

How to explain the way a writer creates effects

Question 2 is always the same: explain how the writer creates effects using language

When planning your answer, look out for the following:

Use of the **five senses** such as colour, noise or sound effects

Use of **contrast or links** between the subject (usually a person) and the environment

**Surprising or unusual words** in the context of the description

**Imagery:** simile, metaphor and personification, as well as adjectives that create a particularly graphic image

You should begin answering the question immediately. Do not waste time writing irrelevant introductions such as:

"The writer creates effects through an interesting selection of vocabulary and devices"



Anyone could write this sentence without even reading the passage. Don't do it!

Have a look at the description of a city below.  
Explain how the writer creates effects using language.

It was a town of red brick, or of brick that would have been red if the smoke and ashes had allowed it; but as matters stood, it was a town of unnatural red and black like the painted face of a savage. It was a town of machinery and tall chimneys, out of which interminable serpents of smoke trailed themselves for ever and ever, and never got uncoiled.

It had a black canal in it, and a river that ran purple with ill-smelling dye, and vast piles of building full of windows where there was a rattling and a trembling all day long, and where the piston of the steam-engine worked monotonously up and down, like the head of an elephant in a state of melancholy madness. It contained several large streets all very like one another, and many small streets still more like one another, inhabited by people equally like one another, who all went in and out at the same hours, with the same sound upon the same pavements, to do the same work, and to whom every day was the same as yesterday and tomorrow, and every year the counterpart of the last and the next.

To score marks, you need to explain how they work, not just identify them.

### Word or Phrase

### Effect

'unnatural red and black'

Colours of the city. Unnatural suggests conflict with nature and stresses the scale of the pollution. Repetition of dark colours may lead us to think city is hopeless

'Interminable serpents of smoke'

Metaphor describes smoke from factories. Serpents are poisonous, deadly animals, full of menace. Interminable emphasises inescapable and never ending

You should try to choose at least five examples from each paragraph. Make sure you keep them short and respond to specific word choices

As previously mentioned, you must begin answering the question immediately

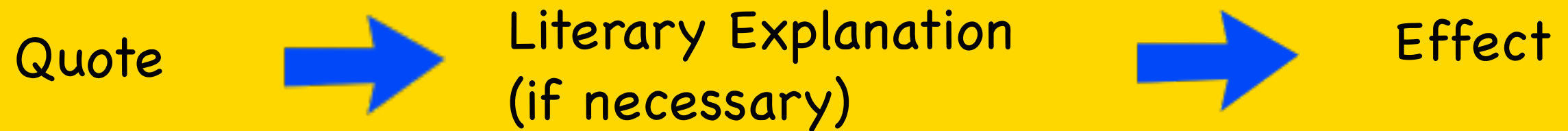
## **Bad Idea**

"The writer creates effects through an interesting selection of vocabulary and devices"

## **Good Idea**

"Unnatural red and black", describes the colours of the city and is particularly powerful as it suggests it is in opposition to nature and therefore stresses the scale of the pollution. Furthermore, the repetition of these dark colours, "black", and, "purple", combined with, "ill-smelling", adds to the growing sense of hopelessness and the smothering atmosphere of sickness.

A useful structure is as follows:



"Like the painted face of a savage", → is a simile describing the way the smoke and ashes smother the city.

→ This comparison emphasises the fact that the real city is literally hidden, or invisible. It further characterises the city as wild, or un-civilised, adding more emphasis to the idea that it is against nature



"Unnatural red and black", describes the colours of the city and is particularly powerful as it suggests it is in opposition to nature and therefore stresses the scale of the pollution. Furthermore, the repetition of these dark colours, "black", and, "purple", combined with, "ill-smelling", adds to the growing sense of hopelessness and the smothering atmosphere of sickness.

"Like the painted face of a savage", is a simile describing the way the smoke and ashes smother the city. This comparison emphasises the fact that the real city is literally hidden, or invisible. It further characterises the city as wild, or un-civilised, adding more emphasis to the idea that it is against nature. The metaphor, "interminable serpents of smoke", further adds to this by comparing the pollution from the factories to a venomous animal. This clearly adds a sense of threat to the atmosphere that is particularly unsettling due to the word, "interminable", which suggests it is unstoppable and relentless.

Finally, the simile comparing the pistons to, "the head of an elephant", creates pity for an animal that is usually thought of as intelligent and harmless. This alarming image emphasises the robotic nature of the factories; an idea further underlined by the alliteration, "melancholy madness". This alliteration also makes the two words stand out, giving them more importance to the passage as a whole.

Band 1: 9–10

Wide ranging discussion of language with some high quality comments that add meaning and associations to words in both parts of the question, and demonstrate the writer's reasons for using them. May group examples to demonstrate overview of meaning/inference/attitude. The candidate tackles imagery with some precision and imagination. There is evidence that the candidate understands how language works.

Band 2: 7–8

Reference is made to a number of words and phrases, and some explanations are given and effects identified in both parts of the question. Images are recognised as such and the candidate goes some way to justify them. There is some evidence that the candidate understands how language works.

Band 3: 5–6

A satisfactory attempt is made to identify appropriate words and phrases. Candidates mostly give meanings of words and any attempt to suggest and explain effects is weak. One half of the question may be better answered than the other. Candidates may identify linguistic devices but not explain why they are used. Explanations are basic or in very general terms (or may be virtually ignored).

Band 4: 3–4

Candidates select a mixture of appropriate words and words that communicate less well. Explanations are only partially effective and occasionally repeat the language of the original, or comments are very general and do not refer to specific words.

Band 5: 1–2

The choice of words is partly relevant, sparse or sometimes unrelated to the text. While the question has been understood, the candidate does little more than offer a few words and make very slight, generalised comments. The answer is very thin.

Band 6: 0

The answer does not fit the question. Inappropriate words and phrases are chosen.