

Student Guides to Flightpath Focuses

Reading Focuses

1 → How effectively does the candidate focus on the exact requirements of the task/question and how effectively are they able to formulate and communicate interpretations of texts?

- Are you sticking closely to the task or the question and answering in a clear and detailed way?
- Are you offering a well thought through opinion about what the writer was trying to make you think, feel and understand?
- Are you considering many layers of different meanings and possible interpretations?

2 → How adept is the candidate at selecting and utilising textual references to support their argument?

- Are you using quotes to back up your opinions and interpretations?
- Are you choosing quotes that have a sensible connection to the task and the points you are making?
- Are you selecting quotes that you find easy to explain and evaluate?

3 → How successful is the candidate at recognising the writer's crafting of material and do they use accurate subject terminology with confidence?

- Are you discussing the decisions the writer made when they chose words and created sentences? (e.g. similes, exclamations, alliteration, imperatives, short sentences etc.)
- Are you discussing the decisions the writer made when they organised and structured their writing? (e.g. paragraphs, layout, openings, conclusions, turning points, flashbacks etc.)
- Do you use accurate subject terminology to talk about the writer's methods and techniques?

4 → How detailed is the candidate when exploring the effects of a writer's methods and to what extent are they able to delve into the layers of meaning that texts produce?

- Are you explaining WHY the writer used a particular method or technique?
- Are you offering a very clear interpretation of what meanings, feelings and ideas the writer was trying to communicate?
- Are you connecting the events and characters and themes in the text to how these issues reflect our own lives in the real world?

5 → How sophisticated is the candidate at conceptualising links between texts?

- Are you pointing out differences and similarities between two texts?
- Are you using comparative connectives or linking phrases to join your interpretations together?
- Are you going back and forth between the two texts throughout your response?

6 → To what degree is the candidate able to relate a literary text to the social, cultural, biographical and historical contexts in which that text is written and received?

- Are you discussing cultural and social attitudes at the time the text was written?
- Are you linking what you know about the time and place the text is set to your interpretations?
- Are you considering how different readers from different time periods might react to the events and characters?

Writing Focuses

1 → How successfully does the candidate utilise punctuation?

- Do you use basic punctuation accurately at all times? (e.g. full stops, capitals, commas, apostrophes etc.)
- Do you try to experiment with a full range of advanced punctuation? (e.g. semi-colons, ellipses, dashes, speech marks etc.)
- Do you use punctuation on purpose to create a particular effect? (e.g. creating a shock with an exclamation or using a dash to create a dramatic pause etc.)

2 → How rich and varied is the candidate's range of vocabulary and is it used with precision and purpose?

- Do you select words very carefully so they explain what you mean more precisely?
- Do you use more high level words to make your work more interesting and imaginative?
- Do you choose the right words to suit the mood and purpose of your piece of writing?

3 → How fruitfully does the candidate employ linguistic methods to make the writing more engaging and effective?

- Do you use a range of techniques in your own work? (e.g. similes, alliteration, short sentences for impact, rhetorical questions etc.)
- Do you use these techniques on purpose to have a particular effect on your reader?
- Do the methods and techniques you use suit the mood and purpose of your piece of writing?

4 → To what extent does the candidate vary and control syntax with purpose to create particular effects?

- Do you use sentences of different lengths?
- Do you start sentences in unusual ways?
- Do the sentence types you choose help to communicate your meaning better?

5 → How accurately does the candidate spell?

- Do you spell all basic words correctly?
- Do you avoid common mistakes with similar sounding words?
- Do you make very few errors with complicated or difficult words?

6 → How effectively does the candidate shape the writing with structural devices throughout the piece and within paragraphs?

- Do you use paragraphs on purpose to break up your writing? (e.g. change of time, change of topic, change of place, change of perspective, change of subject etc.)
- Do you think about how you will shape your writing with a clear beginning, middle and end? (e.g. intriguing openings, surprise turning points, powerful conclusions etc.)
- Do you use connectives and linking phrases to help guide your reader through different sections? (e.g. a time connective to introduce a flashback etc.)

7 → How do the structural and linguistic methods employed across the piece of writing contribute to the overall mood and meaning communicated and how successful is the candidate of meeting audience and purpose specifically?

- Does the style of your writing match the purpose you were aiming for?
- Is the style of your writing appropriate for the audience it was aimed at?
- Is your piece of writing engaging and interesting to read?

Indicative Content for Flightpath Focuses

Reading Focus 1

1 → How effectively does the candidate focus on the exact requirements of the task/question and how effectively are they able to formulate and communicate interpretations of texts?

- Are you sticking closely to the task or the question and answering in a clear and detailed way?
- Are you offering a well thought through opinion about what the writer was trying to make you think, feel and understand?
- Are you considering many layers of different meanings and possible interpretations?

Ambitious response: To what extent can Prospero in Shakespeare's "The Tempest" be considered a good man?

Prospero is a highly ambiguous character and his moral values are questionable. At the start of the play, his burning desire for vengeance is clear and his treatment of Caliban is often viewed as harsh and unforgiving. However he ultimately shows justice and mercy at the end of the play where he forgives his enemies and heals the rift between families by marrying his daughter to the prince of Naples. Shakespeare shows through this character how difficult being human can be and how we all struggle against our primitive desires and instincts to be civilised and good.

Good response: To what extent can Prospero in Shakespeare's "The Tempest" be considered a good man?

I believe that Prospero is a good man because he mostly treats others with respect. He does try to make people pay for their mistakes and sometimes he can get very angry. For example, he makes Alonso think his son is dead and makes Ferdinand work really hard to prove his love for Miranda. He treats Caliban very badly which makes me wonder if he is completely good but in the end he does the right thing by forgiving all his enemies.

Satisfactory response: To what extent can Prospero in Shakespeare's "The Tempest" be considered a good man?

I don't think Prospero is good because he does terrible things like forcing Caliban to be his slave. He creates the shipwreck and wants to kill all his enemies. I like Caliban more because he is treated badly even though he sometimes deserves it. So this makes me think that he's not very nice. In the end, he gets what he wants by using his magic to control other people and he gets angry all the time.

Reading Focus 2

2 → How adept is the candidate at selecting and utilising textual references to support their argument?

- Are you using quotes to back up your opinions and interpretations?
- Are you choosing quotes that have a sensible connection to the task and the points you are making?
- Are you selecting quotes that you find easy to explain and evaluate?

Ambitious response: How does Steinbeck present the relationship between George and Lennie in Chapter 1 of 'Of Mice and Men'?

Although at first it seems that Lennie is a burden to George, the reader quickly realises how reliant George is on the loveable oaf Lennie for companionship and to help him maintain hope in a cruel and brutal world. This is most evident in the mantra that Lennie has learnt by heart from the romantic George: "...because I've got you to look after me and you've got me to look after you". The relationship can be viewed as one sided because George always takes the lead. Even though Steinbeck does not specify who is in front when they appear in Chapter 1 with "one behind the other", the reader quickly acknowledges that this must be George as he is the one who is responsible and capable. Yet for all his brusqueness, he cares deeply for Lennie so despite his continual shouting at Lennie, such as the exclamation 'Give it here!' when he demands the dead mouse from Lennie, his voice eventually is described by the adjective "deep" and the adverb "rhythmically" when he shares his vision of a utopian future that is the bedrock of their relationship.

Good response: How does Steinbeck present the relationship between George and Lennie in Chapter 1 of 'Of Mice and Men'?

George is like a father figure to Lennie because Lennie always listens to George. "Lennie, who had been watching, imitated George exactly". Lennie looks up to George. However they are often fighting and George can often be really mean to Lennie. "You crazy bastard!" It is still obvious that they are friends but you do wonder why they are together because they are so different even though they are in the same situation. That's why they want to "live off the fat of the land" together because they share the dream and this is what makes their friendship important.

Satisfactory response: How does Steinbeck present the relationship between George and Lennie in Chapter 1 of 'Of Mice and Men'?

George and Lennie are good friends even though George shouts at Lennie. "God almighty, if I was alone I could live so easily. I could get a job and work and no trouble". Lennie is very simple minded ("An have rabbits") but George has to look after him all the time. He gets George in trouble. They are very different. Lennie is "like a bear" and George not like that so it seems strange that they are friends and you think that there is something not quite right about their relationship.

Reading Focus 3

3 → How successful is the candidate at recognising the writer's crafting of material and do they use accurate subject terminology with confidence?

- Are you discussing the decisions the writer made when they chose words and created sentences? (e.g. similes, exclamations, alliteration, imperatives, short sentences etc.)
- Are you discussing the decisions the writer made when they organised and structured their writing? (e.g. paragraphs, layout, openings, conclusions, turning points, flashbacks etc.)
- Do you use accurate subject terminology to talk about the writer's methods and techniques?

Ambitious response: How does the language in 'Dulce et Decorum Est' communicate a sense of horror at the reality of war?

When the speaker describes the dying man in the final stanza, the reader understands how diabolical and hellish war can be as he uses a simile to compare the anguish on his face to "a devil sick of sin". This use of figurative language is reflected by other imagery of the hellish and supernatural such as the "haunting flares" or the simile that describes the soldiers as "hags". The use of clauses to extend sentences in the first stanza results in the meter at the start being plodding despite the regular rhyme scheme but this is sharply contrasted with the faster pace of stanza two which is panicked and irregular due to the extensive use of short sentences and hyphens.

Good response: How does the language in 'Dulce et Decorum Est' communicate a sense of horror at the reality of war?

In stanza two the poet uses short exclamations "Gas! Gas! Quick, boys" to make us feel surprised at the sudden attack with a chemical weapon. This is juxtaposed with the first stanza where the rhythm was very slow. The writer uses powerful verbs such as "writhing" and "gargling" to describe the man's pain and suffering.

Satisfactory response: How does the language in 'Dulce et Decorum Est' communicate a sense of horror at the reality of war?

The writer uses a simile to describe the men "bent double, like old beggars under sacks". He also uses the word "gargling" to describe the sound he is making when he is struggling to breathe.

Reading Focus 4

4 → How detailed is the candidate when exploring the effects of a writer's methods and to what extent are they able to delve into the layers of meaning that texts produce?

- Are you explaining WHY the writer used a particular method or technique?
- Are you offering a very clear interpretation of what meanings, feelings and ideas the writer was trying to communicate?
- Are you connecting the events and characters and themes in the text to how these issues reflect our own lives in the real world?

Ambitious response: What is revealed about Macbeth's character in the line: "stars, hide your fires; let not light see my black and deep desires"?

Shakespeare has personified the stars as a symbol of the heavenly qualities of goodness and purity. This opposition of light and dark is imagery that Shakespeare regularly use throughout this and other plays to illustrate the moral choices we must all face. It is clear that Macbeth, a noble, loyal and brave soldier is fully aware that his intent to murder his liege is a shameful, unworthy act and Shakespeare makes him address heaven directly in this soliloquy to reveal that he is fully aware of what is the right thing to do. Therefore the audience must judge him as being weak to his ambition when he finally gives in to evil. Shakespeare wants to show that we all have to face difficult moral choices in our lives and we must live with the terrible consequences if we succumb to our darkest desires.

Good response: What is revealed about Macbeth's character in the line: "stars, hide your fires; let not light see my black and deep desires"?

Macbeth uses the adjectives "black and deep" to describe his ambition to become king whatever the cost. The word "black" has connotations of evil and darkness which is the opposite of the stars in the heaven. He also describes them as "deep" because he doesn't want anyone to find out. You could also interpret this as making it sound like they are so deep that he will never be able to overcome them.

Satisfactory response: What is revealed about Macbeth's character in the line: "stars, hide your fires; let not light see my black and deep desires"?

Macbeth is really worried about what to do because he wants to become the king but he doesn't want anyone to know so that's why he wants to hide his feelings. He is going to kill the king but he doesn't want anyone to find out.

Reading Focus 5

5 → How sophisticated is the candidate at conceptualising links between texts?

- Are you pointing out differences and similarities between two texts?
- Are you using comparative connectives or linking phrases to join your interpretations together?
- Are you going back and forth between the two texts throughout your response?

Ambitious response: Compare how the power of nature is presented in “Storm on an Island” and “Exposure”

Heaney presents the weather in the British Isles as cacophonous and brutal whereas Owen suggests the weather is sly, insidious and furtive. Nevertheless both poems see the elements as a real force to be reckoned with as they have great destructive power. This is clear in the way they both use military imagery to describe the weather: Owen describes the storm clouds as “ranks of soldiers” whilst Heaney uses martial terms such as ‘salvo’, ‘bombarded’ and “strafes”. Yet in one case, the weather is a silent killer and the other is satirising the way the British tend to exaggerate and obsess about the weather.

Good response: Compare how the power of nature is presented in “Storm on an Island” and “Exposure”

Both poets show that the weather is very dangerous because in “Storm on an Island”, the storm sounds fierce and hostile. Similarly, in “Exposure” the weather is killing all the soldiers. On the other hand, no one seems to die on “Storm on an Island” and the poet seems to think we shouldn’t cause such a fuss because, in the end, “it is a huge nothing that we fear”.

Satisfactory response: Compare how the power of nature is presented in “Storm on an Island” and “Exposure”

Both of these poems make it sound like the weather is really frightening and can do a lot of damage. In one it is a huge storm but in the other it is the cold that is killing the soldiers in the trenches.

Reading Focus 6

6 → To what degree is the candidate able to relate a literary text to the social, cultural, biographical and historical contexts in which that text is written and received?

- Are you discussing cultural and social attitudes at the time the text was written?
- Are you linking what you know about the time and place the text is set to your interpretations?
- Are you considering how different readers from different time periods might react to the events and characters?

Ambitious response: What is the relationship like between Juliet and her parents in “Romeo and Juliet”?

Juliet has a much more intimate relationship with the Nurse than she does with her biological mother. This is disconcerting for a modern reader who is used to intimate and close bonds within nuclear families, however, a Shakespearean audience would have accepted that a wealthy family such as the Capulets would have employed staff to deal with child-rearing. We find out early in the play that the Nurse in fact weaned Juliet. This may come as a shock in the 20th Century but the use of wet nurses was common practice in the Elizabethan era. It is little wonder that the nurse has such a maternal connection to Juliet as confidante and mentor whereas her mother seems cold, distant and uninterested.

Good response: What is the relationship like between Juliet and her parents in “Romeo and Juliet”?

Juliet is expected to be completely loyal and dutiful towards her parents which is quite different to today. In Shakespeare’s time, children were not allowed to talk back to their parents and they were often disciplined with beatings. There was a saying: “spare the rod and spoil the child” so it was thought that you were a bad parent if you didn’t use these punishments to keep your child in line. So Juliet has to obey everything her parents tell her to do without question.

Satisfactory response: What is the relationship like between Juliet and her parents in “Romeo and Juliet”?

Families were very different in those days because you had to always do everything your parent wanted you to do. So Juliet’s parents are very strict with her and she feels like she can’t talk them about anything. Which is also true today.

Writing Focus 1

1 → How successfully does the candidate utilise punctuation?

- Do you use basic punctuation accurately at all times? (e.g. full stops, capitals, commas, apostrophes etc.)
- Do you try to experiment with a full range of advanced punctuation? (e.g. semi-colons, ellipses, dashes, speech marks etc.)
- Do you use punctuation on purpose to create a particular effect? (e.g. creating a shock with an exclamation or using a dash to create a dramatic pause etc.)

Ambitious response: Write a speech about what freedom means to you.

When Nelson Mandela – a brave, defiant and gentle role model for us all - was given a life sentence with hard labour, he declared: “freedom is an ideal for which I am prepared die”. Would you be prepared to do the same? Freedom is a basic human right; we should defend that at any cost.

Good response: Write a speech about what freedom means to you.

I often wonder... what does freedom really mean? I think that freedom is a basic human right and everyone should fight for it. Although we are fortunate to be free in this country, I think we often take it for granted. We should be more careful about making sure we don't.

Satisfactory response: Write a speech about what freedom means to you.

Freedom is really important. I believe that freedom is a basic human right that everyone should have and we should protect our right to freedom.

Writing Focus 2

2 → How rich and varied is the candidate's range of vocabulary and is it used with precision and purpose?

- Do you select words very carefully so they explain what you mean more precisely?
- Do you use more high level words to make your work more interesting and imaginative?
- Do you choose the right words to suit the mood and purpose of your piece of writing?

Ambitious response: Write a review of a place you have visited in the UK.

Are you an adrenalin junkie? Does the thought of gyrating, falling, plummeting, and diving at break neck speeds get your pulse racing? Thorpe Park is definitely the place for you! Built in a disused, flooded quarry in Surry, Thorpe Park is the second biggest theme park in the UK with more than 2.7 million visitors a year – jaw-dropping statistics!

The rides are the star attraction! Saw-The Ride, based on the blood curdling horror film of the same name, includes a nerve shredding 110ft vertical drop. Now more terrifying than ever, you won't know what lurks around the corner as you enter Jigsaw's blood-curdling twisted world! You'll be strapped in, fired through a gauntlet of twisted metal before plummeting through rotating blades. Survive and you will appreciate life or sit there and rot. Make your choice.

Good response: Write a review of a place you have visited in the UK.

Thorpe Park might not be everyone's idea of a dream destination but for those fun-seekers out there, it has much to offer. It's a massive park with something for everybody.

If you want a real rollercoaster thrill, then soar on Stealth, be flung upside-down by Nemesis or complete the ten ridiculous inversions on the monstrous Colossus. If getting wet is your idea of fun, the Tidal Wave will make sure you are utterly soaked.

Satisfactory response: Write a review of a place you have visited in the UK.

Thorpe Park is a great day out for the whole family. There are a lot of things you can do there from riding terrifying roller coasters to more gentle family rides. As the second biggest park in the UK, you have a lot of things to choose from. It's very exciting.

I really enjoy the rollercoasters the best. Saw is my favourite because it is so terrifying. Stealth is really ginormous too. I don't really like Colossus though because it makes me feel sick.

Writing Focus 3

3 → How fruitfully does the candidate employ linguistic methods to make the writing more engaging and effective?

- Do you use a range of techniques in your own work? (e.g. similes, alliteration, short sentences for impact, rhetorical questions etc.)
- Do you use these techniques on purpose to have a particular effect on your reader?
- Do the methods and techniques you use suit the mood and purpose of your piece of writing?

Ambitious response: Describe a winter scene.

As tight as the skin of a drum, the sky is stretched taut and low. Glistening icicles hang from the edges of roofs like vicious daggers while fingers of frost creep stealthily across the ground, turning it to stone and ice.

Winter has come.

The trees stretch their skeletal arms upwards. Beseeching, they plead for relief from the interminable cold, their roots clutching at clods of hard-packed earth left barren and bare. But heaven is deaf to their bootless appeal.

Good response: Describe a winter scene.

The wind whistles and in the West, a lone wolf howls. It is winter time and the frost is transforming water to ice along the edges of roofs. The trees reach bony fingers to the unforgiving, grey clouds that feel like that are a weight above my head.

Satisfactory response: Describe a winter scene.

The sky is grey and the wind as cold as ice. I can hear wolf howling. Winter has come to stay. Icicles are sparkling like diamonds on the edges of roofs. The trees are like skeletons and I feel like the clouds are pressing down on me.

Writing Focus 4

4 → To what extent does the candidate vary and control syntax with purpose to create particular effects?

- Do you use sentences of different lengths?
- Do you start sentences in unusual ways?
- Do the sentence types you choose help to communicate your meaning better?

Ambitious response: Write an article giving advice to other students about how to cope with the exam stress.

Do you really believe you'll 'wing it' on the day? Don't be foolish! If you don't prepare yourself well in advance, be prepared to fail. Without fail, it seems that some students, even those with real ambition, tend to leave things to the last minute.

Good response: Write an article giving advice to other students about how to cope with the exam stress.

Preparing for exams is really important. Surprisingly, some students believe they will be okay if they just revise the night before the exam but this is foolish. It has been proved many times that the better prepared you are, the better you will do.

Satisfactory response: Write an article giving advice to other students about how to cope with the exam stress.

Exams are really important so you shouldn't leave it till the last minute. Exams are important for your future so you should study hard and make sure you are well prepared. You will fail if you don't do your best.

Writing Focus 5

5 → How accurately does the candidate spell?

- Do you spell all basic words correctly?
- Do you avoid common mistakes with similar sounding words?
- Do you make very few errors with complicated or difficult words?

Ambitious response: Write the opening of a horror story.

Lightning ripped open the sky as the wind pushed diaphanous clouds across the moon's face, guarding her like a queen. An eerie howl tore through the thick fog as a lupine silhouette emerged into the foreground. Lola heard a twig snap. She spun around, stood and stared, eyes wide with terror, as the sinister shape got closer.

Good response: Write the opening of a horror story.

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Satisfactory response: Write the opening of a horror story.

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Writing Focus 6

6 → How effectively does the candidate shape the writing with structural devices throughout the piece and within paragraphs?

- Do you use paragraphs on purpose to break up your writing? (e.g. change of time, change of topic, change of place, change of perspective, change of subject etc.)
- Do you think about how you will shape your writing with a clear beginning, middle and end? (e.g. intriguing openings, surprise turning points, powerful conclusions etc.)
- Do you use connectives and linking phrases to help guide your reader through different sections? (e.g. a time connective to introduce a flashback etc.)

Ambitious response: Write a story about a journey.

.....sitting on the train platform in the rain with tears running down her cheeks.

She has been crying earlier that day too. Her mother had slapped her across the face – the first time she had ever raised a hand to her – and told her never to come back.

It seem she would have her wish.

Now, sitting on her own, Siobhan felt cold and lonely and just wanted to go home but.....

Good response: Write a story about a journey.

The first thing that had happened was the fight with her mum. She had slapped her across the face and told her get out. Siobhan has burst into tears and run.

Now she was sitting alone on the train platform, wondering if she had made a mistake. She just wanted to go home.

Satisfactory response: Write a story about a journey.

My mum and I had a fight. She told me to get out and slapped me and told me never to come back again.

Next I am sitting on the platform in the rain. I am crying. I wish I wasn't here.

Writing Focus 7

7 → How do the structural and linguistic methods employed across the piece of writing contribute to the overall mood and meaning communicated and how successful is the candidate of meeting audience and purpose specifically?

- Does the style of your writing match the purpose you were aiming for?
- Is the style of your writing appropriate for the audience it was aimed at?
- Is your piece of writing engaging and interesting to read?

Ambitious response: Write a newspaper editorial that informs people about child poverty in the UK.

Last year, an independent investigation was conducted into aspects of children's lives in Britain. The report was released yesterday; the facts that were revealed are shameful.

Shockingly, when compared to data compiled in 1969, the study found that significantly more children are growing up in relative poverty today – 3.6 million compared with 2 million – and claims that these children suffer "devastating consequences throughout their lives".

Ultimately, there is a real risk that our society is sleepwalking into a world where children grow up in a state of social apartheid, with poor children destined to experience hardship and disadvantage just by accident of birth - their more affluent peers unaware of their existence.

Good response: Write a newspaper editorial that informs people about child poverty in the UK.

A report was released yesterday that explained some of the terrible facts about child poverty in Britain in our world today. It has some shocking facts and statistics.

In 1969 there were about 2 million children living in poverty however today there are 3.6 million. This shows that things are getting much more devastating for children than ever before. Poverty is destroying the lives of our young people.

In conclusion, it is obvious that we need to do something about this so that your future doesn't just depend on how fortunate you were when you were born. There is a huge gulf between rich and poor and we need to address this now.

Satisfactory response: Write a newspaper editorial that informs people about child poverty in the UK.

Child poverty in Britain is a terrible thing and we are finding out many different facts about the effect it has on children in our country. Since 1969 there are more children than ever who are living in poverty, with about 3.6 million children living in poverty today. The lives of these children is terrible.

I hope that this will change because it is very sad for children to have to be victims of poverty when other people are so rich, it is unfair and we should change this.