

DR B'S MASTERCLASS

The mysterious ingredients of A and A* English work

Write to a headteacher complaining about the decision to discontinue school dinners:

Sample A *That's who I feel sorry for because it isn't cheap doing packed lunches. I strongly believe that you should re-think this through because I think you haven't thought about this at all. I personally think it's a disgrace and I will be taking action against this.*

Sample B *So it is your responsibility to provide for them the one meal a day that can give them some much needed nourishment. If I allow my children money to buy their dinner then I have no doubt that they too will be misled by fatty burgers and chips. I am not saying we should deprive children of this but they should at least have a choice.*

Write a suspense story:

Sample C *Who knows what might lurk around the next corner? The high rise buildings threaten the dark alleys and streets. All is dark and silent.*

As I watch over the city I see the moonlight catching an office window making it look almost golden.

The smells from the rubbish dumped by people shopping and the overloaded bins rises up. The stench is unbelievable like dead bodies left to rot in a cold, damp cellar.

Sample D *We both had to be home at 9:00. As we approached the bolted gates we both glanced at each other in anxiety. "You go first" I said to Jayne, but wouldn't go, Jayne by this time was very wary of what we were about to do.*

"Let's just forget it now and head back" said Jayne, but I disagreed and begged her to come. We decided to climb the gates together, ensuring there was no body else present. We climbed the gates, which were very tall and extremely pointy.

A AND A* GRADE CHECKLIST

Text-level

- Confident appropriate tone
- Formal and informal styles, as appropriate
- Understanding of genre (eg newspapers, ghost stories)
- Clearly organised - eg layout, and sophisticated discourse markers (eg however, although, despite this)

Sentence-level

- Variety of sentence types
- Short sentences used more than in C and F work
- Confident punctuation to assist the reader's understanding - esp parenthetical commas, colons, semi-colons. No use of the comma splice

Word-level

- Lively, often unexpected, but not over-elaborate
- Well-chosen verbs, rather than heavy use of adverbs
- Confident use of abstract nouns, when appropriate
- Not excessive use of modification
- Correctly spelt

Literature

- Detailed knowledge and understanding of text ... supported by quotations ... and a relish for the language of the text.
- Ability to use a formal, analytical style in writing about literature

You can read the research into F/D and A grade work (all 50 pages) at the QCA website: <http://www.qca.org.uk/technical-accuracy/14-16-tech-accuracy.htm> (you'll need Adobe Acrobat Reader)