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# Penguin Readers

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## Teacher's Guide

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### to Preparing for FCE

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## General

Are your students preparing to take the UCLES First Certificate in English examination (FCE)? If so, you probably know that FCE candidates may choose to write an answer in Paper 2 (Writing Paper) on one of a choice of set reading texts. This guide is designed to help you prepare your students for this part of the exam. It will also show you the ways in which choosing this option will be beneficial for your students.

## The FCE set texts

Every year UCLES prescribes as set texts a list of five books, which may be novels, collections of short stories or plays. The books may be original texts, or they may be 'simplified' versions (graded readers) which match the level of language comprehension required for the FCE exam. Each book stays on the list for two years. Up-to-date lists can be found in the Exam Regulations published every year by UCLES. Some examples from recent years are<sup>1</sup>:

Edgar Allen Poe, *Tales of Mystery and Imagination* (graded reader)

Ernest Hemingway, *The Old man and the Sea* (any version)

*A Window on the Universe* (collection of short stories - unsimplified text)

John Briley, *Cry Freedom* (graded reader)

Emily Brontë, *Wuthering Heights* (graded reader)

Charles Dickens, *Great Expectations* (graded reader)

Aldous Huxley, *Brave New World* (graded reader)

Daphne du Maurier, *Rebecca* (graded reader)

*Best Detective Stories of Agatha Christie* (unsimplified text)

The principal reason that UCLES offers this option is 'to encourage extended reading as a basis for the enrichment of language study.' (UCLES 1997 FCE Handbook: page 17)<sup>2</sup>. The primary purpose is not literary criticism. Rather, candidates are offered the possibility in Paper 2 (Writing Paper), Part 2, Question 5, of simply showing that they have 'read and appreciated a set text.' (reference as above). However, as can be seen from the above list, the set texts also function as an introduction to some of the better known works of English fiction.

## The advantages of choosing to study a set text

There are two main groups of advantages of choosing to study a set text. The first has to do with the fact that students will be involved in reading extensively at a level of difficulty which matches their ability. The second area of importance relates specifically to the FCE exam itself and its preparation.

## EXTENSIVE READING

Reading a lot is good for you! Most teachers will agree that substantial reading is a vital part of the preparation needed for an exam such as the FCE. Students who read widely stand a much better chance of passing or increasing their grade, simply because reading improves both their knowledge of language and their language skills. Research into extensive reading bears out teachers' intuitions: there are many valuable language benefits and other benefits to be gained from extensive reading:

### *Language knowledge and skills*

Reading a lot of material at the right level will give learners valuable exposure to language ('comprehensible input'), reinforcing language learnt in class and helping in the language acquisition process. For example, Krashen claims that writing is largely learnt through reading (1993: pages 7 and 72)<sup>2</sup>, and that substantial vocabulary is acquired through reading (1993). Moreover, he also argues that spelling is mainly learnt through reading, instruction being minimally effective. Other writers have claimed that extensive reading:

- helps learners to *acquire grammar* (e.g. Elley 1991)
- helps learners to *acquire vocabulary* (Pitts et al. 1989, Elley 1991, Grabe 1995)
- improves *writing ability* (Hafiz and Tudor 1989);
- improves *reading skills* including automatic letter and word recognition, reading comprehension, reading strategies (Robb & Susser 1989, Grabe 1995, Hafiz and Tudor 1989)
- improves *other language skills* (eg speaking) and overall language proficiency (Elley and Manghubai 1981, Elley 1991)

### *The reading habit*

On the affective level, reading books at *the right level of difficulty* will encourage 'the reading habit'. Students will feel positive towards material they can understand without great difficulty, and will therefore gain in confidence so that they will read more and more. In this way they will have lots of practice in reading in English and so their comprehension skills will improve. As it is often said, 'You learn to read by reading'.

Moreover, if students feel confident in reading in a foreign language, they will have access to a valuable learning resource which is not dependent on other people such as teachers or native speakers. It is also possible that students will learn to enjoy reading in the foreign language and so they will have a means for 'useful relaxation'.



<sup>1</sup> For details of the particular editions on the UCLES list, refer to the UCLES FCE Handbook.

<sup>2</sup> For all references, see page 17 of this guide, *References and suggestions for further reading*.

## Cultural content

Through reading books in a foreign language, students will improve their understanding of its culture. Access to the cultural information contained in novels and stories will enhance and build the background knowledge which is such an important factor in reading comprehension.

## EXAMINATION ADVANTAGES

### The set book question

The first, obvious point here is that reading one of the set books increases the number of questions available to the candidate in Paper 2, Part 2. UCLES is keen for students to opt for a set text. To quote a recent exam report: 'Students should be encouraged to read one of the background texts and consider choosing Question 5 in Part 2. They will always have a choice of two tasks.' (UCLES 1997 FCE Examination Report: page 10)

Secondly, examination markers and teachers who have taught FCE set books tend to agree that choosing to answer a set book question is a very good option. Candidates who choose one of these questions often produce very good answers and therefore tend to get slightly higher marks than for the other questions in Part 2 of the Writing Paper. There are, no doubt, various possible reasons for this, of which some must have to do with a certain 'predictability' of the questions. If students have read the book and are reasonably familiar with the plot, setting, characters and themes, they will have ready-made ideas for answers to most of the questions which are likely to be set. In other words, they should not have to think very hard during the exam for something to write about. Moreover, through reading, understanding and discussing the book, they will learn the vocabulary they will need to use when they come to write their exam answer, which also has obvious advantages.

### Critical reading skills

Most reading tasks, whether in class or in the FCE exam itself, operate at the level of basic comprehension of the text, whether this relates to the language or the content. However, in reading and preparing for the set book questions, learners have the opportunity to read in a way which is relatively unusual in today's foreign language classrooms but which is a crucially important aspect of the reading skill. Specifically, the set book option asks for the reader's own interpretations and selections of what is particularly salient, significant or interesting for her/him. The candidate is asked to read 'critically', in other words to articulate a personal response to the text, to say what they like or dislike, agree or disagree with, to suggest alternatives to aspects of the text or to relate what they read to their own circumstances. Reading critically is a skill which students need in all areas of the curriculum and

especially at higher educational levels. Thus, the set book option offers the possibility to extend significantly an important aspect of students' reading skills.

## Managing the set book option

### CHOOSING THE BOOK

Having decided that you will offer your students the chance to prepare for the set book option, there are a number of issues to consider in choosing which book to study.

1. First you will need to decide whether you will select one book for the whole class to work on, or whether you will be able to let students work on different books, either individually or in groups.
2. Then there is the question of *expense*. Each student will need a copy of the book to which they can refer regularly. It is best if the students can have a book each. However, it may be possible for students to share a book, or to withdraw the book from time to time from the class or school library.
3. UCLES' list of set books would seem to vary in *difficulty*. For example, in the list of set book titles given above, the vocabulary sizes range from perhaps 1800 words to unsimplified texts. However, unsimplified texts will balance the relatively difficult vocabulary with easier plot lines. Thus your students may cope with unsimplified texts without much difficulty, or you may feel that they would be better with a simplified text. In general, however, it is important that extensive reading texts do not contain a large number of unknown words. If students are constantly having to refer to their dictionaries, the reading process will be difficult and off-putting, and students will not enjoy the books. As a rough guide, it has been suggested that a 'comfortable' level of difficulty can be gauged by a '*rule of hand*', that is, if there are more than five unknown words on a page, the text is likely to be too difficult for pleasurable extensive reading.<sup>1</sup>
4. Finally, in the five books to choose from, each one will usually have quite different *themes and subject matter*. You can obviously make a decision on the text yourself. However, motivation to read is very important in extensive reading, so you will need to decide which book would be the most interesting and engaging for your students. It is a good idea to allow the students to help make the decision. There are several ways to do this:
  - You can give students a very brief summary of each book (two or three lines) to find out which they think they will like the most.

<sup>1</sup>Day, RR & Bamford. 1998. *Extensive Reading in the Second Language Classroom*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. page 122



- Or you could photocopy the summaries of the books on the back cover for students to look at. After they have seen the summaries, students could discuss their opinions and possibly take a vote.
- You could give students a questionnaire to find out in general what kind of books they like to read: horror? romance? detective stories? etc. Use this information to help you make your decision.
- You could give a copy of each of the books on the list to certain students and ask them to read the book and make a recommendation to the class.

It is assumed in this guide that teachers will treat the set book as a class reader. However it is also possible for students working on their own to make use of the Worksheets at the back of this guide.

## BALANCING THE SET BOOK WITH OTHER ASPECTS OF FCE PREPARATION

There is a lot to do to prepare for the Cambridge FCE, so the time needed for work on the set book option will have to be carefully assessed and planned for. If students are going to prepare the set book sufficiently well to be able to answer a question on it, they will need to:

- *read* the book
- *understand* the book
- *respond to and evaluate* the book
- *review and revise* the book
- *remember* the book

### **Reading the book**

First of all, ask yourself whether your students are already accustomed to reading extensively. If not, it is a good idea to allow them to get used to reading easy books extensively sometime before they will need to read their set book. You may need to explain the purposes of extensive reading to them. Ideally, in an extensive reading programme, students:

- develop their reading fluency
- read for the meaning rather than to study language or to translate it
- read easy material
- read a lot
- read fast
- choose what they read
- enjoy what they read
- stop if they don't like the book they have chosen

(The last point will, of course, not apply to the FCE set book!) For more information on extensive reading see the *Penguin Readers Teacher's Guide to Using Graded Readers* (available from Pearson Education offices worldwide) and the references at the end of this guide.

Although you may be working with the set book as a class reader, it is not recommended that you spend a lot of

time in class actually reading. Rather, it is suggested that you treat the book as *extensive* reading that students *mainly do out of class time*, and that you use class time for working on aspects of the book.

### **Time needed for reading the book**

You will need to calculate how much time students will need to read the set book. In this way you can set realistic reading targets and you can make sure that enough time is allowed for the set book preparation. As a very rough guide, and assuming the level of the book is about right for the students, they should manage to read at a rate of about 150 words per minute. Thus a book of around 85 pages with about 300 words per page should take approximately three hours to read<sup>1</sup>. So if students read, say, for half an hour per week, they would need six weeks to complete the reading. For longer books, you will obviously need a longer period to do the reading, or to increase the time spent reading per week. It is important to remember, however, that there are very great variations between individuals in their speed of reading. This is true regardless of their level of English.

It is a good idea to divide the book into five or six manageable 'chunks', say three-to-five chapters, or 15-20 pages, and set these for regular homework reading every week.

If time allows, you may wish to read aloud a part of each section to your students and ask them to finish the reading at home. Alternatively, as many graded readers are recorded on tape or on CD Rom, you could play the soundtrack while students follow the text in the book. People of all ages enjoy being read to, whether in their native language or in the foreign language. Hearing the words will both help students with their pronunciation (and with the reading process since knowing how words sound is an important factor in reading), and also whet their appetites for more and so increase motivation. Always finish the reading aloud with a few questions asking students to say what they think will happen next.

### **Understanding the book**

#### **Before reading the book**

Before students start to read the set book, introduce it to them so that their interest is immediately aroused. There are many ways to do this (see for example: *Penguin Readers Teacher's Guide to Using Graded Readers*, *Penguin Readers Teacher's Guide to Using Film and TV*, and the references at the end of this guide). Here are a few suggestions:

- If you have not already done so when choosing the book, look at the book cover and story summary. If the book contains pictures, look at these. Ask for predictions about: the type of book, where and when



- the story takes place, who the main characters will be.
- Present one of the main problems or conflicts in the story as if it were real, for example as something which happened to a friend of yours, or as something you read about in magazine. Ask students what they would do in the situation or what their advice would be. For example, if you are using *Wuthering Heights* (Penguin Readers, Level 5), you could show students a letter from Hindley to an agony aunt, complaining that his father has brought home a strange boy to live with the family. He doesn't like the boy at all, and thinks his father has made a big mistake. What should he do?
  - Alternatively, use a newspaper article format, or a headline, to present the opening situation or problem. This would be suitable for, for example, the stories in the collection *Best Detective Stories of Agatha Christie* (Penguin Readers, Full Text), several of which begin with reference to a newspaper article in any case.
  - It may be possible to make use of a film of the book to introduce the setting and characters. (See *Penguin Readers Teacher's Guide to Using Film and TV*).
  - If there are topics or themes in the book which are central to the story, (such as mental illness, smuggling, life in the future etc) you could start with a discussion of these.
  - Think about the background information students will need. Show them pictures or maps of places relevant to the book. Ask them what they know about the places and the historical settings.
  - Talk about the writer. Tell students something about her or his life and times. Ask them to read any biographical information given at the front or back of the book. Point out facts or events in the writer's life which may have affected aspects of the book. For Penguin Readers, you can refer to the *Penguin Readers Factsheets* (available from Pearson Education offices worldwide), which provide useful information about authors and background information.

The following books and references contain many more activities to use with a class before reading a book: *Penguin Readers Teacher's Guide to Using Graded Readers*, *Penguin Readers Teacher's Guide to Using Film and TV*, and *Penguin Readers Factsheets*.

### **While reading the book**

During the period when the students are reading the book, you will need to check that they are doing the reading, and also that they have understood what they have read, though at this point you may not want to use much class time for this purpose. Instead:

- You can ask students to complete story summaries for each section they read. This can be in a notebook with columns made over a double page as follows:

Chapter or section	What happened (mention events, characters, places, times)	Comments (give your opinion of characters, events etc)	New words or key words

By completing story summaries, students can react to the story as they read it. Also, for each section, they can keep lists of words which are new or important, together with their meanings if required. A line should be drawn across the pages before starting a new section. The notebooks can be checked on a regular basis.

- Also, students can answer the comprehension questions that may be included in the book itself if it is a graded reader, and in the *Penguin Readers Factsheet* if it is a Penguin Reader.

### ***Responding to, reviewing and remembering the book***

Once students have read a substantial part of the book, it is possible to begin using lesson time to discuss aspects of the book that are relevant to the exam.

If you have a lot of time you may be able to use lesson time while students are still reading the book to start exploring various aspects.

The questions for the FCE writing tasks usually require discussion of one or more of the following elements:

- character
- plot
- specific scenes
- setting
- theme

In the sections which follow, suggestions for ways of working with these various aspects are given.

Accompanying Worksheets can be found in the second half of the book.

There will probably need to be a minimum of four or five sessions during the exam preparation period to cover these aspects of the set book. In addition, in parallel with discussion of the book, you can start to use some of the writing classes to work on the set book questions. Finally, the Worksheets in this pack will also function as exam revision sheets: if completed they will provide quick reference to key information. Alternatively, you can use them as revision activities in themselves.

In the meantime, here is a suggested outline plan for the management of the set book option, assuming an exam preparation period of around 12 weeks with 3-5 hours per week lesson time. (Important: This is a general guide for



students on specific FCE preparation courses. You can adapt this plan to suit the length of preparation time your students have.)

Timescale	Reading classes	Writing classes
Before the exam preparation period starts	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Ensure students are familiar with, and have had some experience of, extensive reading of fiction.</li> <li>2. Decide which set book you will choose.</li> <li>3. Make sure there are sufficient copies available.</li> </ol>	
Week 1	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Introduce the chosen book to the students.</li> <li>2. Explain how you will manage the reading and study of it.</li> <li>3. Set the first reading section and summary entry.</li> </ol>	During weeks 1-6: Cover the other types of writing task for the exam and the necessary writing formats, namely <i>letters</i> , <i>compositions (discursive and narrative)</i> , <i>reports</i> and <i>articles</i> .  From around week 7: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Use a writing lesson to do a set book <b>composition</b> with the class.</li> <li>2. Set a set book <b>letter</b> writing task for homework or timed exam writing practice.</li> </ol> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Limit these tasks to <i>character</i>, <i>plot</i> or <i>scene</i>.</li> </ul>
Weeks 2-8	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Each week set a further section of reading.</li> <li>2. Read aloud to the students or listen to a tape in class for a short period (5-10 minutes) once a week, if you wish.</li> <li>3. Check the students' section summaries and/or comprehension questions each week.</li> <li>4. Use a class session to discuss the plot and/or some of the scenes.</li> <li>5. Use a class session to discuss the characters.</li> <li>6. Use a class session to discuss the setting.</li> </ol>	
Week 9	Use a class session to discuss the themes.	From around week 9: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Use a writing lesson to do a set book <b>article</b> writing task with the class.</li> <li>2. Set a set book <b>report</b> writing task for homework or timed writing practice.</li> </ol> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● In these tasks, include reference to <i>plot</i>, <i>character</i>, <i>scene</i>, <i>theme</i> or <i>setting</i>, as relevant.</li> </ul>
Week 10	Use a class session for evaluation of the book .	
Week 11-12	Revision	Timed writing question practice in class.

## Preparing for the set book option

### THE EXAM QUESTIONS

#### *Types of writing text*

The questions set are general enough to be applicable to any of the set books. However, there are several possibilities for the types of writing text that occur as Question 5 in Part 2 of Paper 2. As with the other questions in Part 2, each type of writing assumes a particular context and reason for writing, and a 'target reader' so that the writing has a clear sense of audience and communication. It is important that students know what is expected for each different text type. In the case of the set book option this will probably be as follows:

#### A composition

This is a *formal* piece of writing in which the *assumed reader* is a *teacher*. *Information* will need to be given, and this may involve narrating part of the plot or a scene, or

describing a character or a place. A composition may require arguments *for and against*. The writer's own *opinion* may be asked for and should be *supported with reasons and/or evidence*.

#### An article

This type of text should be written as if for a *magazine or newsletter*, so that the target reader is someone of a *similar age* or with *similar interests as the writer*, probably unknown to the writer. The main purpose of the writing is to *attract a reader's attention* and maintain their interest. The writing style can be *informal and light-hearted* or more *serious*. The article will probably contain some *description and information*, and should also contain the writer's *opinion*.

#### A report

A report is a text based on fact-finding of some kind and is written to give information and probably to make recommendations, though strong opinions expressed in a personal way are not required. The readers are assumed



to be either *superiors*, such as a teacher or a boss, or *peers*, such as colleagues or classmates. The style is *impersonal* and *formal*. Layout is important so a *title* is a good idea and *headings* can be used for different sections.

### A letter

This is written to a *known person*, such as a penfriend, and so the style is *informal*. The purpose may be to *give information*, *describe* an experience or *give reasons or opinions*. The layout should be as if for a letter.

Text type	Style	Reader	Organization & layout	Content
Composition	formal	teacher	* introduction * paragraphs * conclusion	* information * opinions & reasons * suggestions or recommendations
Article	fairly informal; light-hearted or serious; fairly personal	magazine or newsletter reader (i.e. unknown peer, someone of same age/interests)	* title * introduction * paragraphs * conclusion	* information * opinion & reasons * suggestions or recommendations
Letter	informal, personal	a known person (eg penfriend)	* salutation * paragraphs * ending & signature	* information * opinion & reasons
Report	formal, impersonal	a superior (eg boss) or a peer (eg colleague)	* title * headings * introduction * paragraphs * conclusion	* information * suggestions or recommendations

Use *Student's Worksheet 1: FCE question types (1)* (see back of book) to help students learn and remember what kinds of layout, style and assumed reader are involved in the different types of texts. You may wish to use this Worksheet at the beginning of the exam preparation period during a writing lesson. Or you can use it for revision purposes nearer the exam.

### Response types

Within the framework above, students will need to respond in various different ways. Most of the set book questions, for example, will usually require candidates to:

- give factual *information* about the book by describing an aspect of
  1. plot
  2. scene
  3. character
  4. theme
  5. setting
- give some kind of *personal response*, such as:
  1. an opinion, e.g. saying whether they like or dislike something, an evaluation of the importance of a scene or character
  2. reasons for their opinions
  3. recommendations or suggestions
  4. a response involving a degree of creative thinking or imagination
  5. a comparison or a link with something outside the text or in the candidate's own life
  6. demonstration of insight and understanding

*Student's Worksheet 2: FCE question types (2)* (see back of book) gives some sample questions from previous exam papers. Use *Worksheet 2* near the beginning of the exam preparation period to show students what kinds of questions are set in this part of the Writing Paper. The Worksheet will also introduce them to the categories of information about the book that they will need to be able to supply in their exam answers. Ask them to read boxes A and B and tell them that during the classes to come, once they have completed the reading of the book and their section summaries, they will be given practice in exploring these aspects of the book.

Later on, perhaps during weeks 11 and 12, you can look again at *Worksheet 2* and ask the students to identify exactly what kinds of information and personal response are required for each of the exam questions in the *Worksheet*. You can also use the questions in the *Worksheet* for students to write practice answers.





Suggested content for each exam question given on *Worksheet 2* are given below:

Question no.	A. Information about the book	B. Personal response
1	Character description supported by plot and scene description	Opinion and reasons
2	Descriptions of plot, scene, character, setting, as appropriate	Opinion and reasons, insight and understanding, suggestions, recommendations
3	Description of plot and scene	Creative imagination, reasons
4	Character description supported by plot and scene description	Opinion, comparison with something in your life, reasons, insight and understanding
5	Character description supported by plot and scene description	Opinion and reasons, insight and understanding
6	Description of the themes/ideas supported by details of plot, scene, character and setting	Opinion and reasons, suggestion, recommendation
7	Description of the setting	Comparison with something in your life, insight and understanding
8	Description of any of the elements (plot, scene, character, setting, theme)	Opinion and reasons
9	Description of any of the elements (plot, scene, character, setting, theme)	Opinion and reasons
10	Description of any of the elements (plot, scene, character, setting, theme)	Opinion and reasons

## EXAM TIPS

In general, students should *not*:

- just describe the plot;
- write about a book they have not read;
- learn a model answer and use it for a question for which it does not fit.

But they should:

- correctly identify the question types;
- correctly identify what types of response are needed;
- follow these steps when answering an exam question: think - plan - write - check;
- make sure enough information is included for someone who hasn't read the book to understand the answer ;
- make sure the answer fits the question.

When actually writing, students should:

- use one paragraph for each main point;
- make the line of argument and the function of each paragraph clear by using appropriate connective words and phrases (e.g.: firstly,....; in addition, ....; on the other hand, ..... etc);
- support opinions with examples and evidence from the book;
- use things that characters have said or done to support opinions when writing character sketches.

For a sample essay which illustrates some of the above points about writing, see *Student's Worksheet 3*:

**A sample essay** (see back of book). This Worksheet contains questions to help make these points clear.

Although *Worksheet 3* is concerned with writing set book answers, the points made about writing are general enough to be relevant to all the writing questions, so that, if you wish, you can use this Worksheet in a writing lesson near the beginning of the exam preparation period. Or if you prefer, you can use the Worksheet in a writing lesson from week 7 onwards to focus particularly on the writing of a set book answer.

Use *Worksheet 3* as follows:

1. Ask students to read through the essay and answer question 1.
2. Now ask them (or remind them if you have already done *Worksheets 1* and *2*) what kind of style is required and what sort of content is required.
3. Then ask them to answer questions 2 and 3. Discuss the answers with the class.
4. Now focus on the other features of language and the organization. Look at questions 4-15 with the students, helping them to arrive at suitable answers.



Answers for *Worksheet 3* are as follows. (Questions on the Worksheet are in roman type below; answers to these questions are in *italic* type below the questions.)

*Listening to a well-known book on a cassette is convenient for busy people who have no time to read. For example, you can listen while driving to work, or cleaning the house. There are many books available on cassette these days. So would it be a good idea to record 'Wuthering Heights' by Emily Brontë?*

*A listening version of 'Wuthering Heights' could help to make it seem more interesting. For example, the weather and atmosphere are important in the story and so you could record the sound of wind and rain on a cassette version. Adding some music would also increase its dramatic qualities.*

*In addition, if it is possible to hear the characters speaking it would help to imagine them and their qualities. It would be very nice to hear Heathcliff's voice and that of the two Catherines. These are strong characters who all have lots of emotions. Some important scenes, such as when Heathcliff and Edgar quarrel about Isabella would be very exciting.*

*On the other hand, when you read a book, you normally enter the silent world of the imagination. To have real voices given to the characters might perhaps spoil the enjoyment for some people. It would also be difficult, I think, to make sure that the voices of all the characters are different so that the listener is not confused.*

*All in all, I would strongly recommend recording 'Wuthering Heights' on cassette. But it could not really replace reading the book.*

1. Look at *Worksheet 2*. For which of the questions does the essay above provide an answer?
  - *Question 2*
2. Has the writer used the right kind of style? Find examples of words used which indicate the type of style.
  - *Yes. It should be in a style suitable for a magazine article. It begins in a way which is intended to capture the reader's attention. The style is fairly informal and personal, as it should be. Examples of this are: use of 'So' in the fourth sentence, 'I', 'I think', 'all in all', 'you'*
3. Has the writer included the right sorts of ideas and information in the answer? Find examples.
  - *The following was suggested for question 2 on Worksheet 2*

Question no.	A. Information about the book	B. Personal response
2	Descriptions of plot, scene, character, setting, as appropriate	opinion and reasons, insight and understanding, suggestions, recommendations

*With the possible exception of plot, these things can all be said to have been included in the answer*

4. What is the function of the first paragraph?
  - *To provide an introduction and to attract the reader*
5. What is the function of the first three sentences in this paragraph?
  - *To provide some general background information*
6. What is function of the last sentence in this paragraph?
  - *To introduce the specific book which is the topic of the text*
7. What is the function of the second paragraph?
  - *To give a positive answer to the questions with specific reasons why it would be a good idea to record the book*
8. What is the function of the third paragraph?
  - *to give some more reasons why it would be a good idea to record the book*
9. Why has the writer chosen to make two paragraphs?
  - *The first paragraph is about atmosphere and the second is about the characters*
10. What words does the writer use to show how the ideas in paragraphs 2 and 3 are connected?
  - *for example, also, in addition*
11. What is the function of the fourth paragraph?
  - *to mention some problems*
12. What words in the first sentence make its function clear?
  - *'on the other hand' - to show contrast*
13. What is the connection between the second and first sentence in this paragraph?
  - *The second expands on the first and explains why there may be a problem*
14. What is the function of the last paragraph?
  - *To conclude and make a recommendation*
15. Underline all the conditional verb forms in the essay. Why are these forms used?
  - *See the underlined words in the essay above. The conditional is used because the answer requires some speculation and expression of possibility. In the case of 'I would recommend', this is a fixed phrase which is often used in making recommendations. The 'would' is a kind of 'hedge' to make it seem polite.*



## WORKING ON ASPECTS OF THE BOOK

In the sections which follow some ideas are given to help students develop their understanding of the book's plot, scenes, characters, setting and themes. There are also sections which deal with evaluating the book and with revising for the exam.

### ***Plot and scene***

The aim here is to help students develop a clear understanding of what happens in the book, and also to identify key scenes. Students should have an awareness of why things happen as they do in the story, how one event leads to another. Tie in your activities with your students' work on the section summaries, which students will be completing as they read.

### **Activities after reading a part of the book**

- If the section the students have read finishes at a point where the character is left with a choice, prepare, or ask students to prepare, an 'Agony aunt letter' in which the problem is described. Students can write or make suggestions for a reply. For example, in *Wuthering Heights* (Penguin Readers, Level 5), at the end of chapter 9 it is clear that Catherine will have to choose between Edgar Linton and Heathcliff. An agony aunt letter from Catherine could ask for advice on whether to marry Edgar or Heathcliff.
- Students can compare their summaries of the story, in pairs, groups or as a whole class. There will be variations in the summaries of different students. These differences can be exploited. The students concerned can be asked to explain their choice of key point or event. Use different contributions to build a section summary for the whole class.
- Prepare a section or chapter summary which contains some errors. Students should find and correct the errors.
- Use role play as a way of retelling what has happened in the section read. Students imagine they are different characters in the story. Each character will have a different view of events. In pairs, the different characters recount what happened.
- Students work in groups. Each person in the group takes responsibility for one character. After reading a section of the book, each person writes a diary entry for their character, as if they are that character. They can include major events and, if you wish, another section recording their character's reactions to the events. In the next class students spend a short time looking at each other's diary entries.

- Alternatively, ask students to imagine they are a professional person such as a doctor, social worker, journalist, psychiatrist, or teacher. As this person they give an account of the situation as they see it.
- Complete timelines which provide a quick summary of the story. You can do this by chapter or section with the key events. Or you could organize timelines by character and chapter /section. For an example of the latter, use *Student's Worksheet 4: Character timelines* (see back of book). If the book is long you may need to make more copies of this Worksheet to include all the sections.

### **Activities after reading the whole book**

- Use *Student's Worksheet 5: Analysis of the plot* (see back of book) to analyse the plot by summarizing: the situation or problem facing the main characters; the key events which move the story on; choices facing the characters; their motives; the climax or high point of the story; and how this is linked with or brings about the ending.

If students complete this type of analysis, there are bound to be differences between answers, which can then provide a basis for discussion.

An example of how *Worksheet 5* might be completed is given below, using *Wuthering Heights* (Penguin Readers, Level 5).



<p><b>Opening situation(s)/ problem(s)</b> (the main problem(s) that confront(s) the characters at the beginning of the story)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Mr Earnshaw brings home a stray child, Heathcliff, who he has found in Liverpool, to be brought up as his own child.</li> <li>● Mr Earnshaw's own children react differently: Heathcliff is disliked by Hindley, and liked by Catherine.</li> <li>● Mr Earnshaw dies, and his son Hindley inherits the property.</li> <li>● Hindley treats Heathcliff badly, and Heathcliff swears to get his revenge.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Key events</b> (the main things that happen: characters' choices/actions &amp; their motives; consequences of actions &amp; events; events outside the control of the characters)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Hindley's wife has a child, Hareton, and then dies. Hindley starts to drink heavily.</li> <li>● After overhearing Catherine say she cannot marry him, Heathcliff disappears.</li> <li>● Catherine marries Edgar Linton, despite knowing she really loves Heathcliff.</li> <li>● Heathcliff returns and starts to take his revenge. He makes Hindley fall into debt to him through gambling, and takes over the bringing up of Hindley's son, Hareton.</li> <li>● While Heathcliff visits Catherine at Thrushcross Grange, Edgar's sister, Isabella, falls for him. Heathcliff sees he can take advantage of this.</li> <li>● Heathcliff and Edgar quarrel over Isabella: Catherine becomes ill.</li> <li>● Heathcliff and Isabella run away and are married, and then return to Wuthering Heights.</li> <li>● Heathcliff and Catherine meet and declare their love for each other.</li> <li>● Catherine gives birth to a daughter, Cathy, and dies.</li> <li>● Isabella runs away from her husband, Heathcliff, and has a son, Linton.</li> <li>● Hindley dies and Wuthering Heights now belongs to Heathcliff. One part of his revenge is complete.</li> <li>● Isabella dies and her son, Linton, also Heathcliff's son, comes to Wuthering Heights. Cathy, his cousin and Catherine &amp; Edgar's daughter, meets him and falls for him.</li> <li>● Linton is due to inherit Thrushcross after the death of Edgar Linton, but Linton is weak and ill. Heathcliff wants his son to marry Cathy so that, in the event of Linton dying before Edgar, control of Thrushcross will go to Heathcliff.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Climax</b> (what happens to bring about the ending?)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Heathcliff uses Linton to trick Cathy into going to Wuthering Heights. He keeps Cathy at Wuthering Heights by force until Linton &amp; Cathy marry.</li> <li>● Edgar Linton dies and Linton inherits Thrushcross.</li> <li>● Linton is ill and Cathy nurses him. He dies.</li> <li>● Heathcliff now has control of two estates, and the children of his two childhood enemies, Hindley and Edgar. His revenge is complete.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Ending</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Cathy and Hareton grow to like each other.</li> <li>● Heathcliff dies in a strange fashion, as if the spirit of Catherine has returned to take him to the grave.</li> <li>● Cathy and Hareton marry and go to live at Thrushcross.</li> </ul>

- Using their section summaries or the completed plot analysis as a basis, students 'make a pitch'. That is, set up a role play activity in pairs in which student A pretends to be a film script writer and tries to sell the story to student B, who is a film producer.
- Make a list of points in the story where various things might have happened differently. These points could be choices facing a character, or events outside the characters' control. Ask students to think about what

would have happened if x had or hadn't happened. How would the story have been different?

- Discuss different endings. Ask students to imagine different endings, or make a list of possibilities yourself. Put all the suggestions in a list and ask students which they prefer. Use a 'pyramid discussion' method<sup>1</sup> to discuss the list of possibilities.
- Make a list of key quotations: ask students to say who said them, when and why.

<sup>1</sup> There are several steps in a pyramid discussion as follows: (i) students make up their minds individually on the question(s) to be discussed; (ii) they discuss their opinions in pairs and together come to an agreement on the question(s); (iii) the pairs join together to make a group of four. This group compares opinions and tries to come to an agreement to present to the class; (iv) the groups of four present their opinions and the whole class tries to make a decision.



- Make a list of short pieces of dialogue and a list of speakers. Students can match speakers to dialogues, or match comments and replies.
- Make a summary of the plot containing some wrong facts. Students identify the mistakes.
- Alternatively, give students a summary with gaps or a plot skeleton to complete.
- List a number of events in random order: students put the events in the order in which they occur in the story.
- 'Tableaux', a kind of drama technique, can be used to encourage the remembering of key scenes in a way that is fun and enjoyable. In this technique, students work in small groups. They choose a scene from the book, or chapter, and arrange themselves as if to make a still photo of the scene. They do not speak so it is not at all threatening for those who lack confidence in drama activities. The other members of the class should guess what the scene is.

## **Character**

### **Who's who?**

One of the most important aspects of a book for the purposes of comprehension is having a clear idea of who the characters are and their relationships to each other.

- It is possible that the book may give a list of characters. If not, students can list all the characters, together with their ages, jobs, relationships to each other etc.
- After reading a certain amount of the text, perhaps a section or the first few chapters, ask students to complete a diagram such as in *Student's Worksheet 6: Who's who?* (see back of book), or a family tree, to show the relationships of the characters to each other. If students do this individually, they can compare their answers in pairs.
- Another way to consolidate the necessary information is to use a 'factfile' format, as used in pop magazines. (See *Student's Worksheet 7: Character factfile* at back of book).
- Test understanding of who is who and what their roles are by playing a guessing game such as 'Twenty questions', where one person thinks of a character, or pretends to be a character, and the others have to ask twenty questions in order to find out who the character is. They can only ask twenty questions - no more.
- Build mental pictures of the physical appearance of the characters. Find parts of the text where the appearance of people is described. Copy these parts of the text and make a cloze exercise by deleting key words used to give a picture of the character.
- Ask students to choose which character they would like

to go dressed as to a fancy dress party and why? What would they wear? Ask them to make a list of what they would need to make themselves look like their character.

- Make use of magazine pictures to help students visualize the characters. Take in a selection of pictures and ask students to choose which pictures best fit the characters.

### **What are they like?**

In the FCE exam, students will almost certainly have to analyse and describe the characters' qualities, so they will need to have a good understanding of character traits and motives and how these affect what happens in the story.

- Discuss with students what sort of people the characters are. Build a list of words and phrases to help describe the characters. See for example *Student's Worksheet 10: Personality chart* (see back of book). Make sure that students can support their opinions with evidence from the book.
- Discuss the good points and bad points of the characters. Using *Worksheet 10*, you can discuss whether the characters' qualities mean that the characters have more good points or more bad points.
- Ask students to say who they like and/or dislike in the story and why. Who would they most like to meet? In a film, which character would they most like to play? *Student's Worksheet 8: Character poster* can be used for students to make profiles of the character they like or admire the most.
- It is important that students can provide evidence from the book for judgements made of the characters. Select some events from the book and list them in a column on one side of a worksheet. In a second column, make a list of adjectives or phrases. What do the events reveal about the characters? Ask students to choose suitable adjectives or phrases from the second column.
- 'Wordsearch' puzzles can help with learning key words and vocabulary associated with a character's behaviour. They are easy to make. Simply put the words you want students to learn into a grid and fill the spaces with random letters. Ask students to find the words. Then they should examine the text for parts which describe behaviour characterized by the words. Here is an example:



Here are some words which describe Hercule Poirot in the story 'The Adventure of the Clapham Cook' in *Best Detective Stories of Agatha Christie* (Penguin Readers, Full Text).

fastidious   kind   persevering   clever  
 obstinate   tactful   patient   proud  
 charming   polite

Can you find the words in the puzzle opposite?

The words are arranged up, down, left to right and right to left.

(If this is too easy for your students, don't give them the list of words first.)

When students have found the words, ask them to check any unknown words in their dictionaries and then look in the story to find places where Poirot behaves in ways described by the words.

x	s	u	o	i	d	i	t	s	a	f
z	y	o	b	p	r	a	p	f	t	s
p	e	r	s	e	v	e	r	i	n	g
a	b	d	t	w	z	q	o	s	f	n
t	i	k	i	n	d	o	u	z	y	i
i	a	e	n	l	n	r	d	i	a	m
e	g	t	a	c	t	f	u	l	h	r
n	k	e	t	i	l	o	p	n	m	a
t	q	t	e	u	w	v	a	c	b	h
w	z	x	t	s	r	e	v	e	l	c

Answer:

x	s	u	o	i	d	i	t	s	a	f
z	y	o	b	p	r	a	p	f	t	s
p	e	r	s	e	v	e	r	i	n	g
a	b	d	t	w	z	q	o	s	f	n
t	i	k	i	n	d	o	u	z	y	i
i	a	e	n	l	n	r	d	i	a	m
e	g	t	a	c	t	f	u	l	h	r
n	k	e	t	i	l	o	p	n	m	a
t	q	t	e	u	w	v	a	c	b	h
w	z	x	t	s	r	e	v	e	l	c

- Use a 'pop star' style interview for a magazine, such as *Student's Worksheet 9: Magazine interview* (see back of book) to encourage students to develop a real understanding of the characters. In answering these types of questions they will have to use everything they know about the characters and imagine appropriate answers. If you feel this requires too much imagination from your students, cross out any questions which cannot be answered with information from the set text itself.
- You can adapt *Student's Worksheet 9* for a group activity. Photocopy one set of questions for each group. Cut the questions up into strips and put them into an envelope or a box for each group. Each person in the group should 'be' one of the characters. The students take it in turns to take a question from the envelope or box and answer in role.
- Make use of horoscopes to help develop understanding of a character. For this you will need to find descriptions of the personalities of the different star signs. Ask students to say which star sign they think a character was born under.

- An important aspect of character is motive. Discuss with students why characters act in particular ways or why they make the choices they do. You could put this into a 'trial' frame as in *Student's Worksheet 11: Characters on trial* (see back of book). For this Worksheet you should list some of the actions done by a character and dictate these to the students. This could become a true/false exercise if you include some things not done. Students then put themselves in the role of the character and say or write whether they are guilty or not guilty, giving reasons for their behaviour. Some of the accusations may not have an obvious answer and may lead to discussion. Here is an example, using *Wuthering Heights* (Penguin Readers, Level 5):



- Teacher dictates the words in bold:

(Name): **Heathcliff** ...you are charged with the following:

1. **You gained possession of Wuthering Heights by crooked means.**
2. **You married Isabella even though you did not love her.**
3. **You were cruel to Hareton Earnshaw.**
4. **You forced Cathy Linton to marry your son, Linton Heathcliff, so that you would gain control over Thrushcross Grange.**

- Students then prepare answers to the charges, as follows:

How do you plead and what is the reason?

1. *Not guilty. I did nothing illegal. How could I help it if Hindley Earnshaw gambled away all his possessions? I only took what was owed to me.*
2. *Guilty, I suppose. It is true I did not love her. But I saw a good way to take my revenge on Catherine for marrying Edgar, and on the Linton family for taking away Catherine from me, and for Edgar's insults to me when I was younger.*
3. *Not guilty. The boy loved me. I merely made sure that he was brought up as I was, that is with no education or social graces. Just as his father did with me.*
4. *Not guilty. It is true that I tricked her into coming to Wuthering Heights and that I kept her there until they were married. But she said she was willing to marry Linton, so I didn't force her. I was doing her a favour, in fact, making sure that she would be looked after when her father died as the estate would go to Linton on her father's death. I know Linton might have died before Edgar and then Cathy would have inherited Thrushcross. But he didn't, did he?*

- Other aspects of character which should be discussed are:

(i) *comparisons*: with another character in the book; also with people that the students actually know in real life. You could use a grid format, such as in **Student's Worksheet 10: Personality chart** (see back of book).

(ii) *changes*: how do characters change through the book? At the end of the book, have the characters learnt anything? If you use character timelines (Worksheet 4), changes in characters as the book progresses can be easily recorded.

## Setting

Students need to have as clear a mental picture of the setting as possible. If you can, provide pictures or film clips to help with this (as noted above).

- Find parts of the text which describe the place and build knowledge of the vocabulary students can use for descriptions of the setting, both the time and the place. Make cloze exercises with these parts of the text.
- Discuss what role the setting has in the story. Find parts of the text which show how it affects characters' behaviour or events in the story. Try imagining the story taking place in a different setting. Would it work?
- Ask students to imagine they're going for a visit to the place in the story. Ask them to think about what they would they need to take with them and why. This will help them to imagine the environment, as well as requiring understanding of the story. You can use **Student's Worksheet 12: Essential items for a visit** (see back of book) for this purpose. An alternative way to use the Worksheet is to limit the number of items to, say five, and have a pyramid discussion so that you end with five items agreed by the whole class (See Footnote 1, page 11.)
- Find parts of the text that describe buildings. Ask students to write estate agent descriptions of the buildings.
- Ask students to read a particular section and to find key words or phrases that give a feel of the place and then to make an acrostic from its name. This will help students to learn the necessary vocabulary. There are two ways to do this, as shown in this example from Part 1 of *Wuthering Heights* (Penguin Readers, Level 5):

### Acrostic 1

W	- wild, windy, wet
U	- unusual decorative stonework
T	- trees
H	- hills
E	- evil-looking guns
R	- rough weather
I	- ice
N	- north wind
G	- grass growing between the stones

### Acrostic 2

begging for the warmth	H	of the sun
froz	E	n hard
pouring w	I	th rain
poorly	G	rown trees
the whole	H	illside was one white ocean of snow
a branch of a tree	T	ouching my window
mi	S	ty and cold



- Alternatively, students can be asked to list key words or words from a particular lexical field and turn them into an acronym for easy memorization, like this example from 'The Million Dollar Bond Robbery' in *Best Detective Stories of Agatha Christie*.

<b>aloof</b>	<b>sllaq</b>
ashore	sail
liner	land
on board	lie
overboard	alongside
floating palace	quay

### Themes

The themes portrayed in a book are an important element in producing a personal response in the reader. Students should be encouraged to think about and have opinions about their book's themes. Note that FCE exam questions may refer to a book's 'topics' or 'ideas', rather than using the word 'theme'.

#### Identifying themes

- Asking students some or all of these questions may help to reveal the themes and topics portrayed in the book.

Why do you think the writer wanted to write this story?

What do you think his/her aims are?

If someone asked you, 'What is the story about?', what would you say?

What does the story tell you about life in ....?

What does it tell you about life in general?

What does it show you about how people behave in different circumstances?

Are there any lessons to be learnt from this story?

Is there anything in the book which is relevant to your own life?

- Look back at *Worksheet 5*. The section on the opening situation or problem (if it has been completed) may help to reveal the book's main themes.
- Use *Student's Worksheet 13: Working with themes* (see back of book) to help students think about themes and ideas in the book. On this worksheet are many of the common themes to be found in novels, although the list is by no means exhaustive. Add some more words if you wish. Ask students to try to distinguish between the main themes and the less important ones.

### Tracking the themes

- Once the themes have been identified, they can be tracked through the book using a similar diagram as that used in *Worksheet 4*. Instead of writing the characters' names in the boxes on the left of the sheet, write the theme(s). Then ask students to identify in each section or chapter events or other aspects which are connected with the theme. In this way students will see how the author develops the theme through the book.
- Ask students to link particular themes with characters in the book, giving reasons for their choices.
- Make a list of themes in the book and find a selection of suitable extracts from the book. Ask students to match themes with extracts.
- Alternatively ask each student to choose a particular theme to work on. Then ask the students to locate parts of the text which deal particularly well with their chosen theme. They should be able to explain their reasons for their choice of extract.
- If characters in the book have particular problems, they can be presented as agony aunt/advice column letters to which students can write replies. Alternatively the problems can be used in a class debate or a pyramid discussion.

### EVALUATING THE BOOK

After discussing the various aspects of the book above, and towards the end of the study period, it is a good idea for students to evaluate the book. The exam questions are likely to require opinions on whether they liked the book, or certain aspects of it, or not, and why.

- *Student's Worksheet 14: Evaluating the book* provides questions which students can use to help them form opinions of most of the aspects of the book which they may need to discuss in the exam. This Worksheet can be completed by each student individually, or they can work in pairs and record their partner's answers. Tell students that in the exam it is important to give reasons for their opinions.
- Alternatively, the same questions can be slightly modified to make a 'Find Someone Who ...' exercise, as shown overleaf:





Find someone who	Name
1. .... enjoyed this book.	
2. .... did not enjoy this book.	
3. .... especially liked..... (name of character)	
4. .... did not like..... (name of character)	
5. .... was reminded of someone they know by..... (name of character)	
6. ....liked the part of the book when ..... best.	
7. .... liked the part of the book when .....least.	
8. .... found ..... .....interesting.	
9. .... would have..... if they had been the writer.	
10. .... agreed (or did not agree) with the writer's view of .....	
11. .... has learnt that..... .....from this book.	
12. .... thinks this book would make a good film or TV series.	

The spaces in the questions above can be filled in before the exercise by the teacher or by the students. When students have found names to put in the right hand column, these people can be asked to give reasons for their opinions in a whole class feedback session.

- Ask students to make a list of about five people that they know (friends, family etc). Ask them to say whether each person would enjoy the book and why or why not.

- Tell students that they should imagine that they are going to write a screenplay for a film of the book. In order to do this, they will have to cut substantial parts of the book. Ask them to refer to their section summaries or character timelines and decide which parts of the book could be omitted from a film. They can compare their answers in pairs and report back to the class, giving reasons for their decisions.

## REMEMBERING AND REVISING THE BOOK

For the exam, students will need to remember the story and everything they have learnt about the book. It is a good idea to revise key points with students before the exam. You can make use of memory techniques and games to help with this.

- If students have completed the Worksheets in this book, they can refer to these to help revise key points.
- Some of the ideas for activities already described will be equally useful for the revision stage.
- Ask students to look at *Worksheets 1-3* again to test whether they know now what they should write in an exam answer. Remind students of the various 'Do's and 'Don'ts' listed in the *Exam tips* section on page 8.
- Key words and ideas can be made into acrostics or acronyms for easy memorization.
- Similarly, simple crossword puzzles can be devised in which the questions and answers concern elements and aspects of the book which students need to remember.
- 'Board games' are also an enjoyable way to try to remember a story. See *Penguin Readers Teachers' Guide to Using Graded Readers* for an example.
- Make a selection of sentences from the book and write them on slips of paper. Put all the slips of paper into an envelope. In groups, each student takes a piece of paper from the envelope and has to say what the sentence refers to, and what happened before and after.
- From the book, find a number of pairs of statements and replies. Write each one on a slip of paper. Give each student a slip of paper and ask them to learn by heart what is on the paper so that they can say it easily. Take the slips of paper away. They must find their partner by going around the room and saying their sentence.
- An adapted form of a guessing game known as 'Botticelli' will help students remember characters and what they did. In this game, (taking *Best Detective Stories of Agatha Christie* as an example) student A starts by saying: 'I'm thinking of someone.' The other students then start to ask 'type 1' questions about



actions or characteristics, such as: 'Did this person pretend to be a housekeeper?' Student A has three options for a reply: (i) if the answer to the question is 'no', Student A must say so and also say who the questioner was thinking of, eg. 'No, it's not Mrs Havering.' If student A is wrong in her guess as to who the questioner had in mind, she is then out of the game; (ii) if student A doesn't know who the questioner is thinking of, she must say 'I don't know' and she is then 'out' of the game. (iii) If the answer to the question is 'yes', Student A must say so and the questioner is allowed a 'type 2' question such as: 'Is it Mrs Havering?' - If the answer to this question is yes, the questioner wins a point and a new round starts. If no, student A has a point and the questioning continues. It is a good idea to limit the number of type 1 questions allowed in each round.

- Make a game based on the themes in the book as follows. (This game is based on a well known board game called 'Pictionary'). Write all the theme words on a set of cards. Students should work in groups of around six or eight. In each group there are two teams of three or four: A and B. Each team has a pencil and some clean sheets of paper. For each group you will also need some means of timing, such as an hour glass or a stop watch. The cards are laid face down on each group's table. The game proceeds like this. One student from team A takes a card from the pile without showing it to the rest of his/her team. S/he then has one minute (strictly timed) to try to draw a picture of the word on the card so that his/her team can guess what the word is. If he/she succeeds and the team guess correctly, they score one point. If not, the team scores nothing. Then a student from team B picks a card and the same procedure takes place. This continues until all the cards have been used. The team with the highest number of points wins.

### **Acknowledgement**

The questions from past examination papers on Worksheet 2 of this guide are reproduced by permission of the University of Cambridge Local Examinations Syndicate. The publishers make grateful acknowledgement to them.

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FCE question types (1)

In Paper 2 (Writing) in the First Certificate in English exam, there are different types of question to answer and it is important that you know what is required for each type. You need to think about the best *style* to use, what sort of *person* might read the type of answer you write, how to *organize* your ideas and how to *lay out* your answer. Choose appropriate words from boxes A, B and C below and write the words in the empty labels for each question type.

**A. STYLE**  
 formal  
 informal  
 light-headed  
 serious  
 impersonal  
 personal

**B. READER**  
 teacher  
 someone of your age/interests  
 friend  
 superior eg. boss  
 colleague

**C. ORGANIZATION & LAYOUT**  
 title  
 headings & sections  
 introduction  
 paragraphs  
 conclusion  
 salutation  
 ending & signature

**article**

**composition**

**informal letter**

**report**



## FCE question types (2)

As well as considering the style, reader, layout and organization, you also need to recognize what kind of content the set book exam questions require. Look at these questions, some of which are from past FCE papers. What ideas should you include in your answer? Choose answers from boxes A and B below.

<p><b>A. INFORMATION</b></p> <p><b>What information about the book should you include in your answer?</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* plot description</li> <li>* description of one or more scenes</li> <li>* character description</li> <li>* description of the setting (place and time)</li> <li>* description of the themes/ideas</li> </ul>
<p><b>B. PERSONAL RESPONSE</b></p> <p><b>What kind of personal response is required?</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* opinion(s)</li> <li>* reason(s)</li> <li>* suggestion(s)</li> <li>* recommendation(s)</li> <li>* comparison(s) with something in your own life</li> <li>* insight and understanding</li> <li>* creative imagination</li> </ul>

- 1 Which character in the book or in one of the short stories do you most dislike? Write a **composition** giving reasons for your choice. (©UCLES, June 1998).
- 2 *TALKING BOOKS* - recordings of well-known books on cassettes - are becoming very popular. You have been asked to write an **article** for an English magazine, saying how well the book or one of the short stories you have read would work on cassette, and what some of the problems might be. (©UCLES, June 1998)
- 3 Can you imagine a different ending to the book you have read? Write a **composition**, summarizing how the book or short story might end and giving your reasons for the new ending. (©UCLES, December 1997)
- 4 Do you know anybody who resembles one of the characters in the book? If so, write a **composition**, stating how you know this person and explaining in what ways he or she is similar to the character in the book. Mention any differences. (©UCLES, December 1997)
- 5 Write a **composition**, saying which character in the book you think the author most enjoyed writing about and giving your reasons why. (©UCLES, December 1998)
- 6 Your teacher has asked you to suggest a book which would be suitable for class discussion. Write a **report** for your teacher on the book you have read, describing how the author covers one topic in the book that you think would be suitable for class discussion. (©UCLES, December 1998)
- 7 Write a **composition**, describing a place in the book which you find different to where you live. Explain what the main differences are. (©UCLES, June 1997)
- 8 "We didn't just read the book for pleasure. It also helped us with our study of English." Do you agree with this student's statement? Write a **composition**, explaining why or why not, with reference to the book which you have read. (©UCLES, June 1997)
- 9 A friend of yours has written to you saying that he/she has been asked by a teacher to read the book you have just read. Write a **letter** to your friend saying what you liked and/or did not like about the book.
- 10 Many well known books have been made into films. Write an **article** for a magazine saying whether you think the book or one of the short stories you have read would make a good film, giving your reasons and explaining what difficulties there might be.
  - Choose one of the questions above to write a timed practice answer.



## A sample essay

Look at the sample essay below and then answer the questions which follow it.

*Listening to a well known book on a cassette is convenient for busy people who have no time to read. For example, you can listen while driving to work, or cleaning the house. There are many books available on cassette these days. So would it be a good idea to record 'Wuthering Heights' by Emily Brontë?*

*A listening version of 'Wuthering Heights' could help to make it seem more interesting. For example, the weather and atmosphere are important in the story and so you could record the sound of wind and rain on a cassette version. Adding some music would also increase its dramatic qualities.*

*In addition, if it is possible to hear the characters speaking it would help to imagine them and their qualities. It would be very nice to hear Heathcliff's voice and that of the two Catherines. These are strong characters who all have lots of emotions. Some important scenes, such as when Heathcliff and Edgar quarrel about Isabella, would be very exciting.*

*On the other hand, when you read a book, you normally enter the silent world of the imagination. To have real voices given to the characters may perhaps spoil the enjoyment for some people. It would also be difficult, I think, to make sure that the voices of all the characters are different so that the listener is not confused.*

*All in all, I would strongly recommend recording 'Wuthering Heights' on cassette. But it could not really replace reading the book.*

Answer these questions:

- 1 Look at *Worksheet 2*. For which of the questions does the essay above provide an answer?
- 2 Has the writer used the right kind of style? Find examples of words used which indicate the type of style.
- 3 Has the writer included the right sorts of ideas and information in the answer? Find examples.
- 4 What is the function of the first paragraph?
- 5 What is the function of the first three sentences in this paragraph?
- 6 What is function of the last sentence in this paragraph?
- 7 What is the function of the second paragraph?
- 8 What is the function of the third paragraph?
- 9 Why has the writer chosen to make two paragraphs with paragraphs 2 and 3?
- 10 What words does the writer use to show how the ideas in paragraphs 2 and 3 are connected?
- 11 What is the function of the fourth paragraph?
- 12 What words in the first sentence make its function clear?
- 13 What is the connection between the second and first sentence in this paragraph?
- 14 What is the function of the last paragraph?
- 15 Underline all the conditional verbs in the essay. Why are these forms used?



### Character timelines

In the spaces for each section, write what happens to each character.

Number of chapter or section ▶		
Characters' names ▼		

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## Analysis of the plot

**Book:**

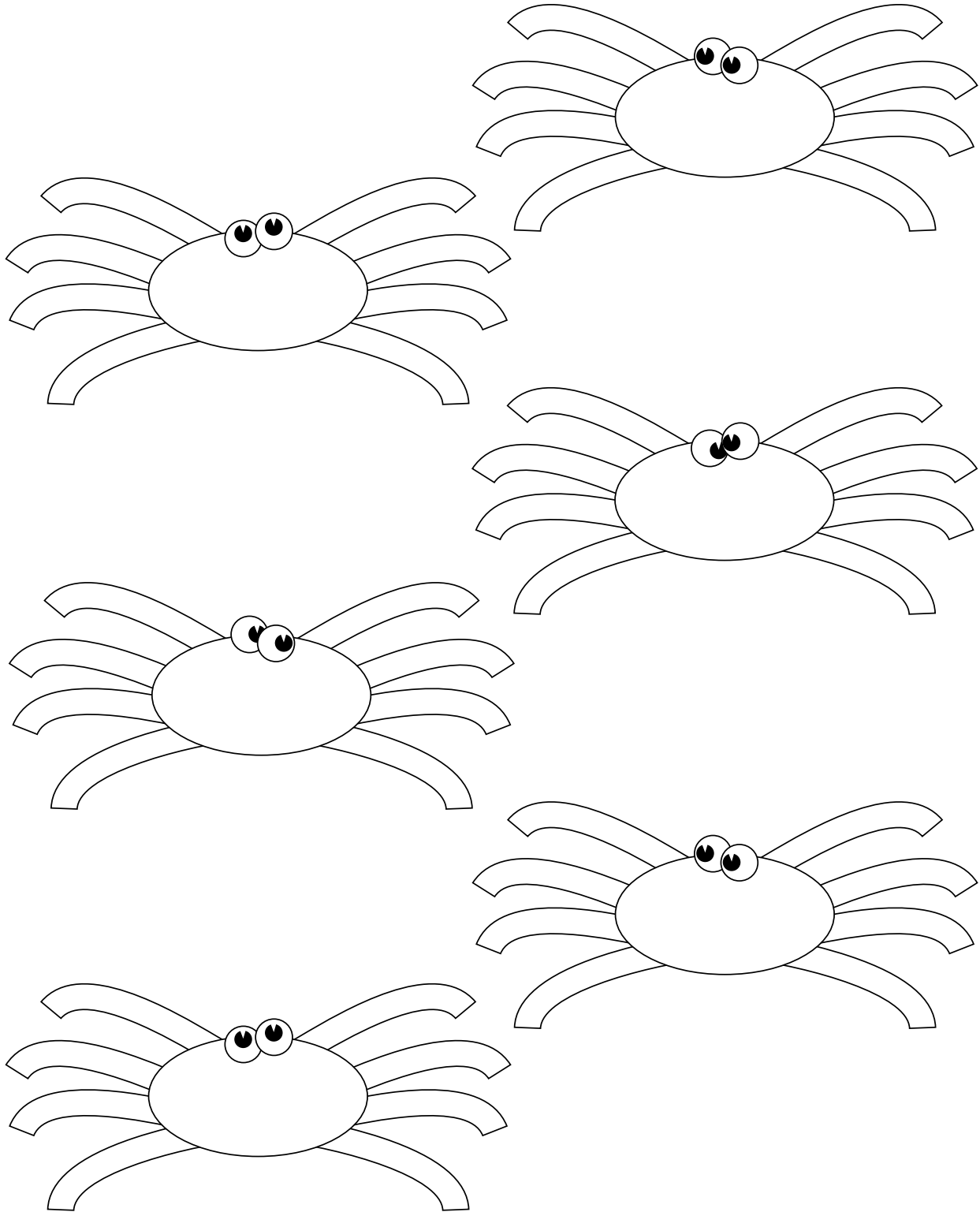
<p><b>Opening situation(s)/ problem(s)</b> (What is/are the main problem(s) that confront(s) the characters at the beginning of the story?)</p>	
<p><b>Key events</b> (the main things that happen; characters' choices/actions &amp; the consequences of these; events outside the control of the characters)</p>	
<p><b>Climax</b> (What happens to bring about the ending?)</p>	
<p><b>Ending</b></p>	

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### Who's who?

Label the spidergrams below. Write the names of the characters on the spiders' bodies. On their legs write facts about the characters, such as their age or the age covered by the story, sex, job, role in the story etc..



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### Character factfile

Choose a character from the book and complete the following:

## All you need to know about:

Name: .....

Age at the beginning/end of the story: .....

Job/role in the story: .....

Family: .....

Lives in: .....

Good points: .....

Bad points: .....

Likes: .....

.....

Hates: .....

.....

Worst moment: .....

.....

Best moment: .....

.....

Ambition: .....

.....

Anything else? .....

.....

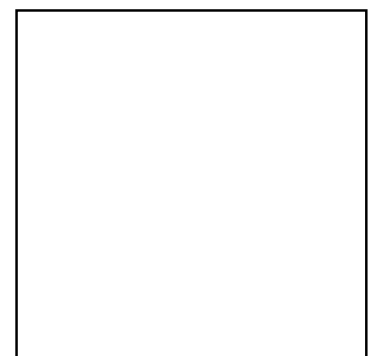
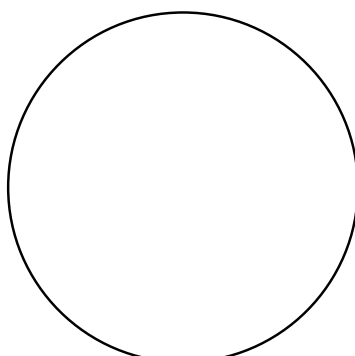
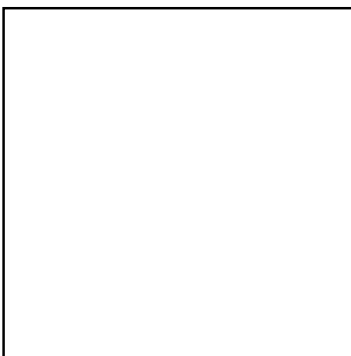
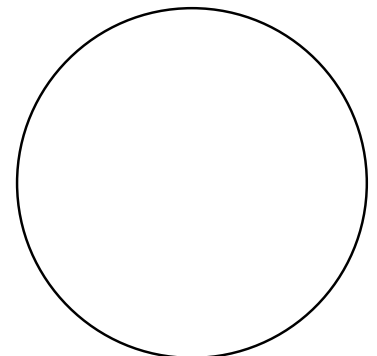
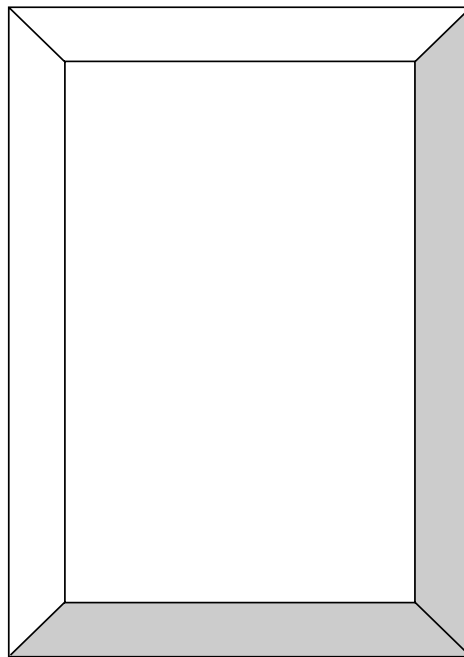
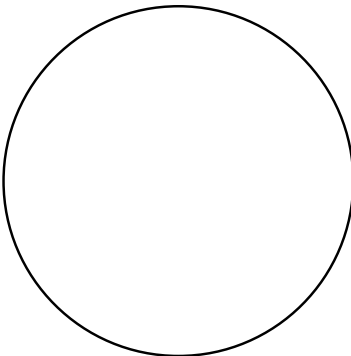
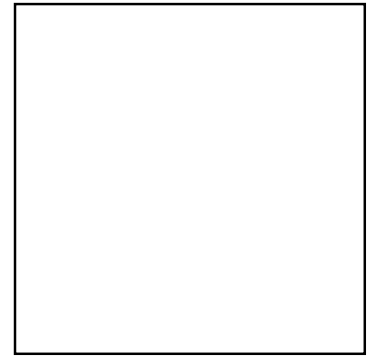
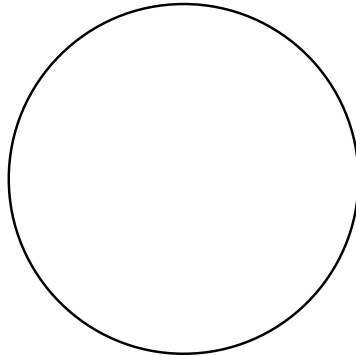
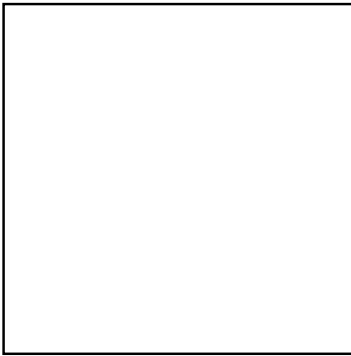
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### Character poster

Who is your favourite character in the book or story? Make a poster showing why you like him/her. In the circles below write some words or phrases which describe aspects of his/her personality that you like or admire. In the squares write some things which he/she did in the story. Draw a picture of your character or find a suitable photo from a magazine to put in the picture frame. Give your poster to your partner and ask him/her to guess who your character is. Finally write your character's name on the picture frame.



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## Magazine interview

Choose a character from the book. Here are some questions which a magazine reporter would like to ask your character\*. Write the answers you think your character would give:

- What is your favourite colour? .....
- What is your favourite animal?.....
- What is your favourite food? .....
- What is your favourite type of car? .....
- What is your favourite piece of music? .....
- What is your favourite place? .....
- What is your favourite piece of clothing? .....
- What is the worst thing you have ever done?.....
- What is your most embarrassing moment?.....
- What would you have written on your gravestone? .....
- What do you like to do to relax? .....
- Would you rather be a lake or a river?.....
- What would you like to change most about the world? .....
- Have you ever loved anyone who didn't love you back? .....
- Who would be your perfect marriage partner? .....
- What are the most important qualities in a wife/husband?.....
- Who would you like to play you in the movie of your life? .....
- Have you ever seen a ghost?.....
- Do you believe in life after death?.....
- Have you ever felt as if you were going mad? .....
- What makes you happy? .....
- Do you have any regrets?.....
- What has been the lowest point in your life? .....
- What helps you through difficult times?.....
- Do you find it easy or hard to trust people? .....
- What do you do if you ever feel lonely? .....
- What would you do if you found a wallet on the street? .....
- If you could have three wishes, what would they be?.....

\* Add some more questions if you would like to.



## Personality chart

Write the characters' names along the top of the chart. Put ticks in appropriate boxes for each character. When you have finished, discuss with a partner your reasons for your opinions. Make another chart with different words or phrases if you wish.

Names of the characters in the book

Qualities							
patient							
impetuous							
sensible							
rash							
cautious							
serious							
funny							
adventurous							
brave							
violent							
timid							
clever							
foolish							
affectionate							
passionate							
cold							
vivacious							
excitable							
quiet							
dull							
contented							
miserable							
cheerful							
nervous							
restless							
calm							
honest							
dishonest							
fussy							
obstinate							
charming							
mean							
greedy							
generous							
kind							
cruel							
arrogant							
humble							
stern							
malicious							

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### Characters on trial



Your teacher will dictate some sentences about a character to you. You are that character. You should say whether you are 'guilty' or 'not guilty' and give an explanation for each charge.

(Name).....you are charged with the following:

- 1 .....
- 2 .....
- 3 .....
- 4 .....

How do you plead and what is the reason?

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4

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## Essential items for a visit

Imagine you are going for a holiday to the place where the story is set. Which of these things would you take with you and why?

- |                  |            |               |                 |
|------------------|------------|---------------|-----------------|
| swimming costume | gun        | chocolate     | tent            |
| boots            | torch      | playing cards | mobile phone    |
| thick coat       | pen        | radio         | candle          |
| umbrella         | paper      | medicines     | dog             |
| suntan oil       | binoculars | a good novel  | calculator      |
| hot water bottle | matches    | guitar        | laptop computer |
| thermos          | camera     | money         | sticky tape     |
| newspaper        | knife      | bicycle       | wig             |
|                  |            | watch         | diary           |

Make your list and give your reasons below:

Things to take:	Why you would take them:

- Compare your list with a partner.



### Working with themes

Which of these words are relevant to the story? Choose 10 words and put them in order of most to least important:

travel pain hate destruction future  
poverty shame jealousy city  
heroism death divorce family cruelty love nature  
crime abuse birth revenge kindness cold heat  
illness money dance danger country  
creation tragedy supernatural peace love  
treachery comedy supernatural passion isolation  
sea animals persuasion understanding power  
prejudice violence evil misery  
mystery stupidity music religion repetition  
parent and child war colour light addiction  
friendship darkness marriage  
intelligence happiness greed

Write your list below. When you have finished, compare your list with a partner. Be ready to explain your choices.



### Evaluating the book

Complete this questionnaire for yourself or for a partner. Delete the words which do not apply.

- 1 Overall, I/ ..... (name of partner) enjoyed / did not enjoy this book because .....
- 2 I/ ..... (name of partner) especially liked ..... (name of character) because.....
- 3 I/ ..... (name of partner) did not like ..... (name of character) because.....
- 4 ..... (name of character) reminded me/ ..... (name of partner) of ..... because/when .....
- 5 The part of the book I/ ..... (name of partner) liked best was ..... because.....
- 6 The part of the book I/ ..... (name of partner) liked least was ..... because.....
- 7 Something I/.....(name of partner) found interesting in the book was .....
- 8 If I/ ..... (name of partner) had been the writer, I/.....(name of partner) would have.....
- 9 I/ ..... (name of partner) agree(s) / do(es) not agree with the writer's view of..... because.....
- 10 From this book I/ ..... (name of partner) have/has learnt.....
- 11 I/ ..... (name of partner) think(s) this book would / would not make a good film or TV series because .....

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