

# Revising for English Language Paper 1

## Session Aims

1. To help parents know the demands of the reading section of English Language Paper 1  
- mock on **Monday 24<sup>th</sup> November.**
2. To give advice about how to use AI to aid revision for Language Paper 1.

# What exams will your child take?

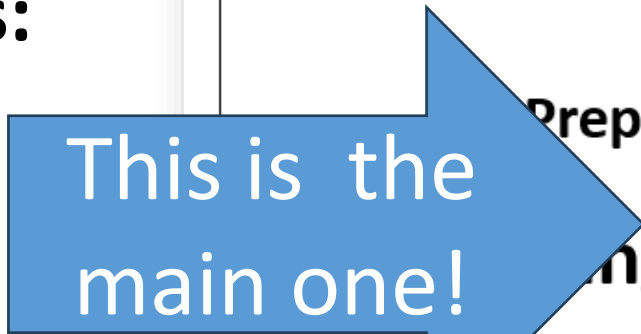
**Language Paper 1**

Year 11

(November '25 Mock)






# Revision Resources:

- Student booklet
- Past Papers
- Sparx Reader
- ChatGPT
- Online revision videos



## Preparing for Language Paper 1

The paper at a glance:

Section A (responding to extract) – 40 marks			
Q1	List 4 things you learn about X.	4 marks (4 mins)	
Q2	How does the writer use language to...? <i>[Analysing language in detail]</i>	8 marks (10 mins)	
Q3	How has the writer structured the text to interest you as a reader? <i>[Analysing the way the whole text is structured]</i>	8 marks (10 mins)	
Q4	A student said 'X' about the extract. To what extent do you agree? <i>[Analysing language in detail – can bring in analysis of structure, too]</i>	20 marks (20 mins)	
Section B (creative writing) – 40 marks			
Q5	Creative writing <i>[Writing a narrative or description]</i>	40 marks (45 mins)	

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Teacher: \_\_\_\_\_

<https://sparxreader.com/>

## Login details

Student email  
address + school  
password

Teachers can setup  
set texts on Sparx.



# Sparx Example

The screenshot displays the Sparx Reader application. At the top, a blue navigation bar contains a back arrow, the text "Sparx Reader", and on the right, "243 SRP", a star icon, the name "Matt Farmor", a bell icon, and a "Menu" button. Below the navigation bar, a grey bar with a purple bookmark icon on the left contains the text "Start reading here". The main content area shows a text passage from "A Christmas Carol" with the word "biting" highlighted in a purple box. A white pop-up dialog box is centered over the text, containing the question "Would you like to see what this word means?" with a close button (X). Below the question are two buttons: "Cancel" and "Show me". At the bottom of the dialog, it says "You can look up 60 more words today." and includes a link "Having trouble?". The background text is partially obscured by the dialog box.

Sparx Reader 243 SRP Matt Farmor Menu

Start reading here

Once upon a time, on Christmas Eve, Scrooge sat busy in his office. It was cold, bleak, biting weather, foggy as well. The city cl... it was dark already

Would you like to see what this word means? X

Cancel Show me

You can look up 60 more words today.

[Having trouble?](#)

The... It was so thick that... e houses opposite

The door of Scrooge's office was open so that he could keep an eye on his clerk, an assistant who worked for him. The clerk sat copying letters in a miserable little room. Scrooge had a small fire,

# Past papers should be made available to your children on Teams.

## Mr Fermor's class example below!

The screenshot shows the Microsoft Teams interface. The browser address bar indicates the URL is `teams.microsoft.com/v2/`. The left-hand navigation pane shows the 'All teams' section with a red 'ER' icon, and the 'English 11L-En2 2024 RWD' team selected. Under 'Main Channels', the 'Past Papers' channel is visible. The main content area displays the 'Past Papers' channel with a sub-section titled '1. Exam Papers'. A table lists 11 exam papers with columns for Name, Modified, and Modified By.

Name	Modified	Modified By
01. Specimen 2014	September 30	M Fermor
02. Specimen 2015	September 30	M Fermor
03. Specimen 2016 (Aug)	September 30	M Fermor
04. Specimen 2016 (Oct)	September 30	M Fermor
05. Summer 2017	September 30	M Fermor
06. November 2017	September 30	M Fermor
07. Specimen 2018	September 30	M Fermor
08. Summer 2018	September 30	M Fermor
09. November 2018	September 30	M Fermor
10. Summer 2019	September 30	M Fermor
11. November 2019	September 30	M Fermor

GCSE  
**ENGLISH LANGUAGE**

Paper 1 Explorations in creative reading and writing

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**Insert**

The source that follows is:

Source A: 21st Century prose-fiction

*Jigs and Reels* by Joanne Harris

An extract from a collection of short stories published in 200

Please turn the page over to see the source

The source that follows is:

Source A: 21st Century prose-fiction

*Jigs and Reels* by Joanne Harris

An extract from a collection of short stories published in 2004.

Source A is taken from the beginning of a short story written by Joanne Harris. Mr Fisher, a teacher of English for forty years, works at St Oswald's Grammar School for Boys.

1 Mr Fisher lived alone in a small terraced house in the centre of town. He did not own a car, and therefore preferred to do as much as he could of his weekend marking in the form room after school. Even so, there were usually two or three stacks of books and papers to take home on the bus.

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Now everything was in black and white, and though Mr Fisher continued to teach with as much devotion to duty as he had forty years before, he was secretly aware that his voice had begun to lack conviction. To these boys, these sullen boys with their gelled hair and perfect teeth, everything was boring. Shakespeare was boring. Dickens was boring.

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25 This was an uncharacteristically gloomy train of thought, and Mr Fisher pushed it away. Not all his boys lacked imagination. Alistair Tibbet, for instance, even though he had obviously done part of his homework on the bus. An amiable boy, this Tibbet. Not a brilliant scholar by any means, but there was a spark in him which deserved attention.

30 Mr Fisher took a deep breath and looked down at Tibbet's exercise book, trying not to think of the snow outside and the five o'clock bus he was now almost certain to miss. Four books to go, he told himself; and then home; dinner; bed; the comforting small routine of a winter weekend.

35 But, gradually sitting there in the warm classroom with the smell of chalk and floor polish in his nostrils, Mr Fisher began to experience a very strange sensation. It began as a tightening in his diaphragm, as if a long unused muscle had been brought into action. His breathing quickened, stopped, quickened again. He began to sweat. And when he reached the end of the story, Mr Fisher put down his red pen and went back to the beginning, re-reading every word very slowly and with meticulous care.

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END OF SOURCE

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END OF SOURCE

F – Fisher's lifestyle

T – Fisher's thoughts on books

F – Fisher's reaction to story

1. Read again the first part of the source, from lines 1 to 4.

Answer all parts of this question

Tick (✓) one box for each question.

01.1 What is the setting of the extract?

A busy city

The centre of town

The countryside

**[1 mark]**

01.2 What is the type of house Mr Fisher lives in?

A block of flats

A detached house

A terraced house

**[1 mark]**

01.3 When did Mr Fisher prefer to do his marking?

At the weekend

During the school day

After school

**[1 mark]**

01.4 How did Mr Fisher get home from school?

He got the bus

He drove a car

He cycled a bike

**[1 mark]**

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A block of flats

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01.4 How did Mr Fisher get home from school?

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He drove a car

He cycled a bike

[1 mark]

- 1 Mr Fisher lived alone in a small terraced house in the centre of town. He did not own a car, and therefore preferred to do as much as he could of his weekend marking in the form room after school. Even so, there were usually two or three stacks of books and papers to take home on the bus.
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2

Look in detail at this extract, from **lines 9 to 15** of the source:

Mr Fisher remembered a time – surely, not so long ago – when books were golden, when imaginations soared, when the world was filled with stories which ran like gazelles and pounced like tigers and exploded like rockets, illuminating minds and hearts. He had seen it happen; had seen whole classes swept away in the fever. In those days, there were heroes; there were dragons and dinosaurs; there were space adventurers and soldiers of fortune and giant apes. In those days, thought Mr Fisher, we dreamed in colour, though films were in black and white, and good always triumphed in the end.

How does the writer use language here to convey Mr Fisher's views on books and stories of the past?

You could include the writer's choice of:

- words and phrases
- language features and techniques
- sentence forms.

**[8 marks]**

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How does the writer use language here to convey **Mr Fisher's views on books and stories of the past?**

You could include the writer's choice of:

- words and phrases
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**[8 marks]**

Students can use these red words as a scaffold for further analytical practice.

This could be applied to Literature analysis too:

[Author] describes...

[quotation]

Here,... [explanation]

The use of.. [analysis of method]

In addition, [further analysis for 'detail']

4. For this question focus on the second part of the source, from **line 25 to the end.**

In this part of the source, Mr Fisher's reaction could be seen to be extreme.

To what extent do you agree or disagree with this statement?

In your response, you could:

- Consider Mr Fisher's reactions in this part of the story
- Comment on the methods the writer uses to present Mr Fisher as being excited
- Support your response with references to the text

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END OF SOURCE

4. For this question focus on the second part of the source, from **line 25 to the end.**

In this part of the source, **Mr Fisher's reaction could be seen to be extreme.**

To what extent do you agree or disagree with this statement?

In your response, you could:

- Consider Mr Fisher's reactions in this part of the story
- Comment on the methods the writer uses to present Mr Fisher as being excited
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## Fisher's reaction extreme?

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Given Mr Fisher's vast experience and commitment to the job, I would argue that the seemingly extreme reaction can be explained by how rare an event a story such as Tibet's is for Mr Fisher.

**At the start of this section,** Harris describes how Tibet's 'had obviously done part of the homework on the bus'. **Here,** Harris lays the ground for Mr Fisher's later surprise when the story is good, which helps to partly explain why the reaction seems so extreme. **The use of the adverb** 'obviously' helps disguise the story's likely brilliance early in this section to add to the surprise later on.

# Warning – this question can wreck timing in the exam!

3. You now need to think about the structure of the **source as a whole**.

This text is from the beginning of a novel.

**How has the writer structured the text to create a sense of excitement?**

You could write about:

- How excitement has increased or decreased by the end of the source
- How the writer uses structure to create an effect
- The writer's use of any other structural features, such as changes in mood, tone or perspective.

# This is our sacrificial lamb!!!

Source A is taken from the beginning of a short story written by Joanne Harris. Mr Fisher, a teacher of English for forty years, works at St Oswald's Grammar School for Boys.

Q1

1 Mr Fisher lived alone in a small terraced house in the centre of town. He did not own a car, and therefore preferred to do as much as he could of his weekend marking in the form room after school. Even so, there were usually two or three stacks of books and papers to take home on the bus.

5 It had been a disappointing term at St Oswald's. For most of the boys in 3F, creative writing was on a par with country dancing and food technology. Oh, he'd tried to engage their interest. But books just didn't seem to kindle the same enthusiasm as they had in the old days.

9 Mr Fisher remembered a time – surely, not so long ago – when books were golden, when imaginations soared, when the world was filled with stories which ran like gazelles and pounced like tigers and exploded like rockets, illuminating minds and hearts. He had seen it happen; had seen whole classes swept away in the fever. In those days, there were heroes; there were dragons and dinosaurs; there were space adventurers and soldiers of fortune and giant apes. In those days, thought Mr Fisher, we dreamed in colour, though films were in black and white, and good always triumphed in the end.

Q2

15 Now everything was in black and white, and though Mr Fisher continued to teach with as much devotion to duty as he had forty years before, he was secretly aware that his voice had begun to lack conviction. To these boys, these sullen boys with their gelled hair and perfect teeth, everything was boring. Shakespeare was boring. Dickens was boring.

20 There didn't seem to be a single story left in the world that they hadn't heard before. And over the years, though he had tried to stop it, a terrible disillusionment had crept over Mr Fisher, who had once dreamed so fiercely of writing stories of his own. They had come to the end of the seam, he understood. There were no more stories to be written. The magic had run out.

25 This was an uncharacteristically gloomy train of thought, and Mr Fisher pushed it away. Not all his boys lacked imagination. Alistair Tibbet, for instance, even though he had obviously done part of his homework on the bus. An amiable boy, this Tibbet. Not a brilliant scholar by any means, but there was a spark in him which deserved attention.

Q4

30 Mr Fisher took a deep breath and looked down at Tibbet's exercise book, trying not to think of the snow outside and the five o'clock bus he was now almost certain to miss. Four books to go, he told himself, and then home; dinner; bed; the comforting small routine of a winter weekend.

35 But, gradually sitting there in the warm classroom with the smell of chalk and floor polish in his nostrils, Mr Fisher began to experience a very strange sensation. It began as a tightening in his diaphragm, as if a long unused muscle had been brought into action. His breathing quickened, stopped, quickened again. He began to sweat. And when he reached the end of the story, Mr Fisher put down his red pen and went back to the beginning, re-reading every word very slowly and with meticulous care.

40 This must be what a prospector feels when, discouraged and bankrupt and ready to go home, he takes off his boot and shakes out a nugget of gold the size of his fist. He read it again, critically this time, marking off the paragraphs with notes in red. A hope, which at first Mr Fisher had hardly dared to formulate, swelled in him and grew strong. He found himself beginning to smile.

45 If anyone had asked him what Tibbet's story was about, Mr Fisher might have been hard put to reply. There were themes he recognised, elements of plot which were vaguely familiar: an adventure – a quest, a child, a man. But to explain Tibbet's story in these terms was as meaningless as trying to describe a loved one's face in terms of nose, eyes, mouth. This was something new. Something entirely original.

END OF SOURCE

3. You now need to think about the structure of the source as a whole.

This text is from the beginning of a novel.

**How has the writer structured the text to create a sense of excitement?**

Your question 3 structure is given to you in Q1, Q2 and Q4:

Q1: Mr Fisher and his setting

Q2: Mr Fisher's views on stories of the past.

Q3: Mr Fisher's reaction to Tibbet's story.

**Initially**, Harris focuses on Mr Fisher's mundane life in a 'terraced house' and his school 'routine' of forty years where he marks at the 'weekend'. This is used as a contrast to the 'nugget' he finds later **adding to the reader's sense of excitement** when there is a change to his normal routine.

Harris **then builds excitement** by focusing on Mr Fisher's passionate attitude to the 'golden' stories of the past, which leads the reader to wonder how he might feel if he got one in his next pile of marking.

**The final focus** on Tibbet's essay **completes the building of excitement** with Mr Fisher being caused to 'sweat' by its brilliance.

0 5

A magazine has asked for contributions for their creative writing section.

**Either**

Write a description of a very hot place as suggested by this picture:



**or**

Write a story about a disagreement.

(24 marks for content and organisation  
16 marks for technical accuracy)

**[40 marks]**

# ChatGPT – the final taboo!

If you don't hop on board the AI train, you'll be left behind while others fly ahead!

Create me a paragraph character description to drop into a creative writing composition. I want you to focus on subtle details such as their hair, smile, eyes, skin, clothing, posture etc. It should include a dash of figurative language, some sentence variation and a few different types of punctuation. I would like my character to be:

- male
- in his twenties
- an everyman type person (so I can be adaptable with his deployment)
- quite good looking
- have an inner determination

He looked like the kind of man you might pass on the street and glance back at, unsure why. His dark hair was slightly unkempt—more from habit than carelessness—and when he smiled, it wasn't broad, but it lingered, as if it knew something you didn't. His eyes, a calm grey, carried a quiet focus that hinted at grit beneath the surface; they didn't dart, they decided. Sunlight had left faint traces across his skin, a suggestion of long walks or work done outdoors, and the rolled sleeves of his shirt revealed lean, capable forearms. He stood straight, but not stiffly—there was a readiness in his posture, as though he were waiting for something worth moving toward. In him was an ordinary sort of strength, the kind that speaks softly but endures.

Now, can you do a similar thing, but I would like a female teenager who

Sure — could you finish your sentence? You started with “*a female teenager who...*” — what kind of person would you like her to be? (e.g. shy, rebellious, thoughtful, popular, artistic, etc.)



is thoughtful but popular and slightly artistic

She had the kind of presence that made people quiet down without quite knowing why. Her hair, loosely tied with a ribbon she'd probably painted herself, framed a face that seemed always half lost in thought. There was colour on her fingertips—ink, or maybe charcoal—and her eyes carried a softness that made people feel seen, even when she was miles away in her mind. She dressed simply but with intent: layered bracelets, a denim jacket covered in pins, a sketch peeking from her pocket. When she laughed, it wasn't loud, but it lit the space; when she listened, it was with full attention. Somehow, she managed to be both part of the crowd and slightly apart from it—like the melody you only notice after the chorus fades.

Mr Fermor wants to show parents how his writing was made better by ChatGPT. Below I will write a weather description.

Please could you:

- improve it
- evaluate the improvements
- give Mr F three targets for next time

The sun had struggled to emerge today. Weak rays broke through gaps in the cloud but there was a sense it would never warm the world below. The chill in the air had been around for days and it didn't look like this was about to change anytime soon. A slow breeze stirred the browning leaves but life otherwise seemed to be on hold.

## Improved version

The sun had fought all morning to break through the stubborn grey, managing only to scatter a few thin beams across the fields. They glimmered faintly, more decoration than warmth. The air clung cold to every surface, the kind of chill that seeps into your sleeves and stays there. A slow, uncertain breeze stirred the browning leaves, and for a moment they shivered—as though even nature was waiting for something to change.

## Evaluation of improvements

- 1.Stronger vocabulary and imagery** – Words like “*fought*,” “*stubborn*,” and “*glimmered*” add energy and personify the weather, giving it more character and tension.
- 2.Greater precision and rhythm** – Varying sentence length (short and long) creates a more natural, engaging flow, drawing attention to key details.
- 3.Mood and atmosphere** – The revision develops the sense of stillness and anticipation more vividly, helping the reader *feel* the cold and the waiting world.
- 4.Consistency of tone** – The imagery is cohesive: each sentence reinforces the theme of quiet struggle between warmth and cold.

## Mr F’s three writing targets for next time

- 1.Experiment with figurative language** – Use personification or metaphor to make the setting feel alive (e.g. “the sun fought,” “the breeze whispered”).
- 2.Vary sentence length for effect** – Combine short, punchy sentences with longer, descriptive ones to create rhythm and emphasis.
- 3.Focus on sensory detail** – Try to include not just what is seen, but what is felt, heard, or even smelled, to deepen the atmosphere.

Below is a Question 2 response to the AQA English Language GCSE Paper 1. I have then copied a student response to this beneath it. Beneath that are the assessment criteria for the language question.

Could you:

- (1) mark it out of 8 using the assessment criteria
- (2) write an improved response
- (3) evaluate the changes you made
- (4) give the students two targets for improvement

If there are few moments in life that come as clear and as pure as ice, when the mountain breathed back at her, Zoe knew that she had trapped one such moment and that it could never be taken away. Everywhere was snow and silence. Snow and silence; the complete arrest of life; a rehearsal and pre-echo of death. She pointed her skis down the hill. They looked like weird talons of brilliant red and gold in the powder snow as she waited, ready to swoop. I am alive, I am an eagle.

**How does Joyce use language here to describe Zoe's feelings?**

## Student Attempt

Joyce describes Zoe's feelings as at peace and not afraid, so the readers can feel her connection to the moment she is in.

Joyce portrays how Zoe is at one with nature when she writes 'few moments in life that come as clear and pure as ice, when the mountain breathed back at her.' Here, Joyce is suggesting that Zoe feels a sense of connection to the mountain because of how peaceful it is. The use of personification of 'the mountain breathes back at her' implies that Zoe feels a connection to the mountain that they are sharing a special moment together. In addition, the verb 'trapped' shows Zoe feels as if she is taking in the moment around her and storing it as a memory.

Also, Joyce reveals Zoe's thoughts before she skis down the mountain. When she writes, 'I am alive. I am an eagle'. Here, Joyce suggests Zoe's confidence about soaring down the mountain.





## (1) Mark out of 8

### Student Response Summary:

The student comments on how Zoe feels peaceful and connected to nature, mentions personification (“the mountain breathed back at her”), comments on the verb “trapped,” and discusses “I am alive. I am an eagle” as showing confidence.

Mark: 5/8 – Level 3 (Clear, relevant explanation)

### Justification:

-  **Clear understanding of language:** The student explains how language reflects Zoe’s feelings (peace, connection, confidence).
-  **Relevant textual detail:** They use a range of evidence: “the mountain breathed back,” “trapped,” and “I am an eagle.”
-  **Analysis depth:** The explanations are mostly clear but not *perceptive* or *detailed* — they tend to restate meaning rather than explore subtler effects (e.g., symbolism or contrasts).
-  **Terminology:** Some is used (“personification,” “verb”) but not always developed with insight.

→ This places it securely in **Level 3 (5 marks)**.



## (4) Two Targets for Improvement

### 1. Develop analysis beyond the obvious.

Don't just explain what the language means — explore *why* the writer chose it and *how* it shapes the reader's understanding of Zoe's emotions.

### 2. Use a wider range of subject terminology naturally.

Integrate terms like *simile*, *metaphor*, *repetition*, and *symbolism* into sentences smoothly to sound analytical rather than list-like.

## Example of a Level 3 (6/8) Response

Joyce uses language to show that Zoe feels calm, connected to nature, and excited about what she is about to do. The phrase *"few moments in life that come as clear and as pure as ice"* uses a simile to show how special this experience feels to Zoe. The comparison with ice suggests purity and stillness, showing that she feels peaceful and focused.

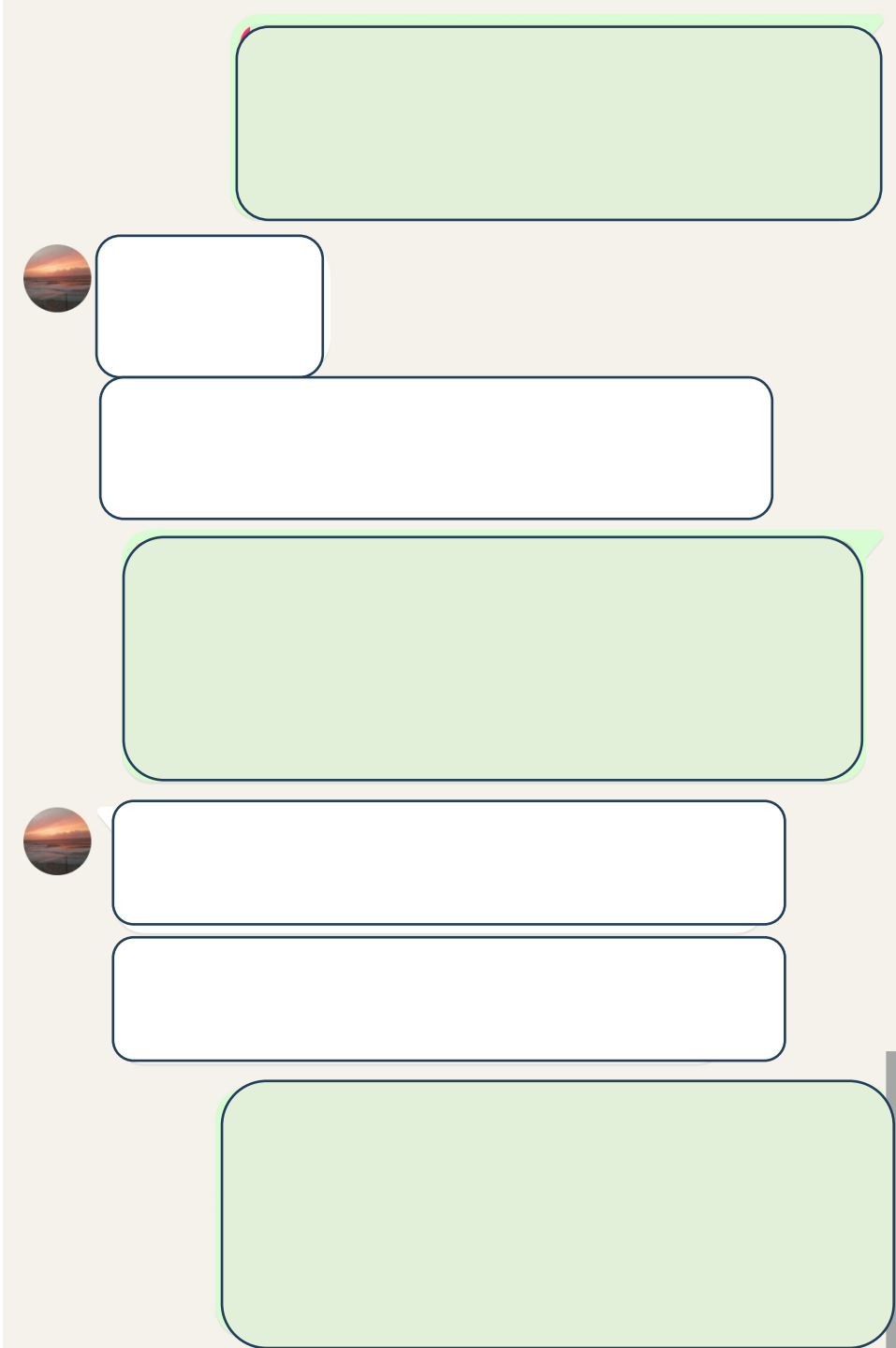
The personification in *"the mountain breathed back at her"* makes the mountain seem alive, which shows Zoe's strong connection with nature. It is as if the mountain is responding to her, helping her feel part of something larger. The verb *"trapped"* shows that Zoe wants to hold onto this moment, as though she knows how rare and perfect it is.

Finally, Joyce uses short sentences and a metaphor in *"I am alive. I am an eagle."* The short sentences make her thoughts sound powerful and certain, while the metaphor of the eagle shows her freedom and confidence as she prepares to ski down the mountain. Overall, the language helps us understand that Zoe feels both peaceful and full of energy at the same time.

### Why this is Level 3 (6/8)

- **Clear understanding of language:** The student explains how language choices reveal Zoe's feelings.
- **Range of relevant detail:** Covers three key quotations with comments.
- **Accurate terminology:** Uses *simile*, *personification*, *verb*, *metaphor* correctly.
- **Limited depth:** The analysis is clear but not fully perceptive — it doesn't explore symbolism or deeper emotional or spiritual meaning.

And finally...



Your children will do better in ALL their GCSEs – but especially English – if they are regular readers.

Fact.





**Please give us some  
feedback on Yr 11  
Revision Evening!**