**Long Answer Questions**

Long answer questions require learners to use a variety of skills. They also need to be able to plan and organise their ideas in order to ensure a full, thorough answer to gain all of the marks available.

Teaching Approaches:

* SQ4R
* BUBBLE/DOUBLE BUBBLE
* FLOW MAP
* ANSWER

Sample Question from the WJEC:

How do the writers present the places of Toiyabe National Forest in Nevada and the city of Alifbay in Text B and Text E?

Teaching Process to follow:

SQ4R

BUBBLE/DOUBLE BUBBLE

FLOW MAP

ANSWER

* SQ4R is a reading strategy designed to guide learners in helping them access a text and in guiding them to look for, find, retrieve and analyse relevant information.
* The Bubble Map can be used to organise the original ideas.
* Use the information from the bubble map as the points in the flow map to begin to extend the ideas to include evidence and analysis.
* Use the Flow Maps as a basis to write a thorough answer to the question.

The answer learners will write using this process will be much longer than that needed for the GCSE examination, and it will take much longer to get there. However, following this process allows learners to begin to think about how to organise their ideas and how to access the text. If pupils have followed this process from KS3 onwards, using it many times before KS4, simply creating the Bubble Map should be enough in the examination itself.

SQ4R

Survey

Question

4R

read

recite

record

review

Survey

Scan material to get a general idea of the material.

Read the introduction and main headings.

Look at pictures and graphs.

Read summary and end of chapter questions.

Question

Ask questions by turning main headings into questions –

What? Where? When? Why? How?

Form questions using graphs, charts, bold words, introductions and summaries.

Read

Read with definite questions in mind.

Attempt to answer these questions and organise the material in your own mind.

Read only to the end of each headed section.

Recite

Look away from the material and ask yourself the questions.

Answer them out loud.

If you cannot answer the questions, go back over the material and read it again.

Record

Underline in text.

Take notes – jot down concepts, not complete sentences.

Review

Review each headed section briefly as you complete it.

Review the complete section later.

Plan regular reviews.

**Useful tools to use**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Q**uestion | **R**ecord |
| **R**eview | |

The words in the bubble will form the first sentence in each paragraph of their response. (The Point in a PEE paragraph).

Pupils should then take this starting point to flow maps to structure their response.

Flow Map Example - Toiyabe

Explain

The language suggests that Toiyabe has been devastated by a natural disaster. The words ‘charred’ and ‘dead’ emphasise that the land has been scarred by recent events, leaving a trail of devastation.

Evidence

“nothing but charred land”, “dead earth”

Point

Toiyabe is presented as a place that has been devastated.

Evidence

“…they could watch it grow again inch by annual inch.” “They lived on the surface of the moon.”

Point

Toiyabe is also presented as a bleak and barren landscape.

Explain

The bleakness of the place is reinforced by Bryson’s acknowledgement that the land will take a long time to recover, the slowness emphasised by the repetition in ‘inch by annual inch’. The landscape is also compared to the ‘surface of the moon’, somewhere that lacks life where nature struggles to grow.

Explain

The word ‘never’ suggests that the devastation is so disastrous that the scale of it is like nothing he’s ever seen before, emphasising the cataclysmic nature of the devastation.

Evidence

“I have – never seen such devastation”

Point

Bryson also implies that the devastation has been totally catastrophic.

Explain

The fact that Bryson refers to the ‘undamaged’ houses as an ‘odd sight’ suggests the devastation seemed to be so thorough that what was once normal now seems out of place.

Evidence

“undamaged house” is an “odd sight”.

Point

Bryson suggests that anything undamaged in the landscape is unusual.

L

Point

Toiyabe’s overall focus is on the total absence of life.

Evidence

‘dead’…‘blackened’

Explain

Bryson repeats the images of the ‘dead earth’ and the ‘blackened stumps’ to reinforce the lack of any living thing that has been left behind after the fire.

Flow Map Example – Rushdie

Point

It seems that the city, even when there are glimpses of hope, still can’t cheer people up.

Evidence

“even though the skies were blue”

Explain

Therefore, the city is such an expert in generating sadness, that even when the skies are ‘blue' the residents are unable to escape the glum, sad, oppressive city.

Point

Throughout the text Rushdie paints a picture of overriding unhappiness through his language choices.

Explain

The personification of the ‘mournful sea’ emphasises how widespread the misery is. Whereas the idea that the ‘glumfish’ are too ‘miserable to eat’ adds to the unhappiness. In addition, ‘black’ carries connotations of sadness and mourning and the ‘melancholy’ belching indicates that the sadness has infiltrated every area of life.

Evidence

‘mournful’, ‘miserable’, ‘black’, ‘melancholy’ etc.

Explain

The city is so unimportant that its name is also not relevant, so irrelevant that it no longer knows what it is, suggesting a lack of identity and importance.

Evidence

“it had forgotten its name.”

Point

Rushdie implies that the city is so sad that it is not worth remembering.

Explain

The reference to the smoke being ‘bad news’ and the fact that the smoke ‘hung’ creates a threatening, inescapable, oppressive mood through the negative connotations.

Evidence

The smoke ‘hung over the city like bad news.’

Point

This is further emphasised by the fact that the sadness seems inescapable.

Explain

The repetition of the word ‘sad’ emphasises the glumness of the city.

Evidence

Rusdie repeats the word ‘sad’.

Point

Overall, Rushdie presents Alifbay as a sad city.

**Long Answer Response**

Toiyabe is presented as a place that has been devastated. The writer tells us that there is, “nothing but charred land” and “dead earth”. The language suggests that Toiyabe has been devastated by a natural disaster. The words ‘charred’ and ‘dead’ emphasise that the land has been scarred by recent events, leaving a trail of devastation and a lack of life; it sounds complete and irreversible.

**Continue with Toiyabe…**

Overall, Rushdie presents Alifbay as a ‘sad’ city. Rusdie repeats the word ‘sad’ in close succession. The repetition of the word ‘sad’ emphasises the glumness of the city as there is no respite from the adjective, constantly reminding us that there is no escape from the sadness.

**Continue with Rusdie…**

The response should indicate that a learner is building on the information in the Flow Maps to demonstrate their understanding and analysis of the text.

**Long Answer Questions Require Inference**

**How do we explicitly teach inference skills?**

One simplified model for teaching inference includes the following assumptions:

* We need to find clues to get some answers.
* We need to add those clues to what we already know or have read.
* There can be more than one correct answer.
* We need to be able to support inferences.

Marzano (2010) suggests teachers pose four questions to students to facilitate a discussion about inferences:

* **What is my inference?**  
  This question helps students become aware that they may have just made an inference by filling in information that wasn't directly presented.
* **What information did I use to make this inference?**  
  It's important for students to understand the various types of information they use to make inferences. This may include information presented in the text, or it may be background knowledge that a student brings to the learning setting.
* **How good was my thinking?**  
  According to Marzano, once students have identified the premises on which they've based their inferences, they can engage in the most powerful part of the process — examining the validity of their thinking.
* **Do I need to change my thinking?**  
  The final step in the process is for students to consider possible changes in their thinking. The point here is not to invalidate students' original inferences, but rather to help them develop the habit of continually updating their thinking as they gather new information.

**Do your students understand what inference is?**

**Be sure your students know what inference is (and what it isn't)**  
Inference is using facts, observations, and logic or reasoning to come to an assumption or conclusion. It is not stating the obvious (stating the obvious: that girl is wearing a fancy dress and carrying a bouquet of flowers. inference: that girl is a flower girl in a wedding). It is not prediction, though the two are definitely related. Remind your students that inference asks "What conclusions can you draw about what is happening now?" Prediction asks, "What will happen next?"

**Can they express their understanding of inference?**

The ability to make inferences is, in simple terms, the ability to use two or more pieces of information from a text in order to arrive at a third piece of information that is implicit. Inference can be as simple as associating the pronoun ‘he’ with a previously mentioned male person. Or, it can be as complex as understanding a subtle implicit message, conveyed through the choice of particular vocabulary by the writer and drawing on the reader’s own background knowledge. Inference skills are important for reading comprehension, and also more widely in the area of literary.

**Approaches to studying texts.**

The research evidence reviewed suggested that, in order to be good at inferring, pupils need to:

* be an active reader who wants to make sense of the text
* monitor comprehension and repair misunderstandings
* have a rich vocabulary
* have a competent working memory.

How can we encourage pupils to infer? The following approaches may be useful:

**Teacher modelling of inferring:**

* teachers "thinking aloud" their thoughts as they read aloud to pupils
* teachers asking themselves questions that show how they monitor their own comprehension
* teachers making explicit the thinking processes that result in drawing an inference.

**Word level work:**

* developing fluent basic reading skills (e.g. practice in decoding print)
* vocabulary building: aurally and in reading
* lexical training, e.g. in local cohesive devices (such as pronouns and connectives).

**Text level work:**

* making explicit the structure of stories
* discussing the role and usefulness of a title
* emphasising that fiction allows multiple interpretations and inference making.

**Questioning by the teacher**:

* asking *‘How do you know?’* whenever an inference is generated in discussion of a text
* asking questions about relationships between characters, goals and motivations
* asking questions that foster comprehension monitoring, such as *Is there information that doesn’t agree with what I already know?*
* ensuring that pupils are not interrupted in their reading by asking questions during reading time, or launching into questioning too soon afterwards.

**Questioning by pupils:**

* training pupils to ask themselves *Why*-questions while reading
* teaching the meaning of the question words ‘*who’*, ‘*when’*, ‘ *why’* etc.
* asking pupils to generate their own questions from a text using these question words.

**Activation of prior knowledge:**

* asking pupils to generate associations around a topic, and discuss and clarify their collective knowledge.

**Prediction and contextualisation:**

* working on predictive and contextualising skills for example via cloze and similar exercises.

**Aural work:**

* listening to stories and story tapes
* listening comprehension activities
* practising inferential questions on aurally presented texts.

**Choosing the right texts:**

* taking care not to choose texts that are too easy for classwork: very explicit texts provide few opportunities for inferences to be made.

**Cross curricular work:**

* discussion of texts in curricular areas outside literacy.

This is how they represented the stages involved:

1. identify important passage words

2. activate important facts about those words

3. do reasoning about those facts, computing relationships between the words

4. the result is a coherent abstract discourse representation.

References: http://dera.ioe.ac.uk/7918/1/DCSF-RR031.pdf