

Exam Practice for AQA English Language Paper 2

Please note, these papers were created for use with my own students and are not for redistribution or for sale/resale.

The questions do not include Number 1 as this is a simple tick-box question. The papers reflect the same questions and difficulty level as the exams. Instructions are based on *sections* of the texts rather than numbered lines, otherwise the questions are closely modelled on the AQA style.

One example uses a 21st century text with a 19th century text, the other uses 20th century and 21st century. I will be adding fiction examples to 'match' these practice papers which include the other date period so that each full exam will band across 19th-21st century texts, as in the AQA exams.

I have used the theme of Christmas in both examples to show how differently the same theme can be presented.

Hint! As there are 2 practice papers, try taking as long as you need to complete one, then do the other under timed conditions to see the difference in your work. This can be an excellent way of finding out how you work under stress, and also what you are capable of when working in a more relaxed frame of mind.

For more exam help and practice questions and ideas, please have a look at my books on Amazon <https://www.amazon.co.uk/l/B009K45K48>

and Lulu <http://www.lulu.com/spotlight/heulwen>

Practice Paper A

BBC NEWS

The new rituals of a modern-day Christmas

By Emily Purser



Mince pies, stockings and singing carols are Christmas traditions that have been around for as long as we can remember. But are there new festive rituals that in years to come could be spoken of in the same way?

Christmas celebrations have a long and varied history in the UK. From 5th Century nativity carols to the first Christmas tree brought over to England by Prince Albert in 1841, to the banning of the festival altogether under Oliver Cromwell in 1647.

But new Christmas rituals that reflect contemporary life are slowly becoming a familiar part of the season.

OPEN-AIR SKATING

There's Ice Cube in Leeds, The Ice Factor in York, Skating@Life in Newcastle, Spinningfields in Manchester, Winter Wonderland in Edinburgh and Somerset House in London, to name just a few.

Suddenly, every major city in the UK seems to have an outdoor skating rink for a season that can last for more than three months.

There's a nostalgia about skating that evokes American movies, at a time of year when people are happy to escape the stresses of the season.

"It's got that romance that you associate with Central Park in New York, especially at night, when there's sparkling lights and music playing, and hot chocolate in the cafe downstairs." says Vicky Pepys of Skating@Life, which has 70,000 visitors over 15 weeks.

GERMAN CHRISTMAS MARKETS

German markets can now be found across the UK, where visitors can find all manner of crafts and sip on festive "Glühwein" (mulled wine) to fend off the cold.

Christmas markets have become a popular holiday pastime, creating a festive shopping experience. The Frankfurt Christmas market in Birmingham is the biggest of its kind outside of Germany and Austria.

The city knows it's Christmas when the Germans come, according to Emily Malcolm of Birmingham City Council. This is reflected in the visitor numbers, which reached 2.8 million last year, with 94 German-owned stalls flown in from Frankfurt.

"As British people increasingly look for an escape from a nakedly commercial Christmas, it's seen as something wholesome in an otherwise increasingly consumerist world. It allows them to engage with Christmas but not in a religious way." says Simon Green, co-director of the Aston Centre for Europe.

FESTIVE COFFEE

It wasn't so long ago that when someone asked "How do you like your coffee?" there were two possible answers. Black or white.

Now there are cappuccinos, machiatos, flat whites and long blacks, among others.

And to further complicate things, coffee shops now adopt Christmas flavours.

Lattes are flavoured gingerbread at Coffee Republic, and roasted hazelnut or creme brulee at Costa. And at Starbucks there is a special "Christmas blend".

"We know that as soon as the red cups come to Starbucks, Christmas is here," says a spokesman for retail analysts Allegra Strategies.

Story from BBC NEWS:

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/go/pr/fr/-/1/hi/magazine/8425357.stm>

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Christmas in Dreamthorp: December 1862

Alexander Smith

Of all the seasons of the year, I like winter best. That peculiar burden of time I have been speaking of, does not affect me now. The day is short, and I can fill it with work; when evening comes, I have my lighted room and my books. Should black care haunt me, I throw it off the scent in Spenser's forests, or seek refuge from it among Shakspeare's men and women, who are by far the best company I have met with, or am like to meet with, on earth. I am sitting at this present moment with my curtains drawn; the cheerful fire is winking at all the furniture in the room, and from every leg and arm the furniture is winking to the fire in return. I put off the outer world with my great-coat and boots, and put on contentment and idleness with my slippers. On the hearth-rug, Pepper, coiled in a shaggy ball, is asleep in the ruddy light and heat. An imaginative sense of the cold outside increases my present comfort--just as one never hugs one's own good luck so affectionately as when listening to the relation of some horrible misfortune which has overtaken others. Winter has fallen on Dreamthorp, and it looks as pretty when covered with snow as when covered with apple blossom. Outside, the ground is hard as iron; and over the low dark hill, lo! the tender radiance that precedes the morn. Every window in the little village has its light, and to the traveller coming on, enveloped in his breath, the whole place shines like a congregation of glow-worms. A pleasant enough sight to him if his home be there! At this present season, the canal is not such a pleasant promenade as it was in summer. The barges come and go as usual, but at this time I do not envy the bargemen quite so much. The horse comes smoking along; the tarpaulin which covers the merchandise is sprinkled with hoar-frost; and the helmsman, smoking his short pipe for the mere heat of it, cowers over a few red cinders contained in a framework of iron. The labour of the poor fellows will soon be over for a time; for if this frost continues, the canal will be sheathed in a night, and next day stones will be thrown upon it, and a daring urchin venturing upon it will go souse head over heels, and run home with his teeth in a chatter; and the day after, the lake beneath the old castle will be sheeted, and the next, the villagers will be sliding on its gleaming face from ruddy dawn at nine to ruddy eve at three; and hours later, skaters yet unsatisfied will be moving ghost-like in the gloom--now one, now another, shooting on sounding irons into a clear space of frosty light, chasing the moon, or the flying image of a star! Happy youths leaning against the frosty wind!

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2 You need to refer to Source A and Source B for this question.

The ways Christmas is enjoyed by communities has changed since Victorian times.

Use details from BOTH sources to write a summary of the different activities enjoyed by the communities in Source A and the community in Source B.

(8 marks)

3 You now need to refer only to SOURCE A, looking at the sections **OPEN-AIR SKATING** and **GERMAN CHRISTMAS MARKETS**.

How does the writer use language to describe Christmas in these sections?

(12 marks)

4 For this question, you need to refer to the WHOLE OF SOURCE A together with the WHOLE OF SOURCE B.

Compare how the writers convey different perspectives and feelings about the Christmas season.

(16 marks)

Section B: Writing

"The modern world treats Christmas as yet another excuse to spend lots of money. People are obsessed with meaningless objects when they should be spending more time helping those in need."

Write an article for a broadsheet newspaper in which you argue for OR against this statement.

(24 marks for content and organisation)

(16 marks for technical accuracy)

(40 marks)

Practice Paper B

Mother-of-3 who spent £1,500 on 300 Christmas presents for her children insists they're NOT spoilt after she's accused of being 'delusional' and 'pressie-bragging'

- Emma Tapping criticised after sharing a picture of her tree online
- Revealed 300 gifts for her family underneath that cost £1,500
- Presents are for her two daughters, son and husband
- Told This Morning that she works hard to save for Christmas
- Do you buy your kids lots of presents? Email femail@mailonline.co.uk

By [LUCY WATERLOW FOR MAILONLINE](#)

PUBLISHED: 16:45, 9 December 2015 | **UPDATED:** 19:50, 9 December 2015

A mother who loves to shower her three children with 85 presents each on Christmas Day has defended her right to overindulge them.

Emma Tapping, 27, from the Isle of Man, was met with criticism from around the world when she shared a picture of the mountain of presents, that cost around £1,500, under her Christmas tree on [Instagram](#).

She told FEMAIL she was shocked after the picture was taken and turned into an image that went viral with the caption: 'Nearly time for all the materialistic parents to compete and broadcast how many presents their kids have on Facebook! Just remember theres some children who dont get much [sic].'

Nearly time for all the materialistic parents to compete and broadcast how many presents their kids have on Facebook!! Just remember theres some children who dont get much!



© emma tapping

People left comments on the picture accusing Emma of spoiling her children and forgetting the true meaning of Christmas.

Emma, who runs a holiday cottage, said: 'I was more shocked by the reaction of people who instantly thought I was a bragging parent with spoilt little brat children. I was shocked how judgemental people were. My attitude is what I buy my kids is my business, no one else's.'

She added: 'The worst comments were for me were about the kids, the lady that stole the picture knew it must of been a kid's Christmas tree, hence "materialistic parents", so that was upsetting that people didn't think about that before judging.'

Emma, who estimates there are around 300 presents under her tree for her two daughters aged 13 and nine, her son, aged 19 months, and her husband, a labourer, defended her right to lavish them with gifts and insisted they are not spoilt.

She said: 'You can buy your children two presents or 200 but it is the way you bring them up. They could have two presents and still be a little terror.'

'My kids know the difference between right and wrong, they appreciate everything they get and they don't get spoilt throughout the year, we don't go on expensive holidays.'

She said she is 'not rich at all' and manages to accumulate her festive haul by bargain hunting and shopping throughout the year - starting in the Boxing Day sales. She said: 'I start shopping in January and use every bargain, every sale I can, that's how I do it, I shop all year round to make the pile as big as it is.'

When she found out the picture had been taken off her account and had gone viral, prompting people around the globe to comment on it, she was unrepentant and shared the picture again with her own message.

'I LOVE christmas I LOVE spoiling my kids in the festive season and I work damn hard to make sure it is every bit as amazing as it can be. So 2 fat fingers up to all the judgemental ***holes and big thanks to all the normal, every day people who don't really give a s*** about SOMEONE else's christmas tree or got into the festive spirit with me. Merry christmas everyone. share share share.'

Christmas in war time

From: The Financial Times, Christmas Eve 1915



The old-time wish "A Merry Christmas" will on this occasion unfortunately have to be deferred until the end of the war, probably for some time after the war, for the lingering pains of such a titanic struggle as we are at present engaged in - pains of memory and of present suffering - will check any exuberance of jollity such as has become by old tradition, associated with an English Christmas for hundreds of years.

But if we cannot expect the full-blooded mirth of an old-fashioned Dickens Christmas, we may still anticipate a time of quiet cheerfulness, seasoned with the hope that before the advent of another Yuletide the peace so ardently desired by the whole world will at length have dawned and the period of wholesale slaughter and wholesale waste will have come to an end.

That fair hope may reasonably help to raise the level of our spirits at this season, which only inevitable rotation of the calendar brings under the category of "festive". Very many of us have to mourn our dead, a grief poignantly intensified by the associations of the time. Still, even so, there is deep consolation for the survivors: if it is sweet and decorous to die for one's country, in a still higher degree is it to perish in defence of the eternal principles of justice and humanity, without which

*"The pillar'd firmament is rottenness
And earth's base built on stubble"*

There is, too, our duty to the children, that perennial source of hope and joy, without which we might well be content to let the world slide.

And even greater at the present time is our duty to those brave soldiers and sailors of the kingdom and Empire who are fortunate enough to be home on leave. Let us send them back one and all cheered, refreshed and reinvigorated, while we have no doubt that the enthusiastic gratitude of the

country will have provided their gallant comrades still at the Front or on the high seas with the means of "keeping Christmas in genial fashion.

To the London Stock Exchange more than perhaps any other great section of the City community Christmas presents the hard task of showing cheerfulness and fortitude under very difficult circumstances.

Bitter poverty has befallen many of the members, others have the greatest difficulty in making both ends meet, while few indeed find their business prospering. But Stock Exchange men have always been "sportsmen" in the best sense of that much-abused term. The other day Lord Derby in a speech in "the House" paid a well merited tribute to the splendid manner in which available members had responded to the call of their country, and those who were prevented by age or other disablement from taking up arms had not failed to "do their bit" in such spheres of usefulness as were open to them.

Never, indeed, in their history have the nation and the Empire approached nearer to the realisation of the Christian ideal of unselfish devotion to moral and spiritual causes or has so generously sacrificed all material advantages on the altar of duty.

In the knowledge, therefore, that we are quitting ourselves like men and in the serene hope for the future we may accept without qualms of conscience such pleasures as Christmas in war time can bring us, and in this spirit we beg to extend our sincere good wishes to all our readers.

2 You need to refer to Source A and Source B for this question.

The ways Christmas is affected by circumstances is explored in both sources.

Use details from BOTH sources to write a summary of the different approaches to Christmas presented in Source A and in Source B.

(8 marks)

3 You now need to refer only to SOURCE A, looking at the sections on **page 6**.

How does the writer use language to present Emma in these sections?

(12 marks)

4 For this question, you need to refer to the WHOLE OF SOURCE A together with the WHOLE OF SOURCE B.

Compare how the writers convey different perspectives and feelings about the Christmas season.

(16 marks)

Section B: Writing

"Christmas-time puts pressure on people to spend more than they can afford. Anyone who does not celebrate Christmas with over-the-top gifts and behaviour is in the minority."

Write an article for a broadsheet newspaper in which you argue for OR against this statement.

(24 marks for content and organisation)

(16 marks for technical accuracy)

(40 marks)