Paper 1

Language in Context

70 marks | **2 hours** | A: Comprehension **(30)** | B: Summary **(10)** | C: Language structures **(30)**

1 Timing plan

TIME	SECTION	MARKS	FOCUS
50 min	A: Comprehension	30	Read the passage once for meaning, then answer. Let the marks decide how much you write.
30 min	B: Summary	10	Find and number your points before you write a single sentence.
40 min	C: Language	30	Advert, cartoon and editing questions. Check every answer against the text or visual.

2 What examiners look for

Comprehension

- [ ] I did what the question word asks: *explain*, *discuss*, *quote* and *evaluate* are different jobs.
- [ ] My answer matches the mark allocation: a 3-mark question needs three clear ideas or one well-developed one.
- [ ] I used my own words when asked, and quoted exactly when asked to quote.
- [ ] I wrote in full sentences unless the question said otherwise.

Summary

- [ ] I read the instruction twice and underlined exactly what I must summarise.
- [ ] I numbered my points first, one clear idea per point.
- [ ] I left out examples, statistics, quotes and repetition.
- [ ] I wrote one fluent paragraph in my own words, within the word limit, with my word count at the end.

Language structures

- [ ] For adverts and cartoons, I linked what I see (the visual) to what I read (the words).
- [ ] When editing, I checked concord, tense, punctuation and spelling before rewriting.

Common mark-losers

- × Summarising points the question didn't ask for, even if they are well written.
- × Lifting sentences straight from the passage in the summary.
- × Leaving out the word count.
- × One-word answers to questions worth 2 or 3 marks.
- × Numbering answers differently from the question paper.

Paper 2

Literature

80 marks | 2½ hours | A: Poetry (30) | B: Novel (25) | C: Drama (25)

1 Timing plan

TIME	SECTION	MARKS	FOCUS
40 min	A: Poetry	30	Two prescribed poems plus the unseen poem, which is compulsory. About 13 minutes per poem.
55 min	B: Novel	25	Answer ONE question, on the novel you studied.
55 min	C: Drama	25	Answer ONE question, on the drama you studied.

The golden rule: across Sections B and C, write ONE essay and ONE contextual question. Never two essays, never two contextuals.

2 What examiners look for

The literary essay

- [ ] My introduction answers the question in one or two sentences.
- [ ] I chose a stance (agree, disagree or agree to an extent) and kept it all the way through.
- [ ] Every body paragraph follows **Point → Evidence → Explain**.
- [ ] Each topic sentence answers the question on its own. If it doesn't, I'm retelling.
- [ ] I cut plot details that don't support my argument. The examiner already knows the story.

Contextual questions and poetry

- [ ] I referred to the extract and used short, exact quotations.
- [ ] I named the technique *and* explained its effect on the meaning or tone.
- [ ] For "discuss" or "critically comment" questions, I gave my view and backed it up.
- [ ] I wrote enough for the marks: 3 marks need more than one line.

Common mark-losers

- × Retelling the plot instead of arguing a point.
- × Answering two essays or two contextual questions in Sections B and C.
- × Answering on a set work you didn't study.
- × Quoting without explaining why the quote matters.
- × Running out of time and rushing the unseen poem.

Paper 3

Writing

100 marks | **3 hours** | A: Essay, 400–450 words **(50)** | B: Two transactional texts, 180–200 words each **(2 × 25)**

1 Timing plan

TIME	TASK	MARKS	FOCUS
10 min	Plan the essay		Choose a topic and type, then map your opening, 3–4 body ideas and ending.
60 min	Write the essay	50	Follow your plan. Use 2–3 techniques on purpose.
10 min	Edit the essay		Fix spelling, punctuation and paragraphing. Check the word count.
45 min	Transactional 1	25	About 5 minutes planning, 30 writing and 10 checking.
45 min	Transactional 2	25	Same split. Don't let text 1 eat into this time.
10 min	Final check		Numbers, titles and word counts on every answer.

2 Essay

- [ ] I picked the topic I can say the most about, not the one that sounds impressive.
- [ ] I decided the type straight away: narrative, descriptive, argumentative, reflective or discursive.
- [ ] For a narrative, I knew my ending before I started.
- [ ] If I chose a picture, my essay clearly links to it.
- [ ] I wrote down the topic number and my title. The title isn't in the word count.
- [ ] I handed in my plan, crossed out neatly.

3 Transactional

- [ ] I used the correct format for the text type (letter, speech, dialogue, email, article and so on).
- [ ] My register and tone suit the audience.
- [ ] The body is 180–200 words.
- [ ] I answered every part of the prompt.
- [ ] I gave each text a clear structure: opening, development, close.

Common mark-losers

- × Skipping the plan, then running out of ideas halfway through.
- × Writing far under or over the word limit.
- × Wrong format or register in a transactional text.
- × Spending so long on the essay that the second transactional text is rushed.