SPECIMEN MATERIAL 2

GCSE
ENGLISH LANGUAGE
(8700)
Paper 1 Explorations in creative reading and writing

Insert

The source that follows is:

Source A: 20th Century prose fiction

An extract from the novel *Brighton Rock* by Graham Greene.

Please turn the page over to see the source

It is 1938, in the popular seaside resort of Brighton on a Bank Holiday[1]. Hale, playing the part of Kolly Kibber, works for The Daily Messenger newspaper giving out cards for prizes to the holiday crowd. But he has something else on his mind.

HALE knew, before he had been in Brighton three hours, that they meant to murder him. With his inky fingers and his bitten nails, his manner cynical and nervous, anybody could tell he didn't belong – belong to the early summer sun, the cool Whitsun[2] wind off the sea, the holiday crowd.

They came in by train from Victoria every five minutes, rocked down Queen's Road standing on the tops of the little local trams, stepped off in bewildered multitudes into fresh and glittering air: the new silver paint sparkled on the piers, the cream houses ran away into the west like a pale Victorian water-colour; a race in miniature motors, a band playing, flower gardens in bloom below the front, an aeroplane advertising something for the health in pale vanishing clouds across the sky.

It had seemed quite easy to Hale to be lost in Brighton. Fifty thousand people besides himself were down for the day, and for quite a while he gave himself up to the good day, drinking gins and tonics wherever his programme allowed. For he had to stick closely to a programme: from ten till eleven Queen's Road and Castle Square, from eleven till twelve the Aquarium and Palace Pier, twelve till one the front between the Old Ship and West Pier, back for lunch between one and two in any restaurant he chose round the Castle Square, and after that he had to make his way all down the parade to West Pier and then to the station by the Hove streets.

Advertised on every Messenger poster: "Kolley Kibber in Brighton today". In his pocket he had a packet of cards to distribute in hidden places along his route: those who found them would receive ten shillings from the Messenger, but the big prize was reserved for who-ever challenged Hale in the proper form of words and with a copy of the Messenger in his hand: "You are Mr. Kolley Kibber. I claim the Daily Messenger prize."

This was Hale's job to keep doing his duty until a challenger released him, in every seaside town in turn: yesterday Southend, today Brighton, tomorrow –

He drank his gin and tonic hastily as a clock struck eleven, and moved out of Castle Square. Kolley Kibber always played fair, always wore the same kind of hat as in the photograph the Messenger printed, was always on time. Yesterday in Southend he had been unchallenged: the paper liked to save its guineas[3] occasionally but not too often. It was his duty today to be spotted and it was his inclination too. There were reasons why he didn't feel too safe in Brighton, even in a Whitsun crowd.

He leant against the rail near the Palace Pier and showed his face to the crowd as it uncoiled endlessly past him, like a twisted piece of wire, two by two, each with an air of sober and determined gaiety. They had stood all the way from Victoria in crowded carriages, they would have to wait in queues for lunch, at midnight half asleep they would rock back in trains an hour late to the cramped streets and the closed pubs and the weary walk home. With immense labour and immense patience they extricated from the long day the grain of pleasure: this sun, this music, the rattle of the miniature cars, the ghost train diving between the grinning skeletons under the Aquarium promenade, the sticks of Brighton rock, the paper sailors caps.

Nobody paid any attention to Hale; no one seemed to be carrying a Messenger. He deposited one of his cards carefully on the top of a little basket and moved on, with his bitten nails and his inky fingers, alone.

Glossary

[1] Bank Holiday – an official holiday when banks and most offices are closed.

[2] Whitsun – A Christian festival on the seventh Sunday after Easter

[3] Guineas – A guinea was an old form of currency equivalent to just over £1

END OF SOURCES

AQA

SPECIMEN MATERIAL 2
First exam in June 2026

Please write clearly in block capitals.

Centre number | | | | | | Candidate number | | | | |

Surname _____

Forename(s) _____

Candidate signature _____

GCSE
ENGLISH LANGUAGE
(8700)

Paper 1 Explorations in creative reading and writing

Time allowed: 1 hour 45 minutes

Materials
For this paper you must have:
- **Source A** – provided as a separate insert

Instructions
- Answer **all** questions.
- Use black ink or black ball-point pen.
- Fill in the boxes on this page.
- You must answer the questions in the spaces provided.
- Do not write outside the box around each page or on blank pages.
- Do all rough work in this book. Cross through any work you do not want to be marked.
- You must refer to the insert booklet provided.
- You must **not** use a dictionary.

Information
- The marks for questions are shown in brackets.
- The maximum mark of this paper is 80.
- There are 40 marks for **Section A** and 40 marks for **Section B**.
- You are reminded of the need for good English and clear presentation in your answers.
- You will be assessed on the quality of your **reading** in **Section A**.
- You will be assessed on the quality of your **writing** in **Section B**.

Advice
- You are advised to spend about 15 minutes reading through the Source and all five questions you have to answer.
- You should make sure you leave sufficient time to check your answers.

Do not write outside the box

Section A: Reading

Answer **all** questions in this section.
You are advised to spend about 45 minutes on this section.

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0 1 Read again the first part of the source, from **lines 1 to 3**.

Answer **all** parts of this question.

Tick (✓) **one** box for each question.

0 1 . 1 How soon did Hale realise the danger?

- Before arriving in Brighton ☐
- Within minutes ☐
- After three hours ☐

[1 mark]

0 1 . 2 What were Hale's fingers like?

- Clean and pale ☐
- Inky and bitten ☐
- Dirty and cracked ☐

[1 mark]

Do not write outside the box

0 1 . 3 What does Hale's appearance suggest?

He's out of place ☐

He's on holiday ☐

He's confident ☐

[1 mark]

0 1 . 4 How does Hale seem to feel?

Relaxed ☐

Anxious ☐

Cheerful ☐

[1 mark]

4

0 2 Look in detail at this extract from **lines 4 to 11** of the Source:

> They came in by train from Victoria every five minutes, rocked down Queen's Road standing on the tops of the little local trams, stepped off in bewildered multitudes into fresh and glittering air: the new silver paint sparkled on the piers, the cream houses ran away into the west like a pale Victorian water-colour; a race in miniature motors, a band playing, flower gardens in bloom below the front, an aeroplane advertising something for the health in pale vanishing clouds across the sky.
>
> It had seemed quite easy to Hale to be lost in Brighton. Fifty thousand people besides himself were down for the day, and for quite a while he gave himself up to the good day, drinking gins and tonics wherever his programme allowed.

How does the writer use language here to describe Brighton on that day?

You could include the writer's choice of:

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

[8 marks]

0 3 You now need to think about the structure of the source as a whole.

This text is from the opening of a novel.

How has the writer structured the text to create tension?

You could write about:

- how tension 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. **[8 marks]**

0 4 Focus this part of your answer on the second part of the Source from **line 16 to the end**.

In this part of the source, Hale could be seen as feeling nervous and unsafe.

To what extent do you agree?

In your response, you could:

- consider your own impressions of how Hale feels
- comment on the methods the writer uses to present Hale as nervous or unsafe
- support your response with references to the text.

[20 marks]

Section B: Writing

You are advised to spend about 45 minutes on this section.
Write in full sentences.
You are reminded of the need to plan your answer.
You should leave enough time to check your work at the end.

0 5 Your school or college is asking students to contribute some creative writing for its website.

Either: Write a description of a beach from your imagination. You may choose to use the picture provided for ideas.

Or: Describe an occasion when you felt unsure or challenged. Focus on the thoughts and feelings you had at that time.

(24 marks for content and organisation
16 marks for technical accuracy)
[40 marks]

END OF QUESTIONS

There are no questions printed on this page

DO NOT WRITE ON THIS PAGE
ANSWER IN THE SPACES PROVIDED

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