



EDEXCEL INTERNATIONAL GCSE (9–1)

ENGLISH LANGUAGE B

Student Book

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Robert O'Brien, Pam Taylor



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INTRODUCTION TO THE COURSE	VI
ABOUT THIS BOOK	VIII
ASSESSMENT OVERVIEW	X
01 READING SKILLS	2
02 WRITING SKILLS	24
03 SECTION A	56
04 SECTION B	138
05 SECTION C	174
EXAM PREPARATION	198
GLOSSARY	202
INDEX	204

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

This lesson will help you to:

- practise and perfect skills to respond effectively to unseen non-fiction in the exam.

HINT

Remember to always use quotation marks to indicate direct quotation. Wherever possible, quotations should be integrated into the main body of your own sentences. Longer quotations should be used sparingly and set off from the main paragraph.

SELECTING EVIDENCE

You will need to locate quotations in order to support your points quickly, under exam conditions. It is important that the quotations that you use are short and directly relevant to your point.

ACTIVITY 1

A01

SKILLS ANALYSIS

▼ SELECTING EVIDENCE FROM *TOUCHING THE VOID*

Read the passage from *Touching the Void* on pages 113–114. Copy and complete the following tables, finding evidence of each technique or stylistic choice in the passage.

▼ JOE'S ACCOUNT	▼ EVIDENCE
Short sentences	
Description of how physically painful the accident is	
Descriptions of feeling lonely	
Use of modal verbs (<i>must, could, should, would, shall, will</i>) to speculate about the future	
Punctuation for effect	

▼ SIMON'S ACCOUNT	▼ EVIDENCE
Careful and considered tone	
Realist is understanding of the situation	
Unsympathetic descriptions	
Use of modal verbs (<i>must, could, should, would, shall, will</i>) to speculate about the future	
Punctuation for effect	

HINT

The exam involves a mixture of short and longer answer questions. You will need to locate the relevant part of the passage for each question, but you do not need to offer direct quotation for the shorter questions. Read the question carefully and look at the number of marks available to help you to determine how much information to include and whether you need to quote.

ACTIVITY 2

A02

SKILLS ANALYSIS

▼ BEAT THE CLOCK!

You have three minutes to find an example of each of the following techniques in the *Touching the Void* extract:

- ellipsis
- exclamation mark
- direct speech
- emotive language
- rhetorical question
- use of first-person narrative
- colloquial language.

ACTIVITY 3

A02

SKILLS CRITICAL THINKING, ANALYSIS, INTERPRETATION

▼ POINT-EVIDENCE-EXPLAIN

For each of the techniques listed in Activity 2, construct a P-E-E paragraph exploring the effect that the technique has on the context of the story and its effect on the reader. Start by completing the following example.

Point: Both Simon and Joe use ellipses in their accounts. Joe's passage even ends with it.

Evidence: 'I kept staring at him, expecting him to fall...'

Explanation: Ellipsis is used as a structural device to create suspense and anticipation.

EXAM-STYLE QUESTION

A02

SKILLS CRITICAL THINKING, ANALYSIS, REASONING, INTERPRETATION

Explain how the writer presents two different impressions of the accident. You should support your answer with close reference to the passage, including **brief** quotations. (10 marks)



- *Touching the Void* is a true story of overcoming incredible hardship.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

This lesson will help you to:

- explore links and connections between writers' ideas and perspectives and how these are conveyed.

COMPARISONS

Before you start, read or re-read the 12 pieces of contemporary non-fiction on pages 124–137. These pieces have been chosen so you can practise reading and responding to passages in preparation for your exam. They include a range of the types of text that you need to be familiar with. The pieces are paired together with each pair sharing a theme that can be used as the basis for comparison.

QUESTION 7

HINT

The final question is worth approximately one third of the marks for the whole section. You should divide your time accordingly.

SUBJECT VOCABULARY

implicit suggested or understood without being stated directly
explicit expressed in a way that is very clear and direct

HINT

Make sure you select information that is relevant to the question.

Question 7 is the final question of Section A, and it will ask you to compare the two unseen texts that you have been given. This question is the longest and most complex and represents about a third of the marks available in Section A.

5 STEPS TO SUCCESS

STEP 1: Remember that the essay that you write in response to the question will be comparative, based on both Text One and Text Two. You will not have seen either of the texts before. The question is likely to focus on:

- what the texts are about, key themes and the authors' conclusions
- the authors' use of language, character and other effects.

STEP 2: Make sure that you focus on the question. Begin by stating what the texts are about, both obviously and at a deeper level, considering **implicit** and **explicit** meaning.

STEP 3: Make sure you refer to interesting or relevant points of detail, as a very general answer will not be as successful. It is not enough to point things out and 'translate' the text; avoid retelling the story and make sure you explain how the devices and features work, what their effect is on the reader, and so on. Ask yourself why the author might have used that kind of language, imagery and so on. Remember: Point-Evidence-Explain.

STEP 4: Draw clear links and contrasts between the texts. Depending on which texts you are given, you may also be able to draw contrasts and links within the texts as well. Make sure that you compare and contrast the texts by using words and phrases such as 'similarly', 'in comparison' or 'on the other hand'.

STEP 5: Quote briefly, using a single word or phrase, to support your comments. You may refer to a whole paragraph or long section, but do not copy it out in full. Show that you are quoting by using inverted commas. Because you should only use short quotations, you should integrate them into your sentences and introduce them with a comma or colon. Whenever you quote, always explain in your own words what the quotation means and comment on its effect, with particular focus on language and structure.

TEXT ONE

Touching the Void is an autobiography by Joe Simpson. Unusually for an autobiography, it is presented from both the perspective of Joe, and of his climbing partner, Simon Yates, in the first person.

Published in 2003, it is a true story of how he and Simon set out to become the first people to climb Siula Grande in Peru. However, the pair are involved in a terrible accident which results in Joe breaking his leg and becoming separated from his partner. Simon is forced to cut the rope connecting the pair as he believes Joe to be dead and his only chance of survival.

Read the following extract that details the accident from both perspectives.

▼ FROM *TOUCHING THE VOID* BY JOE SIMPSON

Joe's account

I hit the slope at the base of the cliff before I saw it coming. I was facing into the slope and both knees locked as I struck it. I felt a shattering blow in my knee, felt bones splitting, and screamed. The impact catapulted me over backwards and down the slope of the East Face. I slid, head-first, on my back. The rushing speed of it confused me. I thought of the drop below but felt nothing. Simon would be ripped off the mountain. He couldn't hold this. I screamed again as I jerked to a sudden violent stop.

Everything was still, silent. My thoughts raced madly. Then pain flooded down my thigh – a fierce burning fire coming down the inside of my thigh, seeming to ball in my groin, building and building until I cried out at it, and my breathing came in ragged gasps. My leg!... My leg!

I hung, head down, on my back, left leg tangled in the rope above me and my right leg hanging slackly to one side. I lifted my head from the snow and stared, up across my chest, at a grotesque distortion in the right knee, twisting the leg into a strange zigzag. I didn't connect it with the pain which burnt my groin. That had nothing to do with my knee. I kicked my left leg free of the rope and swung round until I was hanging against the snow on my chest, feet down. The pain eased. I kicked my left foot into the slope and stood up.

A wave of nausea surged over me. I pressed my face into the snow, and the sharp cold seemed to calm me. Something terrible, something dark with dread occurred to me, and as I thought about it I felt the dark thought break into panic: 'I've broken my leg, that's it. I'm dead. Everyone said it... if there's just two of you a broken ankle could turn into a death sentence... if it's broken... if... It doesn't hurt so much, maybe I've just ripped something.'

I kicked my right leg against the slope, feeling sure it wasn't broken. My knee exploded. Bone grated, and the fireball rushed from groin to knee. I screamed. I looked down at the knee and could see it was broken, yet I tried not to believe what I was seeing. It wasn't just broken, it was ruptured, twisted, crushed, and I could see the kink in the joint and knew what had happened. The impact had driven my lower leg up through the knee joint. ...

I dug my axes into the snow, and pounded my good leg deeply into the soft slope until I felt sure it wouldn't slip. The effort brought back the nausea and I felt my head spin giddily to the point of fainting. I moved

Face Side of a mountain.

nausea Sensation of physical sickness.

kink A sharp bend or twist in something.

axes Ice axes, used by mountaineers and climbers to cut footholds in ice.

breaking trail The process of making a trail through deep snow.

and a searing spasm of pain cleared away the faintness. I could see the summit of Seria Norte away to the west. I was not far below it. The sight drove home how desperately things had changed. We were above 19,000 feet, still on the ridge, and very much alone. I looked south at the small rise I had hoped to scale quickly and it seemed to grow with every second that I stared. I would never get over it. Simon would not be able to get me up it. He would leave me. He had no choice. I held my breath, thinking about it. Left here? Alone?... For an age I felt overwhelmed at the notion of being left; I felt like screaming, and I felt like swearing, but stayed silent. If I said a word, I would panic. I could feel myself teetering on the edge of it.

Simon's account

Joe had disappeared behind a rise in the ridge and began moving faster than I could go. I was glad we had put the steep section behind us at last. ... I felt tired and was grateful to be able to follow Joe's tracks instead of **breaking trail**.

I rested a while when I saw that Joe had stopped moving. Obviously he had found an obstacle and I thought I would wait until he started moving again. When the rope moved again I trudged forward after it, slowly.

Suddenly there was a sharp tug as the rope lashed out taut across the slope. I was pulled forward several feet as I pushed my axes into the snow and braced myself for another jerk. Nothing happened. I knew that Joe had fallen, but I couldn't see him, so I stayed put. I waited for about ten minutes until the tautened rope went slack on the snow and I felt sure that Joe had got his weight off me. I began to move along his footsteps cautiously, half expecting something else to happen. I kept tensed up and ready to dig my axes in at the first sign of trouble.

As I crested the rise, I could see down a slope to where the rope disappeared over the edge of a drop. I approached slowly, wondering what had happened. When I reached the top of the drop I saw Joe below me. He had one foot dug in and was leaning against the slope with his face buried in the snow. I asked him what had happened and he looked at me in surprise. I knew he was injured, but the significance didn't hit me at first.

He told me very calmly that he had broken his leg. He looked pathetic, and my immediate thought came without any emotion. ... You're dead... no two ways about it! I think he knew it too. I could see it in his face. It was all totally rational. I knew where we were, I took in everything around me instantly, and knew he was dead. It never occurred to me that I might also die. I accepted without question that I could get off the mountain alone. I had no doubt about that.

... Below him I could see thousands of feet of open face falling into the eastern glacier bay. I watched him quite dispassionately. I couldn't help him, and it occurred to me that in all likelihood he would fall to his death. I wasn't disturbed by the thought. In a way I hoped he would fall. I knew I couldn't leave him while he was still fighting for it, but I had no idea how I might help him. I could get down. If I tried to get him down I might die with him. It didn't frighten me. It just seemed a waste. It would be pointless. I kept staring at him, expecting him to fall...

ACTIVITY 1

A03

SKILLS ANALYSIS, INTERPRETATION

▼ COMPARING JOE AND SIMON'S ACCOUNTS

To help you to develop comparative skills, look back at the *Touching the Void* extract again in order to make comparisons within the text. Work with a partner to copy and complete the following table, considering Simon's account.

▼ WHAT WORDS OR PHRASES IN JOE'S ACCOUNT MOST VIVIDLY SHOW HIS PAIN AND HIS THOUGHTS AND FEELINGS?

Joe's account focuses on pain and shock: agony, panic and fear. He is obsessed with pain and the extremity of the damage, using powerful and emotive verbs: 'it was ruptured, twisted, crushed'. This uses the rule of three and emotive language to make the reader feel his pain.

Sharp, onomatopoeic sounds, such as 'bones splitting' and 'shattering blow', using emotive verbs.

Sometimes uncompromisingly direct to intensify sense of reality: 'the impact had driven my lower leg up through the knee joint'; 'we were above 19,000 feet... and very much alone'. Sometimes detailed descriptions involve the reader and put them in his shoes.

Words and images that convey thoughts and feelings vividly and frankly, sometimes in a sequence that conveys dramatic changes of mood and thought (paragraph 4: 'A wave of nausea... I'm dead.');

phrasing becomes abstract and almost vague at times, suggesting trauma: 'something terrible, something dark with dread'; 'teetering on the edge of (panic)'.

Uses rhetorical questions, such as 'Left here? Alone?'. This creates an **atmosphere** of uncertainty, putting the reader in his shoes and creating a sense of drama and suspense.

▼ WHAT WORDS OR PHRASES IN SIMON'S ACCOUNT SHOW MOST CLEARLY THE DIFFICULT DECISION HE FACES? EXPLAIN THE REASONS FOR YOUR CHOICES.

SUBJECT VOCABULARY

atmosphere the feeling that an event or place gives you

ACTIVITY 2

A03

SKILLS CRITICAL THINKING, ANALYSIS, INTERPRETATION, DECISION MAKING

▼ DIFFERENT ATTITUDES

Compare and contrast Joe and Simon's attitudes towards the accident described in the passage from *Touching the Void*. Support your answer with examples from both accounts.

You might like to consider some of the following points: biographical and autobiographical writing, style, structure, viewpoint, selection of detail, presentation of fact/opinion.

Note that in the exam you will be comparing two different text extracts. Here you are comparing two different perspectives from the same text, so this is for illustrative purposes only and is not indicative of the exam.

ACTIVITY 3

A03

SKILLS

CRITICAL THINKING, ANALYSIS,
INTERPRETATION, DECISION MAKING

KEY POINT

The individuality of your answer will lie in your choices of which details to highlight and the effect you think they have on the reader. Focus your energy on these aspects rather than making very general comments.

▼ MEETING ASSESSMENT OBJECTIVES

Read the following student responses to the question in Activity 2. How well do you think they meet the following assessment objective?

- AO3: Explore links and connections between writers' ideas and perspectives, as well as how these are conveyed



EXAMPLE STUDENT ANSWER A

Joe's account of the climb is very matter of fact and doesn't spare us the grim details of the injury that he sustained earlier in the climb: 'I felt a shattering blow in my knee, felt bones splitting, and screamed'. This indicates that he isn't really too badly affected currently by the psychological trauma of his ordeal. In Simon's account he is also very matter of fact about the experiences of Siula Grande, but the way in which he presents it isn't so horrific, more clinical. As if he isn't really there and is just doing a commentary on someone else climbing the mountain.

Joe's account of the climb uses a lot more exciting language and a richer vocabulary to keep the reader interested: 'Everything was still, silent. My thoughts raced madly'. Whereas Simon's account only uses very simple language and is more factual rather than exciting: 'I rested a while when I saw that Joe had stopped moving'. I think this suggests that Joe is perhaps more experienced at writing or was more affected by the incident on the Siula Grande. This helps us to understand that Joe and Simon aren't professional writers; I feel that this does take some of the possible atmosphere away from the story. In conclusion I think that there really aren't that many differences between the two accounts, other than the ones that I have stated. I think this is because they are both about the same incident and are both written from the same aspect of climbers.



EXAMPLE STUDENT ANSWER B

Both Simon and Joe use ellipses in their accounts: 'I kept staring at him expecting him to fall...'. The ellipses help to add tension and makes the reader wonder what will happen next. It keeps you on the edge of your seat and introduces the idea of an unfortunate event, which can help to build up to a climax point. Simon's account ends with an ellipsis, leaving it up to your imagination and making you want to find out more.

HINT

You must COMPARE and CONTRAST. To do this, use phrases that shows you are comparing, such as, 'in comparison', 'in contrast', 'similarly', 'however'.

SUBJECT VOCABULARY

juxtaposition putting two very different things close together in order to encourage comparison between them

This extract consists of two pieces of autobiographical prose narrative (or monologues) giving different perspectives on the same event. Relatively short paragraphs follow a sequence of time, but the real demarcations are provided by crucial developments in thought. The key to understanding the piece is to appreciate the different ways Joe and Simon respond to the accident. Though both accounts are very similar in style, there are significant differences to be explored.

Simon and Joe both use exclamatory sentences in their accounts. 'My leg!... my leg!' Joe uses this in particular to emphasise a thought and to bring a greater level of attention to the phrase. In this example it highlights how painful this experience is for him and forces an emotional response from the reader.

In keeping with this idea, emotive language is used more frequently by Joe: 'something dark with dread occurred to me, as I thought about it I felt the dark thought break into a panic'. The use of words like 'dread', 'dark' and 'break' create a semantic field of horror and sadness.

In comparison with Joe's account, Simon is less emotional and more objective in considering the situation in hand: 'I could see it in his face. It was all totally rational'. The use of short simple sentences helps keep his point of view very black and white and provokes a less emotional response from the reader. It seems fitting that Simon, as the observer, is more pragmatic in his analysis of the situation – the reader is aware that he feels a responsibility to act and is weighing up his decisions in as calm and factual a way as he is able to.

In conclusion, the **juxtaposition** between Simon and Joe's narratives illuminates the pathos in the two accounts. The starkly different tones force the reader to take sides. The reader is more likely to side with Joe's emotive and deeply personal account.



▲ Joe Simpson's is a great story of mountaineering survival

TEXT TWO



▲ Blue John Canyon, Utah, USA

drop-off A sheer downward slope.

chockstone A stone that has become stuck between rocks.

overhang A part of something (in this case, the rock) that extends over something else.

traverse Cross.

teeters Balance unsteadily.

torque Rotating force.

Between a Rock and a Hard Place is an autobiography written by Aron Ralston, an engineer turned outdoorsman and motivational speaker. It relates his experience in 2003 of being trapped for five days and seven hours in Blue John Canyon, found in the Utah desert in the southern United States.

His right arm was trapped by a boulder and, unable to free himself, he amputated his arm using a blunt pocketknife. He then had to return through the canyon and climb down a 20-metre slope before he could reach safety and receive medical care.

▼ FROM *BETWEEN A ROCK AND A HARD PLACE* BY ARON RALSTON

I come to another **drop-off**. This one is maybe eleven or twelve feet high, a foot higher and of a different geometry than the overhang I descended ten minutes ago. Another refrigerator **chockstone** is wedged between the walls, ten feet downstream from and at the same height as the ledge. It gives the space below the drop-off the claustrophobic feel of a short tunnel. Instead of the walls widening after the drop-off, or opening into a bowl at the bottom of the canyon, here the slot narrows to a consistent three feet across at the lip of the drop-off and continues at that width for fifty feet down the canyon.

Sometimes in narrow passages like this one, it's possible for me to stem my body across the slot, with my feet and back pushing out in opposite directions against the walls. Controlling this counterpressure by switching my hands and feet on the opposing walls, I can move up or down the shoulder width crevice fairly easily as long as the friction contact stays solid between the walls and my hands, feet, and back. This technique is known as stemming or chimneying; you can imagine using it to climb up the inside of a chimney.

Just below the ledge where I'm standing is a chockstone the size of a large bus tire, stuck fast in the channel between the walls, a few feet out from the lip. If I can step onto it, then I'll have a nine-foot height to descend, less than that of the first **overhang**. I'll dangle off the chockstone, then take a short fall onto the rounded rocks piled on the canyon floor.

Stemming across the canyon at the lip of the drop-off, with one foot and one hand on each of the walls, I **traverse** out to the chockstone. I press my back against the south wall and lock my left knee, which pushes my foot tight against the north wall. With my right foot, I kick at the boulder to test how stuck it is. It's jammed tightly enough to hold my weight. I lower myself from the chimneying position and step onto the chockstone. It supports me but **teeters** slightly. After confirming that I don't want to chimney down from the chockstone's height, I squat and grip the rear of the lodged boulder, turning to face back upcanyon. Sliding my belly over the front edge, I can lower myself and hang from my fully extended arms, akin to climbing down from the roof of a house.

As I dangle, I feel the stone respond to my adjusting grip with a scraping quake as my body's weight applies enough **torque** to disturb it from its position. Instantly, I know this is trouble, and instinctively, I let go of the rotating boulder to land on the round rocks below. When

tricochet Bounces off.

apocryphal Doubtful, untrue.

I look up, the backlit chockstone falling toward my head consumes the sky. Fear shoots my hands over my head. I can't move backward or I'll fall over a small ledge. My only hope is to push off the falling rock and get my head out of its way. 40

The next three seconds play out at a tenth of their normal speed. Time dilates, as if I'm dreaming, and my reactions decelerate. In slow motion: the rock smashes my left hand against the south wall; my eyes register the collision, and I yank my left arm back as the rock ricochets; the boulder then crushes my right hand and ensnares my right arm at the wrist, palm in, thumb up, fingers extended; the rock slides another foot down the wall with my arm in tow, tearing the skin off the lateral side of my forearm. Then silence. 45

My disbelief paralyzes me temporarily as I stare at the sight of my arm vanishing into an implausibly small gap between the fallen boulder and the canyon wall. Within moments, my nervous system's pain response overcomes the initial shock. Good God, my hand. The flaring agony throws me into a panic. I grimace and growl ... My mind commands my body, 'Get your hand out of there!' I yank my arm three times in a naive attempt to pull it out. But I'm stuck. 55

Anxiety has my brain tweaking; searing-hot pain shoots from my wrist up my arm. I'm frantic, and I cry out... My desperate brain conjures up a probably apocryphal story in which an adrenaline-stoked mom lifts an overturned car to free her baby. I'd give it even odds that it's made up, but I do know for certain that *right now*, while my body's chemicals are raging at full flood, is the best chance I'll have to free myself with brute force. I shove against the large boulder, heaving against it, pushing with my left hand, lifting with my knees pressed under the rock. I get good leverage with the aid of a twelve-inch shelf in front of my feet. Standing on that, I brace my thighs under the boulder and thrust upward repeatedly, grunting, 'Come on ...move!' Nothing. 60 65 70

EXAM-STYLE QUESTION

A03

SKILLS

CRITICAL THINKING,
ANALYSIS,
INTERPRETATION,
DECISION MAKING

Refer to **BOTH Text One AND Text Two** to answer the following question.

Compare how the writers of Text One and Text Two convey their ideas and experiences.

Support your answer with examples from **both** texts.

(15 marks)



▲ 'Another chockstone is wedged between the walls...'

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Pearson Edexcel International GCSE (9–1) English Language B prepares students for the new 2016 International GCSE (9–1) English Language B specification. This book provides comprehensive coverage of the specification and is designed to supply students with the best preparation possible for the examination:

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- Chapters are mapped closely to the specification to provide comprehensive coverage and are enhanced by targeted reading and writing skill sections
- Learning is embedded with differentiated exercises and exam practice throughout, including summary sections to review learning
- Signposted transferable skills
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- Reviewed by a language specialist to ensure the book is written in a clear and accessible style for students whose first language may not be English
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- eBook included
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