



Critical Essay

Higher English



Critical Essay Exam Format

Paper

Part of the critical reading paper (paper 2).

Time

Time allocation for this paper is 1 hour 30 minutes, the same as National 5.

Timing can be more difficult as the essay is expected to be more insightful and sophisticated than in National 5, and the SST component takes longer to complete at higher level as there is no marks for quotes.

Marks

The essay is 20 marks, the same as National 5.



Essay Questions

Option of 3 questions per genre.

Make sure you answer a question from the genre of text you are studying!

Take your time when picking a question, as the wording can sometimes be confusing.



Essay Questions

PART D — POETRY

*Answers to questions on **poetry** should refer to the text and to such relevant features as word choice, tone, imagery, structure, content, rhythm, rhyme, theme, sounds, ideas . . .*

- 10.** Choose a poem which explores a challenging situation or a strong emotion.
With reference to appropriate techniques, discuss how the poet's presentation of the challenging situation or strong emotion enhances your appreciation of the poem as a whole.
- 11.** Choose a poem which has an uplifting or disturbing or reflective mood.
With reference to appropriate techniques, discuss how the poet's presentation of the uplifting or disturbing or reflective mood enhances your appreciation of the poem as a whole.
- 12.** Choose a poem which explores an issue of personal or social or moral importance.
With reference to appropriate techniques, discuss how the poet's presentation of this issue enhances your appreciation of the poem as a whole.



**How to
structure a
critical essay**

Introduction

4/5 TCQAP paragraphs

Conclusion



Writing your introduction

Used to introduce the text and make links to the question that is being asked.

Things to include:

- Title and Author
- Short summary of the text
- Literary techniques (make sure you list things that you later analyse)
- Theme



The main TCQAP paragraphs

You will be used to writing TCQAP paragraphs in National 5.

Topic Sentence

Context

Quotation

Analysis

Personal Evaluation

These paragraphs are the main body of your essay. These will remain largely the same no matter what question you answer. You will only need to change parts of your topic sentence and evaluation to link back to the question you have chosen to answer.



Improving Essays from Nat5 to Higher Level- Quotations

At Higher, your essay should contain both island and embedded quotations.

Island quotation- Your longer quotation, the main one that your analysis is centered around.

Embedded quotation- One or two words embedded within your analysis.

Using two quotations allows for a more detailed analysis.



Example from last year

ISLAND

“The rain set early in to-night,
The sullen wind was soon awake,
It tore the elm tops”

(longer quotation)

EMBEDDED

“spite”

(short, used within the analysis)



Improving Essays from Nat5 to Higher Level-Topic Sentences

There is a level of sophistication expected at Higher.

Demonstrating a more extensive vocabulary is a great way to improve the standard of your writing.

An easy way to demonstrate this in your essay is to improve your topic sentences.

There are some good examples on the following slide that you can take and utilise in your writing.



Topic Sentence Stems Examples

- In the first instance X is introduced to the reader in...
- This sense of Y is further reinforces/augmented/further suggested/cemented/compounded by...
- The earlier idea that _____ is reflected in _____ when the writer...
- The character's _____ is accentuated through the use of...



Advice on timing

You might not be able to split the paper into two 45 minute sections. Through practice, you will find out if you need more or less time than this for the essay.



Timed practice does not mean you have to sit and write out your whole essay every time!



You can break it down into one or two paragraphs, and once you are more comfortable with the timing, build it up into the whole essay.



Marking

Section 2 - CRITICAL ESSAY

Supplementary marking grid

	Marks 20 - 19	Marks 18 - 16	Marks 15 - 13	Marks 12 - 10	Marks 9 - 6	Marks 5 - 0
Knowledge and understanding The critical essay demonstrates:	thorough knowledge and understanding of the text perceptive selection of textual evidence to support line of argument which is fluently structured and expressed perceptive focus on the demands of the question	secure knowledge and understanding of the text detailed textual evidence to support line of thought which is coherently structured and expressed secure focus on the demands of the question	clear knowledge and understanding of the text clear textual evidence to support line of thought which is clearly structured and expressed clear focus on the demands of the question	adequate knowledge and understanding of the text adequate textual evidence to support line of thought which is adequately structured and expressed adequate focus on the demands of the question	limited evidence of knowledge and understanding of the text limited textual evidence to support line of thought which is structured and expressed in a limited way limited focus on the demands of the question	very little knowledge and understanding of the text very little textual evidence to support line of thought which shows very little structure or clarity of expression very little focus on the demands of the question
Analysis The critical essay demonstrates:	perceptive analysis of the effect of features of language/filmic techniques	detailed analysis of the effect of features of language/filmic techniques	clear analysis of the effect of features of language/filmic techniques	adequate analysis of the effect of features of language/filmic techniques	limited analysis of the effect of features of language/filmic techniques	very little analysis of features of language/filmic techniques
Evaluation The critical essay demonstrates:	committed, evaluative stance with respect to the text and the task	engaged evaluative stance with respect to the text and the task	clear evaluative stance with respect to the text and the task	adequate evidence of an evaluative stance with respect to the text and the task	limited evidence of an evaluative stance with respect to the text and the task	very little evidence of an evaluative stance with respect to the text and the task
Technical accuracy The critical essay demonstrates:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> few errors in spelling, grammar, sentence construction, punctuation and paragraphing the ability to be understood at first reading 				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> significant errors in spelling, grammar, sentence construction, punctuation and paragraphing which impedes understanding 	

[END OF MARKING INSTRUCTIONS]



Words of advice

Do not stress about the timing right away. It is more important at the beginning of the year to spend time understanding the text and how to write about the different techniques.

Once you have a good essay plan, stick to it! Build off your teacher's feedback to continue improving your essay throughout the year.



Finally...

Good luck in Higher English!

If anyone has any more questions about revision for the critical essay please just ask 😊

