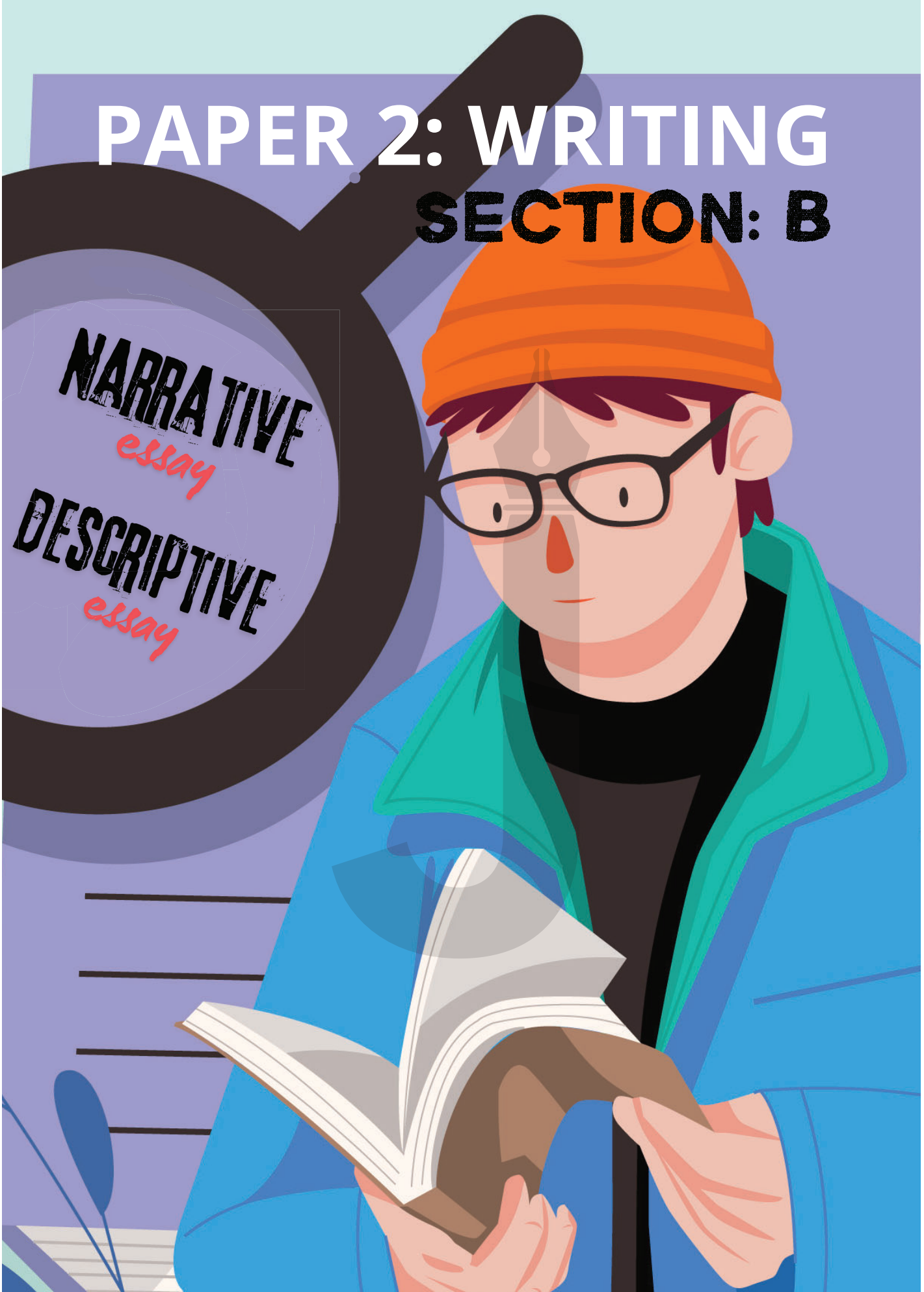


PAPER 2: WRITING

SECTION: B

NARRATIVE
essay

DESCRIPTIVE
essay



ESSAY WRITING

Pre-requisites:

- Punctuation
- Sentence structures
- Grammar (i.e. subject-verb agreement/ singular-plural etcetera)
- Vocabulary
- Spelling

Writing Paper:

Cambridge acknowledges that any piece of creative continuous writing is a product of a unique individual writer. Therefore, there is no easy way to summarise what makes a successful response to these questions. The following qualities are some of which the examiner looks at whilst marking your writing, but they will allow acceptable interpretations and approaches to the topics and reward them accordingly, if logical. As mentioned directly in the syllabus:

Writing

- express what is thought, felt and imagined

300



Word Limit: 350- 450 Words (+/- 10%)

Choice In Questions:

- 2 Descriptive Writing Prompts:

Describe

① - In recent years, two ideas have been targeted in a single prompt (i.e. **Describe two different places where you and your family like to go, one of which is exciting and one of which is relaxing.**) -

- Asked to describe a **person, places or event/situation.** → list 8 things

Basics:

list 4-5 things.

- 2 Narrative Writing Prompts:

-i- Sentence based: Add a particular sentence in your story (i.e. **“Write a story which includes the words, “I had never even thought about what was inside the shop until that fateful day.”**)

-ii- You are given a particular subject that should be a part of your story

(i.e. **“Write a story in which a helicopter plays an important part.”**)

sailing boat

①

Two teachers
(lasting / disliked)

- Personality
- Appearance / style
- Taught / connected
- Impact

④

⑤ ending.

②

Cultural. history night prayer eidi food clothes community

Event

8 aspects

Eid = eidulfitr
(Ramadan)

- ① History (Ramadan) ^{so w...n}
- Chandni (eve)
- ② Prayer
- ③ Clothes
- eidi ④
- food
- ⑤ community ✓ (People)

⊗ Conflict (suspense)

Order

- Chronological
(Timed order)
from the start till the end

Importance

Dos:

DESCRIPTIVE essay

①

1. Write What You Know Deeply

Choose familiar places

Descriptions from memory are more vivid.

Stronger

Example Paragraph:

I still remember the alley behind my grandmother's house, where mint grew wild between the cracks in the cement. After the rain, the scent of mint rose up and mixed with the earthy smell of wet soil and the sting of kerosene from nearby stoves. I could almost taste the memory.

2. Zoom In and Zoom Out Accordingly

Start wide	Give an overview of the scene.
Zoom in next	Focus on a specific detail to add intimacy.

Zoom Out: From the rooftop, the city spread like a metal sea—buildings rising like waves, blinking with office lights.

Zoom In: Below, a cracked windowsill cradled a chipped cup, still steaming, forgotten.

2. Create Atmosphere

The radiance of the sky in the morning sun.

1 Use weather and time	Set a mood using the season or time of the day.
2 Choose sensory mood markers	Sound, smell, silence, or temperature.
3 Match tone to setting	A spooky forest needs a tense mood.

③ Use all Senses

1 hour

← 350-450.

Hopeless - Gloomy
Dark
Rainy

Good = sun. birds

Example Paragraph:

Fog laced the streets like a whisper. Shop windows glowed faintly, blurred like underwater lights. Each footstep echoed too loud in the stillness. Something felt... off.

Copy work: Write the same street twice—once as a warm evening, once as a mysterious night. Compare.

Order Matters

Tip	Explanation
Follow a chronological path	Either by time or emotional impact.
Or according to emotional importance	Layer your details as <u>the scene unfolds</u> .
Stay consistent	Avoid jumping randomly between elements.

Example Paragraph:

First came the smell, sharp and citrusy. Then the rows of trees: oranges glowing like lanterns. Finally, the crunch beneath my shoe as I stepped on a fallen one.

5. Engage the Senses (But Don't List Them)

Tip	Explanation
Let senses appear naturally	Include them in the scene—not as a checklist.
Focus on <u>2–3 vivid details</u>	Strong, specific images are better than covering all five senses.
Follow through with WHY is it important	Make each sense connect to how the character feels.

① Smell
② Taste
③ Hear
④ Feel
⑤ Speak

Example Paragraph:

The wind pushed warm air over my skin, reminding me I was finally home. Inside, my father grilled meat, and the smoky scent drifted over the garden, reminding me of all the evenings I had spent, devouring this same scent.

6. Show, Don't Tell

Use body language	Show feelings through actions and expressions.
Let the reader infer emotion	Avoid naming feelings—let readers feel them.

Example Paragraph: *Don't write:* "she was angry"
Write: She slammed the cupboard door, arms crossed tight

Her sissles echoed the air, barely able to hold in her excitement.

7. Contrast Adds Depth

Tip	Explanation
Mix opposites	Juxtapose calm with chaos, light with shadow.
Use to reveal tension	Show complexity in a moment or mood.

Example Paragraph:
 Sunlight fell in golden stripes on the cracked hospital tiles. Outside, children laughed; inside, her fingers trembled around the get-well balloon.

8. Descriptive vs Narrative Balance

Tip	Explanation
Frame with light narrative	A sentence or two of action is enough.
Stay focused on the setting	Don't shift into full plot mode or character problems.
Keep conflict out	Descriptive writing should NEVER have a conflict.

Third Person POV

Sample Essay (Descriptive):

EXAMPLE RESPONSE #1:

Question: Describe what the place where you live is like in the early morning and in the early evening. (Remember you are describing the atmosphere, the activities and any people as well as the place.)

• - Neighbours • - Animals
• - Children

In the mornings, the area in which I stayed is always bustling with life, as neighbors constantly rush in and out of their houses, dogs bark loudly at passersby and children laugh and scream as they play in the neighborhood playground. The area is so fully alive you would think that the atmosphere throughout the day would remain the same. However, the atmosphere of the early morning and the early evening could not be any more different.

= Intro!

= Weather

Walking out of the house into the radiance of the morning sun, you are greeted by the loud honks of impatient transporters in white school vans as they wait for children clad in identical crisp white uniforms and matching white sneakers to be ushered out of their homes by their parents. The newspaper deliveryman, wearing a black jacket and a red helmet, rides his motor scooter from house to house, handing out papers much to the excitement of the local dogs, who bark aggressively at him, their tails threateningly erect, like bayonets at the ready.

> Newspaper man + dogs

The office-goers in the neighbourhood, all dressed in smart office attire with matching handbags or briefcases, rush from their front doors to their cars, hoping to avoid the morning traffic jam, most of them with a mug of steaming coffee in hand. The twitters of local birds thrum in the air as they flit among the trees in the neighbourhood, occasionally swooping down to catch their breakfast: oversized, succulent, green caterpillars.

> birds and insects.
(nature)

As the day progresses and the beaming sun softens into a warm glow, ribbons of tangerine and yellow stretch across the sky, signalling the approach of the early evening. Children run into the streets, peals of laughter erupting from their lips as they play games of tag and badminton under the watchful eyes of their parents.

evening

School children going out

officegoers

- School
- office
- Goes

Students return home to the embrace of their parents, their uniforms dishevelled after a gruelling day of lessons. Weary office-goers tiredly drag their way into their respective houses. Sniffing the ground with their round, button-shaped noses, dogs mark any tree in their sight, much to the embarrassment of their owners, who tug them away, sternly using their leashes.

Despite it being the same neighbourhood, there is such a contrast between the ruckus in the morning and the gentle ambience of the early evening. I am glad that I got to experience both of these scenes.

EXAMPLE RESPONSE #2:

One event:

Question: Describe the feelings you experienced leading up to a challenging event and the feelings you experienced afterwards. (The challenging event could be sporting, academic or any other activity.)

Chronological

9 a.m.

I feel sick; I can't do this.

= Minor

Sentence!

fr

As I stand in the corridor furiously trying to cram in last-minute revision, the fear eating at my stomach prevents me from being able to concentrate. Two years of English studies have hurtled by and now it is time for the final reckoning. The last exam. One last test which will determine my fate: pass and I can head to university; fail and a future in fast food awaits.

event

destiny

9.15 a.m.

inevitable

Convinced I have forgotten everything that I have ever been taught (and resigned to imminent failure), I shuffle into the hall. Why do I feel like a death row prisoner walking to their doom?

bad destiny

smile

9.20 a.m.

Taking my allocated seat right in the centre of the room, I'm exposed. My heart is pounding like an inmate determined to break free of their prison. It's a furnace in the exam hall and the backs of my legs stick to the uncomfortable plastic chair. The air is heavy with tension. Sweat blooms through the back of my shirt and my tie is stifling me.

↳ suffocating

9.25 a.m.

Silence. The only sounds are the tick of the clock and the tap of the invigilator's shoes as she moves among the desks. My paper is slid onto the desk. The urge to be sick intensifies. Shaking, I fill in my details in the required spaces. My hand feels tight; my writing is already a mess.

9.29 a.m.

The clock sluggishly inches nearer to 9.30 a.m. I don't want to open the paper, but simultaneously need to know what is inside. The anxious anticipation is almost unbearable. The minute hand crawls towards the 6 and with one final, protracted click signals the start of the exam.

"You may begin."

"You have five minutes remaining."

After two hours of non-stop writing, as the invigilator gives the five-minute warning, I finish my final sentence. Closing the paper, I want to cry. The emotion of the last two hours seems determined to spill over and I take some steadying breaths.

As I hand over my paper, a wave of relief washes over me as I realise that my exams are complete. I have done my best and feel the paper has gone as well as it could. The theme I revised the most thoroughly came up and I feel lucky.

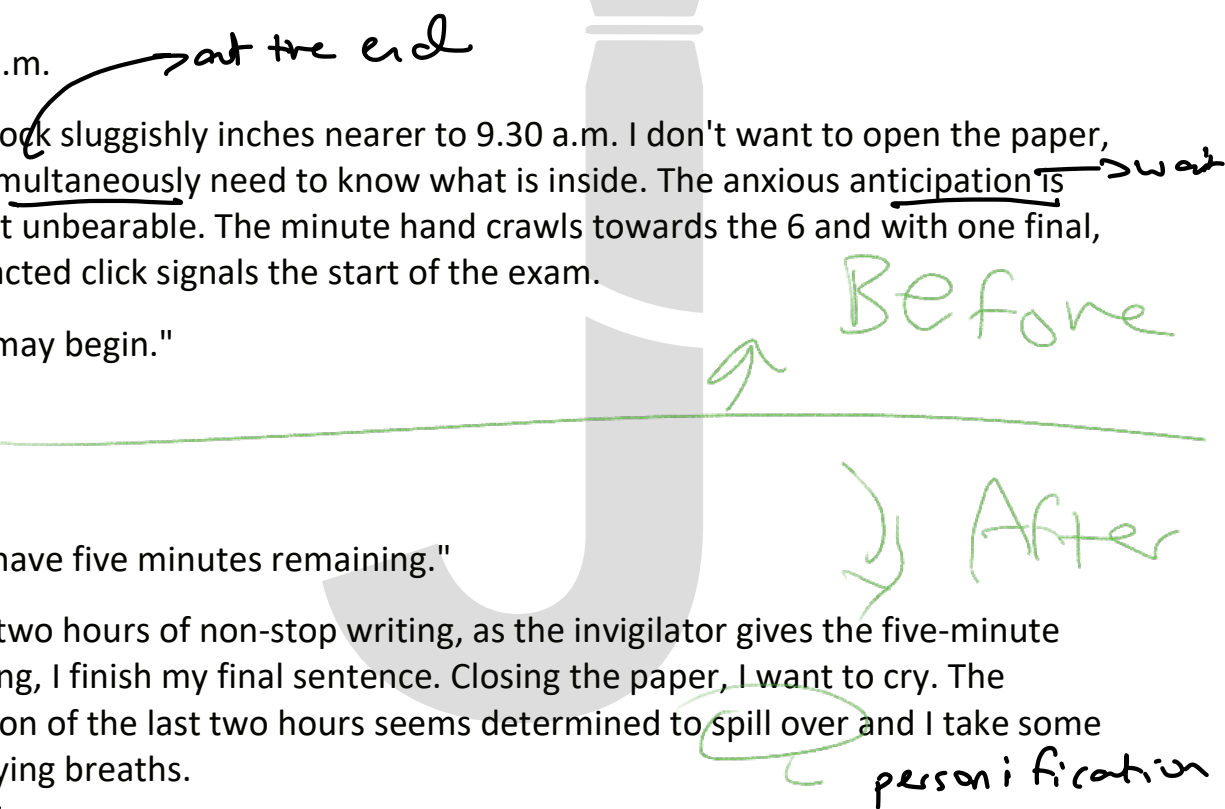
Walking out into the warm embrace of the sunshine, a whole summer free of work stretching ahead, a glow of blissful contentment envelopes me; the joy I feel in this moment as I listen to my friends' excited chatter is unrivalled. Freedom is finally ours.

↳ content

= unparalleled

hor

short



EXAMPLE RESPONSE #3

Question: Describe how you feel the night before an important day and how the morning of the day goes

The soft glow from the digital display flickered as the minutes sluggishly passed. The pale green cast an eerie shadow across my bed, while outside was as dark as a raven's pupil. Nothing moved, apart from me, anxiously turning and fidgeting my blankets into a tangle. I heard a faint hum from downstairs; the sound of the dishwasher automatically starting, churning and rumbling the plates from dinner until they sparkled. My mind churned like the machine, impossible to turn off now it had started. I checked the clock again. The night felt endless.

I shuffled over to turn on the light. Silhouetted against the inside of a shade, a fly lazily crept to the top, balancing on the rim. I watched as it fluttered its wings slightly, before it took off in a frenzy of buzzing around the top of my bed, going nowhere in particular. I wondered what its purpose was. Why was it here? It hummed close to my face and I swatted it away gruffly. It landed back on the rim, satisfied with its little flurry of activity, as I reached over to turn off the light again.

I straightened out my blankets and turned again.

The clock's mechanical glow informed me that only a few minutes had passed. I sighed and attempted to still my mind. I could see the dim outlines of my post-it notes, meticulously written and ordered; with all of the information I could ever need neatly written in my careful handwriting. But now all of that order had turned to chaos, as I struggled to remember even the simplest of equations. I needed to get some sleep, but my brain point-blank refused to let me. I stared at my curtains, considering whether to go downstairs to make myself a drink.

The light now was different. The glow from the clock was less lurid, more muted, and the darkness of the room less extreme. I lazily looked up at my curtains once again, and my mind registered that the soft light of day had altered the atmosphere in the room from one of suspended animation to action. I turned over and saw the time. I jumped wildly out of bed. What was, just a few seconds ago, stillness and peace, was now urgency and panic.

I was late.

My limbs scrambled with the grace of a puppet on tangled strings. I wrenched open drawers, grabbing whatever clothing my hands first touched. My shirt was inside out, my socks mismatched, but none of it mattered. I ran a toothbrush over my teeth without looking in the mirror, the minty foam clinging to my lip as I pulled on my shoes and dashed out the door. The hallway smelt like toast and furniture polish, but there was no time to enjoy either.

Outside, the air was cool and sharp, like the world itself had only just woken up. The sun was barely stretching across the sky, its fingers of gold creeping along rooftops and pavement. I jogged down the road, breath catching in my throat, my bag thumping at my side. The stillness of the morning had not calmed me—it had only heightened the tension. Today was here, and ready or not, I had no choice but to meet it.

Example Candidate Response – high

Examiner comments

Section B: Composition
Descriptive Writing

Describe the scene at a local park or public garden both early in the morning and in the afternoon.

Early in the Morning:

The sun was still barely conspicuous in the distant horizon. Its rising rays gilded the magnificent park. Antiquated trees (appeared) with its gnarly branches appeared quite skeletal against the gloomy and velvety sky. Myriads of minute ants scurried and scuttled across the damp earth, the redolent petrichor quite palpable. A deafening silence prevailed as the city was still sleeping peacefully. The morning breeze darted down the dreary deserted paths,

Drops of moisture accumulated on the pesto coloured leaves, the added load destroying its once straight posture. Effervescent birds commence to gather on the trees, their mellifluous chirping sounding quite euphonious. Due to the absence of the staccato of car horns, the lively conversations of the birds reverberated throughout the interior of the park. Mesmerizing! Slowly, the smell of freshly mowed grass commenced to tantalize the nostrils as the groundsman exuberantly began his work. Being the first to arrive, a sense of punctuality was clearly visible in his eyes. The crimson painted mahogany benches remained in solitude, eagerly waiting to hear a

1 The candidate immediately uses a descriptive feature to establish the atmosphere of the early morning scene as quiet and almost eerie with the sky being 'gloomy and velvety' against which stand the 'skeletal' trees.

2 Alliteration contributes towards the range of descriptive features with the 'myriad of minute ants'. There is also a shift in focus from an overview to very specific detail as the candidate introduces a sense of dynamism with the further use of alliteration as the ants 'scurried' and 'scuttled'.

3 The personification in the image of the city 'sleeping peacefully' furthers the candidate's range of descriptive features.

4 The candidate uses onomatopoeia as the wind is described as 'hissing angrily', adding again to the range of descriptive features employed.

5 The candidate uses auditory imagery to good effect as the 'lively conversations of the birds reverberated through the park'.

6 The candidate gives an example of olfactory imagery adding to the range of descriptive features used with the mention of the 'smell of freshly mowed grass'.

7 The candidate's response moves from the description of the setting to focus on a person within the setting, giving another example of a descriptive feature.

Example Candidate Response – high, continued

Examiner comments

8 spectrum of tales ranging from juicy gossip to tragic romance. The water accumulated on the ~~cobblestone~~ ^{preparing for another} cobblestone path reflected the world above.

In the afternoon:

The duckenne smile of the sun was clearly conspicuous, its golden ~~to~~ fingers covering the entirety of the park. Moseying clouds ~~slow~~ moved lazily in the azure sky. The park was now filled to the top ⁹ its every crevice

10 brimming with renewed vigour. While exhausted ~~the~~ workers ^{traipsed} ~~made~~ slowly towards the welcoming benches, lively adolescents ran es ecstatically down the meandering ~~to~~ paths. Families sat peacefully on the emerald green carpet, ~~remis~~ emotionally reminiscing about the good old days. Busy employees with their crisp tucked in shirts ran helplessly to catch business meetings, lack of punctuality ^{being} the only stain on their white shirts uniform. ¹¹

12 Long gone was the pleasant smell of ~~grass~~ ^{grass}. Instead, a blend of the metallic tang of perspiration and acrid smell of saliva got more intense with every passing second. The birds on the ~~(bire)~~ branches contracted their limbs and set off into the ~~pettucid-blue~~ ^{horizon} sky, their resplendent colours juxtaposed against the pellucid-blue sky. It appeared as if a fatigued artist violently dabbed various colours onto his canvas in order to meet the nearing deadline. The moist earth ¹³ had now ~~harded~~ hardened due to being exposed

8 The candidate's use of personification is highly effective, as the bench is described as remaining 'in solitude, eagerly waiting to hear a spectrum of tales'.

9 The candidate establishes contrast, beyond that given in the question, as the park moves from being empty to being 'filled to the top'.

10 The candidate refers to the image of the benches again as 'exhausted workers traipse towards them' showing a careful organisation of the response.

11 The candidate shows evidence of thoughtful organisation using the contrast between the park keeper who was mentioned earlier as having 'a sense of punctuality was clearly visible in his eyes' and the busy employees whose 'lack of punctuality' is 'the only stain on their white uniform'.

12 The candidate gives further evidence of thoughtful structuring, by referring back to the previous image of the 'freshly mowed grass' and establishing a contrast with the 'metallic tang of perspiration' now dominant in the air.

13 The simile describing the sky as a 'fatigued artist' who 'violently dabbed various colours onto his canvas in order to meet the nearing deadline' adds to the candidate's use of descriptive features.

Example Candidate Response – high, continued

Examiner comments

14 to the ~~sweltering sun~~ sweltering sun. Moreover, the raucous laughter of children echoed throughout the park; the cacophonous screech sounding quite exasperating to many. Some decided to hear a few dulcet tones through their air pods while some delicately read about the inspiring lines from his favourite book. The intricate carvings on the bodies of trees attracted the attention of many, each having a story of its own. While many rays of the sun were reflected back by the lush green cover of the trees, some were able to breach the strong defence and paint a unique pattern on the floor. From embracing couples to seasoned veterans quietly spending their last few days, there was one thing in common: everyone were over every person was in awe of the mystic beauty of this splendid park.

14 The candidate uses auditory imagery to good effect with a description of the 'raucous laughter of children' which 'echoed throughout the park' furthering the range of descriptive features.

15 The return to the image of the rays of the sun, initially seen at the start of the response, creates a cyclical structure which is effective in conveying the ever-repeating nature of these sorts of days in the park.

16 The candidate concludes the response effectively with a sense of reflection, bringing the piece back to the sense of calm established at the start and showing clarity of structure.

17 Throughout this response, the candidate uses a wide range of well-constructed sentences accurately, including simple, compound, and complex structures.

18 The candidate uses a precise, extensive, and effective range of vocabulary. The spelling is highly accurate, with only occasional slips. Punctuation is highly accurate, aside from the incorrect use of a semi-colon.

Content and structure = 10 out of 10
Style and accuracy = 14 out of 15

**Total mark awarded =
24 out of 25**

How the candidate could improve their answer

Style and accuracy

- The use of punctuation was highly accurate, with the correct use of full stops, commas, a colon and an exclamation mark. However, correctly hyphenating compound adjectives, 'pesto-coloured' and capitalising the proper noun 'AirPods' would have improved this response, as would the inclusion of apostrophes (for both omission and possession), brackets, a question mark and using a semi-colon accurately.
- The candidate needed to be consistent with all verbs to ensure tense agreement; for example, in the case of 'commence' this should be 'commenced'. The candidate also needed to ensure greater accuracy in subject-verb agreement, as in the case of 'Antiquated trees with its gnarly branches' which should be 'Antiquated trees with their gnarly branches' to maintain subject-verb agreement between 'trees' and 'their'.
- Overall, this was an ambitious response which firmly demonstrated the qualities required for Level 5; however, the response exceeded the indicative word count by 50 words. The candidate should have stayed within the 350–450 words specified and spent time checking their work for the sort of slips outlined.

Paper 2: Writing

→ 25 Marks
(1 hour)

= Section B: Composition [Essay Writing]

To compose? = Create

350-450 words

15 Marks:

Quality of Writing

- Punct
- S.S
- G
- Sp
- Vocab

10 Marks:

Content

↳ Narrative ✓

OR

↳ Descriptive ✓

