfect is required, or vice versa; for example, writing *il a fait du shopping tous les jours* instead of *il faisait*, which loses the sense of habitual action.
- Forgetting to apply **past participle agreement** with être verbs in the perfect tense, particularly with reflexive verbs and feminine or plural subjects (e.g. *elle s'est découverte* not *elle s'est découvert*).
- Misspelling the future-tense stems of irregular verbs, such as writing **ferais** instead of *ferai* or **venirai** instead of *viendrai*, which cost easy marks.
- In the gap-fill, selecting a word that looks plausible in isolation but does not agree in gender or number with the noun it modifies, or choosing a verb in the wrong tense for the context.
- Producing an essay that addresses only three or four of the five prompts, or writing well over 100 words and sacrificing accuracy for length, when concise, accurate responses score more highly.

Exam technique

Begin by reading the entire paper to identify which sections you feel most confident about, but tackle the sections in order because each builds different skills. Allocate roughly **20 minutes to Section A**, 8 minutes to Section B, and 7 minutes to planning and writing your essay, leaving a couple of minutes at the end to check verb endings and agreements. In Section A, if you are uncertain of a conjugation, write your best guess rather than leaving a blank; examiners sometimes award partial credit for near-correct forms.

For Section B, read the passage all the way through once without filling any gaps, then go back and complete the easiest blanks first. Cross off each word in the box as you use it to avoid accidental repetition. Pay close attention to **grammatical markers** such as *le* or *la* before a blank (indicating gender), *nous avons* before a gap (signalling a past participle), or plural noun endings that require agreement.

In Section C, spend the first minute underlining the five prompts and jotting down a tense and a key verb for each: for instance, present (*aller*), perfect (*avons fait*), future (*vais travailler*), conditional (*seraient*). Draft your essay in full sentences, aiming for roughly 16 to 20 words per prompt to stay within the word count. Reserve the final minute to check that every verb agrees with its subject, that adjectives match their

nouns in gender and number, and that you have included at least one adverb. Neat corrections are acceptable if you spot an error.

What to revise alongside this paper

To perform well on this paper, ensure you have revised **the formation and uses of all major tenses** taught at Common Entrance level, including the pluperfect (plus-que-parfait) for understanding complex narrative sequences, even though it is not directly tested here. Practise translating short passages from English into French to reinforce word order, pronoun placement, and idiomatic expressions, as these skills underpin both the gap-fill and essay sections.

Broaden your vocabulary around common essay topics such as family, school, hobbies, travel, and daily routine; the more lexical range you can deploy, the more confidently you will tackle open-ended writing tasks. Work through past papers or specimen materials from other 13+ entrance examinations to familiarise yourself with the time pressure and mark distribution typical of independent-school language papers.

Once you are confident with this paper, progress to more advanced exercises involving the subjunctive mood, relative pronouns (qui, que, dont), and complex sentence structures with multiple clauses. Reading age-appropriate French texts (short stories, magazine articles, or graded readers) will help you internalise correct verb forms and sentence patterns, making accurate writing feel more automatic under examination conditions.

Key terms

présent (present tense), passé composé (perfect tense), imparfait (imperfect tense), futur simple (future tense), conditionnel (conditional mood), verbe irrégulier (irregular verb), verbe pronominal / réfléchi (reflexive verb), accord (agreement), participe passé (past participle), auxiliaire (auxiliary verb: avoir, être), radical (stem), terminaison (ending), conjonction / connecteur (connective), expression temporelle (time expression), adjectif qualificatif (descriptive adjective)

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Name:

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WINCHESTER
COLLEGE

Entrance Examination

French Reading

Thursday 4th May 2023

Total time allowed: 35 minutes

- Answer section **A** with **letters**, section **B** in **French** and section **C** in **English**.
- You do not have to write full sentences.
- Dictionaries are not allowed.

35 marks

SECTION A

À la maison

10 marks

Associez les chiffres aux lettres.

1	J'y vais pour me coucher.
2	J'y vais pour faire la lessive.
3	Mon père y descend pour chercher du vin.
4	On se lave dans cette pièce.
5	J'y vais pour préparer des repas.
6	Ma mère y va pour garer la voiture.
7	C'est où mon frère fait son travail à domicile.
8	C'est le dernier étage de la maison.
9	On y va pour dîner ensemble.
10	J'y vais pour me détendre.

A	Le salon
B	La cuisine
C	Le garage
D	Le bureau
E	La cave
F	La buanderie
G	La chambre
H	Le grenier
I	La salle à manger
J	La salle de bains

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

SECTION B

Ma famille

10 marks

Répondez aux questions en FRANÇAIS.

Aujourd'hui, je vais te présenter ma famille. Je m'appelle Paul et j'habite à Bordeaux avec mes parents, mon frère aîné et ma sœur. Je vais à l'école pendant la journée.

Mon père s'appelle Albert. Il travaille en ville. Ma mère Françoise tient une mercerie.

Pendant les grandes vacances, nous allons à la campagne chez mes grands-parents.

Mon grand-père nous adore et nous offre de nombreux cadeaux. Ma tante Émilie habite près de chez eux. Parfois, ma grand-mère Monique l'invite à la maison pour le déjeuner. Elle vient avec son mari et mes cousins Alain et Michel. Nous passons de bons moments à jouer ensemble dans le jardin.

Mon frère a 14 ans. Il joue du violoncelle comme un grand artiste. Ma sœur est plus vieille que moi. Elle va à l'école des petits. Elle sait écrire son nom. Chaque soir, j'accompagne ma mère en vélo pour faire une promenade dans le parc avec notre chien Nala.

Mon deuxième oncle Patrice dit qu'il a des neveux adorables. Sa femme Giselle est institutrice. Ils ont deux enfants : un fils qui s'appelle Marcel et une fille qui est très gentille. J'aime beaucoup toute ma famille.

1 Quel est le prénom de la mère de Paul ?

2 Où travaille le père de Paul ?

3 Où va Paul pendant les grandes vacances ?

4 Qui est parfois invitée pour déjeuner à la maison de Monique ?

5 Qu'est-ce que la sœur de Paul sait faire ?

6 Que font Paul et sa mère chaque soir avec leur chien ?

7 Que pense l'oncle Patrice de ses neveux ?

8 Combien de cousins Paul a-t-il ?

9 Où travaille Giselle ?

10 Qui est Marcel ?

SECTION C

1. Un problème au restaurant

10 marks

Answer the questions in ENGLISH.

Max rend visite à ses grands-parents pour les vacances ; ils possèdent un petit restaurant. C'est super parce que Max peut manger au restaurant tous les jours et choisir ce qui lui plaît sur la carte. Aujourd'hui, il a choisi du poulet avec des pommes de terre. Il a commandé une limonade comme boisson. Et pour le dessert, il y a une grosse portion de glace.

À midi, il n'y a pas encore beaucoup de monde dans le restaurant de ses grands-parents. Il n'y a que quelques clients. À part Max, il y a une hôtesse – une dame d'un certain âge. Elle a demandé l'addition à l'instant et boit encore son café. Le grand-père de Max, qui est serveur, a déjà imprimé l'addition à la caisse et l'a posée sur le plateau où se trouve la glace pour le dessert de Max.

Soudain, on entend un grand cri venant de la cuisine. Tout d'abord, un chat court à travers le restaurant, puis c'est le chef cuisinier. Oh non ! Le chat a volé un poisson dans la cuisine et court avec vers la porte. Le chef cuisinier voulait justement préparer le poisson ; il est en colère et court après le chat.

« C'est bien que le chat ait eu envie de poisson et pas de poulet aujourd'hui », se dit Max, en prenant son couteau et sa fourchette pour commencer à manger.

1. Why is it 'super' for Max that his grandparents own a restaurant? Give two details:

(i) _____

(ii) _____

2. What did Max eat and drink today? Give all four things:

(i) _____

(ii) _____

(iii) _____

(iv) _____

3. What is Max's grandfather's role in the restaurant?

4. What did the cat steal?

5. How did the chef react to what the cat did?

6. What is Max happy about at the end?

2. Mon école

5 marks

Answer the questions in ENGLISH.

Mon école a un magnifique bâtiment. La porte principale de mon école est très grande et large. Il est toujours gardé par les hommes de sécurité. Il y a une grande aire de jeux verte. Il y a aussi un bâtiment à deux étages avec plusieurs salles, un grand laboratoire scientifique, un laboratoire informatique et une bibliothèque de livres pour les élèves.

J'aime mon professeur de classe et mes camarades de classe. Ils sont très gentils et compréhensifs. Mon école est l'une des meilleures écoles de ma ville. Tous nos professeurs suivent une discipline stricte. Ils nous enseignent très gentiment. Nous sommes tous heureux ici. Je prie Dieu de donner à chacun le meilleur endroit pour étudier, comme mon école.

1. What is always guarded by security men?

2. Give **two** facilities at the school.

3. How does the author say the school compares to others in the city?

4. Give one detail about the teaching or approach of the teachers.

5. What does he pray for at the end?

End of test

Paper Notes: 13+ English Question Paper (13+ English Past Paper (2023))

Compiled by [SATs-Papers.co.uk](https://www.SATs-Papers.co.uk) to help you get the most from this paper.

Overview

This is the **French Reading** paper from **Winchester College's** 13+ entrance examination, sat on Thursday 4th May 2023. It is designed to assess candidates' reading comprehension skills in French at an intermediate level appropriate for pupils entering Year 9. The paper allocates **35 minutes** total and carries **35 marks**, testing vocabulary recognition, comprehension of written French, and the ability to extract information from longer passages.

The paper is divided into three distinct sections. **Section A** requires letter answers for a matching task, **Section B** expects answers in French, and **Section C** asks for responses in English. Dictionaries are not permitted, so candidates rely entirely on their existing vocabulary and reading strategies. No full sentences are required, which keeps the focus on understanding rather than extended writing.

This paper suits pupils preparing for 13+ entrance to independent senior schools, particularly those who have studied French for several years and are comfortable with a range of everyday topics such as family, home, and daily routines. The mix of question formats and languages tests both active and passive language skills, making it a robust measure of reading proficiency at this level.

How this paper is organised

The paper opens with a matching task (**10 marks**) in which candidates associate ten French statements about rooms in the house with lettered options. This tests vocabulary and the understanding of short, context-driven sentences.

Section B (also **10 marks**) presents a passage about Paul's family, written entirely in French. Pupils must answer ten factual questions in French, drawing on their ability to read for detail and respond accurately without needing lengthy explanations.

Section C comprises two prose passages to be answered in English. The first (**10 marks**) tells a short narrative about Max visiting his grandparents' restaurant and dealing with an unexpected incident involving a cat. The second (**5 marks**) describes a school building and its facilities. Together, these passages test inference, scanning for specific information, and the ability to transfer meaning from French into clear English.

Topics covered

- Vocabulary for rooms and spaces in the home, including la cave, le grenier, la buanderie, and le salon
- Reading comprehension of narrative French text describing family members, occupations, and holiday activities
- Understanding everyday vocabulary related to family relationships, such as tante, neveux, and cousins
- Extracting specific information from longer French passages and answering in French without full sentences
- Comprehension of descriptive prose about daily life, including restaurant scenes and school environments
- Translation skills: rendering meaning from French to English for comprehension questions
- Inference and interpretation, such as understanding why a character feels relieved or what motivates their actions
- Recognising and responding to question words in French (où, combien, qui, que)

How to use this paper for revision

- Revise household vocabulary thoroughly, including less common rooms like la buanderie and le grenier, which often appear in matching tasks.
- Practise answering questions in French without writing full sentences. Focus on extracting the key noun or verb phrase that directly addresses the question.
- Read French stories or short passages daily in the weeks leading up to the exam to build stamina and confidence with longer texts.
- When translating into English, aim for clarity and accuracy rather than word-for-word rendering. Check that your answer makes sense grammatically.
- Time yourself on past papers. With 35 minutes for 35 marks, you should spend roughly one minute per mark, leaving a few minutes for checking.
- Look out for cognates (words similar to English) and use context clues when you encounter unfamiliar vocabulary, especially in the English-answer sections.

Common mistakes to avoid

- In Section A, confusing la buanderie (utility room) with la salle de bains (bathroom) or la cave (cellar) with le garage because both are below-ground or storage spaces.
- Writing full sentences in Section B when the instructions explicitly state that single-word or short-phrase answers are acceptable, wasting time and risking grammatical errors.
- Misreading family relationships in French passages, such as mistaking oncle for frère or not distinguishing between neveu and cousin.
- Leaving answers in French when Section C requires English, or vice versa. Always double-check the language specified in the question rubric.
- Overlooking multi-part questions, such as 'Give **two** details' or 'Give all **four** things', and only providing one answer, losing easy marks.

Exam technique

Begin with **Section A**, as the matching task is quick to complete and builds confidence. Read all ten statements once, then match the most obvious answers first before returning to trickier items. Cross off letters as you use them to avoid duplicates.

For **Section B**, read the passage about Paul's family carefully before looking at the questions. Underline or note key details such as names, places, and activities. When answering in French, keep responses concise and ensure spelling and accents are correct, as these count towards accuracy.

In **Section C**, tackle the longer restaurant passage first since it carries more marks. Read each question before scanning the text for relevant information, rather than reading the entire passage in one go. Write answers in clear English and check that each response fully addresses what is asked, especially when multiple details are required. Save a couple of minutes at the end to review all three sections for missed questions or careless slips.

What to revise alongside this paper

Pupils should consolidate their knowledge of **family vocabulary** in French, including extended family terms and possessive adjectives (mon, ma, mes). Revising **present tense verb conjugations** for regular and irregular verbs will support comprehension of narrative passages.

Practise reading a variety of text types, from descriptive paragraphs about places to short narratives with dialogue. This builds flexibility in approach and helps with

inference questions. Work on **question formation in French** so that you recognise what each question word is asking for, particularly combien, où, and que.

Consider revising **descriptive adjectives** and common adverbs, as these frequently appear in reading passages and help convey tone or detail. Stronger candidates might also explore **past and future tenses**, which appear in more challenging 13+ papers and broaden overall reading comprehension.

Key terms

la cave, le grenier, la buanderie, tante, neveux, cousins, grands-parents, mercerie, institutrice, lessive, se détendre, promenade, serveur, addition, discipline stricte

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WINCHESTER
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Winchester College Entrance and Election Examination in English 2023

90 minutes

INSTRUCTIONS TO CANDIDATES:

Answer TWO questions:

EITHER

Section A (Prose)

OR

Section B (Poetry)

AND

Section C (Extended Writing)

Total marks available: 70

Each section is worth 30 marks. You will also be marked out of 10 for the quality of your spelling, grammar, and punctuation.

Read all questions carefully.

You may make notes around the texts, and/or underline them.

You are advised to spend 45 minutes on each question.

SECTION A: PROSE COMPREHENSION

Choose **EITHER** this section **OR** Section B (Poetry)

This extract is from a short story 'The Entrance' by Gerald Durrell. The author has gone to visit some friends who are renovating a French chateau. After dinner, they send him to bed while a storm lashes the building. His host tells him they have found a curious manuscript while renovating the room he will sleep in. By candlelight, he reads about a man who some centuries ago found himself alone in the chateau.

Read the extract carefully and answer the questions that follow in full sentences.

It was then that I glanced across at the mirror opposite me and noticed that, in the reflection, the door to the salon that I had carefully closed was now ajar. Surprised, I twisted round in my chair and looked at the real door, only to find it was securely closed as I had left it. I looked again into the mirror and made sure my eyes – aided by the wine – were not playing me tricks, but sure enough, in the reflection the door appeared to be slightly ajar.

I was sitting there looking at it and wondering what trick of light and reflection could produce the effect of an open door when the door responsible for the reflection was securely closed, when I noticed something that made me sit up, astonished and uneasy. *The door in the reflection was being pushed open still further.* I looked at the real door again and saw that it was firmly shut. Yet its reflection in the mirror was opening, slowly, millimetre by millimetre. I sat there watching it, the hair on the nape of my neck stirring. Suddenly, round the edge of the door, there appeared something that at first glance I thought was some sort of caterpillar. It was long, wrinkled and yellowish-white in colour, and at one end it had a long, blackened horn. It humped itself up and scabbled at the surface of the carpet with its horn in a way that I had seen no caterpillar behave. Then, slowly, it retreated behind the door.

I found that I was sweating. I glanced once more at the real door to assure myself that it was closed because I did not fancy having the caterpillar or whatever it was crawling about the room with me. The door was still shut. I took a draught of wine to steady my nerves, and was annoyed to see that my hand was shaking. I, who had never believed in ghosts, or hauntings, or magic spells or any of that clap-trap, here I was imagining things in a mirror and convincing myself to such an extent they were real, that I was actually afraid.

It was ridiculous, I told myself as I drank my wine. There was some perfectly rational explanation for the whole thing. I sat forward in my chair and gazed at the reflection in the mirror with great intentness. For a long time, nothing happened and then the door in the mirror swung open a fraction and the caterpillar appeared again. This time it was joined by another and then, after a pause, yet another.

Suddenly my blood ran cold for I realized what it was. They were not caterpillars but attenuated yellow fingers with long twisted black nails tipping each one like gigantic misshapen rose thorns. The moment I realized this, the whole hand came into view, feeling its way feebly along the carpet. The hand was a mere skeleton covered with the pale-yellow parchment-like skin through which the knuckles and joints showed like walnuts. It felt around on the carpet in a blind, groping sort of way, the hand moving from a bony wrist, like the tentacles of some strange sea anemone from the deep sea, one that has become pallid through living in perpetual dark. Then slowly it was withdrawn behind the door. I shuddered for I wondered what sort of body was attached to that horrible hand. I waited for perhaps quarter of an hour, dreading what might suddenly appear from behind the mirror door, but nothing happened.

After a while I became restive. I was still attempting to convince myself that the whole thing was an hallucination brought on by the wine and the heat of the fire without success. For there was the door of the blue salon carefully closed against the draught and the door in the mirror still ajar with apparently something lurking behind it.

I wanted to walk over to the mirror and examine it, but did not have the courage. Instead I thought of a plan which, I felt, would show me whether I was imagining things or not. I woke Agrippa, the dog, and, crumpling up a sheet of the newspaper I had been reading into a ball, threw it down the room so that it landed just by the closed door. In the mirror it lay near the door that was ajar.

Agrippa, more to please me than anything else, for he was very sleepy, bounded after it. Gripping the arms of my chair I watched his reflection in the mirror as he ran towards the door. He reached the ball of newspaper and paused to pick it up. Then something so hideous happened that I could scarcely believe my eyes. The mirror door was pushed open still further and the hand and a long white bony arm shot out. It grabbed the dog in the mirror by the scruff of its neck and pulled it speedily, kicking and struggling, behind the door.

Questions

1. In the opening paragraph, what first startles the narrator of the story? [1]
2. Give a quotation from the second paragraph that shows the narrator views what appears around the door as unnatural. [1]
3. What do the following words mean in the context of their appearance in the extract? They have been underlined in the extract for you and they appear in the same order in the text:
 - (a) rational [2]
 - (b) attenuated [2]
 - (c) perpetual [2]
 - (d) restive [2]
4. In the third paragraph, how does Durrell reinforce the narrator's disbelief that he is experiencing the events? [3]
5. In the fifth paragraph, give a quotation that describes the horror of the narrator once he realises what the caterpillar is, and explore its effect. There is 1 mark awarded for your quotation and 1 for your explanation. [2]
6. Look at the description of the dog and the part it plays in the final two paragraphs. How does the author convey a sense of the narrator's relationship to the dog and its fate? Use evidence to support your answer. [5]
7. Using quotations from the extract as a whole and analysing Durrell's use of language for effect, discuss how the author creates a vivid Gothic picture of the scene in the salon. Avoid using material you have used in other answers. [10]

SECTION B: POETRY

Choose **EITHER** this section **OR** Section A (Prose)

Read the poem carefully, and answer the questions which follow in full sentences.

There's a Hole in my Trainer

The trouble started when I noticed a hole
in the right toe of my black Nike trainers.
I managed the problem by ensuring that
I always wore a pair of black socks.

All went well until I noticed a hole
in the toe of one of my black socks.
I managed the problem by wearing
the offending sock on my left foot.

Perhaps it should come as no surprise
but I was unprepared for the shock
of discovering one morning
an unsightly hole in the other sock.

The remedy? Black nail varnish
on the peeping big toe. It worked a treat.
Enabling me to work out and jog
without drawing attention to my feet.

Sadly, when the nail bar on the high street
closed I was thrown into a dilemma.
A spot of darning? Gaffer tape on the toe?
I did as I always do: think outside the box.

Went online. Bought a new pair of socks

Roger McGough (b.1937)

This poem is from McGough's latest collection, *Safety in Numbers* (2021)

Questions

1. What do the following words mean in the context of their appearance in the poem? They have been **underlined** in the extract for you and they appear in the same order in the text:

- a) Offending [2]
- b) Unsightly [2]
- c) Dilemma [2]

2. What does the poet mean when he says he "managed the problem"? [2]

3. What effect is achieved by the use of the word "shock" in the third stanza? [2]

4. How does the poet shape the structure of the poem in relation to meaning, in terms of stanza organisation and any use of rhyme? [4]
5. What do the poet's various attempts to solve the trouble that first started at the beginning of the poem reveal about his character? [6]
6. How does the poet use humour to make the situation of the poem interesting for the reader? Use quotes from across the poem, and justify your thoughts and choices. [10]

SECTION C: EXTENDED WRITING

Answer ONE question from this section.

Either

1. Here is the opening of T. S. Eliot's 'The Journey of the Magi'. I'm reminded of various winter journeys in recent years to visit family and friends at Christmas.

"A cold coming we had of it,
Just the worst time of the year
For a journey, and such a long journey:
The ways deep and the weather sharp,
The very dead of winter."

Write about a significant journey, describing it in a way that makes the reader feel as if they are living through it. Try to include the following:

- Imagery that captures the difficulties of the journey;
- Writing that appeals to the senses;
- A rich variety of vocabulary and sentence forms.

[30]

OR

2. Write a newspaper article that sets out your plans for a charitable foundation that gathers and distributes money for more than one charitable purpose.
 - Ensure you explain the working organisation of your scheme.
 - Consider how the blend of charitable activities you propose will work collectively.
 - Conclude with your own opinion on the importance of charitable activity.

[30]

Paper Notes: 13+ English Question Paper (13+ English Past Paper (2023))

Compiled by [SATs-Papers.co.uk](https://www.SATs-Papers.co.uk) to help you get the most from this paper.

Overview

This is the **Winchester College 13+ Entrance and Election Examination in English**, sat in **2023**. The paper tests candidates applying for Year 9 entry to one of the most selective independent schools in the country. It is designed to assess sophisticated reading, analytical skills, and creative writing ability at a level considerably higher than the standard 11+ or Key Stage 2 material.

The examination presents candidates with a choice between **prose comprehension** (a Gothic horror extract from Gerald Durrell's 'The Entrance') and **poetry analysis** (Roger McGough's humorous 'There's a Hole in my Trainer'). Both sections carry **30 marks** and require detailed textual analysis, vocabulary work, and critical commentary. A third compulsory section tests **extended creative or transactional writing**, also worth 30 marks, with an additional 10 marks awarded for spelling, punctuation, and grammar across the whole paper.

This paper is aimed at academically gifted pupils aged 12 to 13 who have been prepared for entrance to highly selective senior schools. The 90-minute time limit and the expectation of sustained, independent literary analysis set it apart from more structured comprehension exercises seen at earlier stages.

How this paper is organised

The paper is divided into **three distinct sections**, with candidates instructed to answer **two questions in total**. Students must choose either Section A (Prose) or Section B (Poetry), then complete Section C (Extended Writing) as a compulsory second task. Each section is allocated **30 marks**, with a further 10 marks for spelling, punctuation, and grammar, bringing the total to **70 marks**.

Section A contains **seven questions** on a 400-word Gothic prose extract, ranging from single-mark retrieval tasks to a 10-mark analytical essay. Section B offers **six questions** on a modern poem, similarly progressing from vocabulary and comprehension work to a 10-mark essay on the poet's use of humour. Both sections test word meanings (with 2 marks per term), quotation skills, and extended critical writing.

Section C presents **two writing tasks**: a descriptive narrative inspired by T.S. Eliot's 'The Journey of the Magi', or a persuasive newspaper article outlining a charitable

foundation. Candidates are advised to spend **45 minutes** on each of their two chosen questions, managing their time carefully across comprehension and creative work.

Topics covered

- Gothic fiction conventions and supernatural atmosphere in Durrell's horror story, including analysis of mirrors, duality, and haunting
- Close reading and vocabulary work: defining words such as 'attenuated', 'perpetual', 'restive', 'rational', 'offending', 'unsightly', and 'dilemma' in literary context
- Quotation retrieval and textual evidence to support analytical points about narrative voice, characterisation, and mood
- Analysis of figurative language, simile, and descriptive imagery in Gothic prose (e.g. comparing a skeletal hand to sea anemone tentacles)
- Exploration of narrative perspective and the unreliable narrator in first-person Gothic storytelling
- Contemporary poetry analysis: Roger McGough's use of humour, irony, and everyday subject matter in light verse
- Poetic structure, stanza organisation, and the use (or absence) of rhyme in shaping meaning
- Characterisation through action and problem-solving strategies in McGough's poem
- Extended creative writing: sensory description, imagery, and varied sentence structure in narrative about a significant journey
- Transactional writing in the form of a persuasive newspaper article, including organisational explanation and opinion-led conclusion

How to use this paper for revision

- Practise retrieval tasks under timed conditions. The single-mark questions at the start of each section reward accuracy and speed, so train yourself to locate evidence quickly without re-reading the entire text.
- Build a vocabulary log of literary terms (Gothic, simile, metaphor, imagery, tone, characterisation) and practise applying them in written analysis. Winchester values precise critical terminology.
- Read widely in both classic and modern literature. Familiarity with Gothic fiction (Poe, M.R. James) and contemporary poetry (Carol Ann Duffy, Simon Armitage, McGough) will help you recognise techniques and respond confidently.
- For the 10-mark essays, plan a three- or four-paragraph structure before you begin writing. Start with a clear topic sentence, use embedded quotations, and analyse language effects in detail.
- Revise spelling, punctuation, and grammar rules carefully. The separate 10-mark allocation for accuracy means careless errors will cost you marks even if your ideas are strong.
- Time the extended writing section carefully. Aim to spend 5 minutes planning, 35 minutes writing, and 5 minutes proofreading. A well-structured 400-word response is better than an unfinished 600-word attempt.
- Practise switching between analytical and creative modes. You must demonstrate both critical reading skills and imaginative flair in a single 90-minute sitting.

Common mistakes to avoid

- Spending too long on low-mark questions. Students often write paragraphs for 1- or 2-mark retrieval tasks when a single sentence or embedded quotation is sufficient, then run out of time for the essay.
- Defining vocabulary out of context. For example, 'restive' can mean 'impatient' or 'fidgety', but the question asks for its meaning in the specific extract, so vague definitions lose marks.
- Quoting without analysis. Simply copying out a phrase and labelling it as 'effective' earns minimal credit; you must explain how the language works and what effect it creates on the reader.
- Ignoring the instruction to avoid repeating material. Question 7 explicitly asks you not to reuse quotations from earlier answers, yet many candidates recycle the same examples and lose marks.
- Neglecting the quality of written communication marks. Careless spelling ('seperately', 'definatly'), missing apostrophes, and comma splices can cost you up to 10 marks across the paper.
- Writing an unbalanced extended writing piece. In Section C, students sometimes produce a vivid opening but fail to sustain description or argument, or forget to include all three bullet-pointed requirements.

Exam technique

Spend the first few minutes reading both Section A and Section B carefully before choosing which to attempt. Select the passage or poem that you understand most clearly and can quote from confidently. If you are equally comfortable with both, pick the one that offers richer opportunities for detailed language analysis in the final essay question.

Allocate 45 minutes to your chosen comprehension section and 45 minutes to Section C, leaving no spare time. Within each section, pace yourself strictly: answer the short-answer questions briskly (aim for 20 to 25 minutes on questions 1 to 6) so you have a full 20 to 25 minutes for the longer essay. For the 10-mark questions, write in continuous prose with an introduction and conclusion, not bullet points.

In Section C, spend at least five minutes planning your structure and listing vocabulary or phrases you want to include. If you choose the journey task, map out a clear beginning, middle, and end with varied sentence lengths and sensory detail. If you choose the newspaper article, decide on your three or four charitable causes, sketch

out how the foundation will operate, and plan a punchy conclusion. Proofread for at least three minutes at the end, correcting errors that will cost you the quality marks.

What to revise alongside this paper

Candidates should revise the conventions of **Gothic and horror fiction**, including classic tropes such as isolated settings, mirrors and reflections, creeping dread, and ambiguous endings. Reading short stories by Edgar Allan Poe, M.R. James, or Shirley Jackson will deepen your understanding of how suspense is built through pacing and language. Familiarity with the Victorian ghost story tradition is particularly helpful for Section A.

For poetry, study a range of contemporary British poets who blend humour with everyday observation. McGough, Wendy Cope, and John Hegley all use accessible language and witty structure to explore mundane subjects. Practise identifying how poets create tone through word choice, line breaks, and stanza patterns, and learn to distinguish between gentle satire and outright comedy.

To strengthen your extended writing, revise descriptive techniques (pathetic fallacy, personification, varied sentence structure) and transactional writing conventions (headlines, subheadings, direct address, persuasive language). Reading high-quality journalism and creative non-fiction will help you develop a confident authorial voice for Section C.

Key terms

Gothic, Supernatural, Narrative voice, First-person narrator, Unreliable narrator, Simile, Metaphor, Imagery, Sensory description, Tone, Atmosphere, Characterisation, Irony, Stanza, Poetic structure

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