

# Unit 1

## What is directed response?

### Learning outcomes

**In this unit you will:**

- understand the structure of Paper 1, Section A, Questions 1a and 1b
- review the assessment objectives as they relate to the questions
- understand the key skills and techniques required to approach the questions.

### Assessment objectives

With this task, you are being assessed on your ability to:

- read and demonstrate understanding of a wide variety of texts (Questions 1a and 1b)
- write effectively, creatively, accurately and appropriately, for a range of audiences and purposes (Question 1a)
- analyse the ways in which writers' and speakers' choices of form, structure and language produce meaning and style (Question 1b).

### Directed response (Section A, Question 1a)

With a directed response, you are given a piece of writing and asked to rewrite it for a different purpose or audience.

#### EXAM-STYLE QUESTION 1.1

A friend has asked you to accompany her to the cinema to see a film.

Using the information in the text, write an email explaining why you would or would not like to accept the invitation.

Use 50–100 words.

(25 marks)

As you are still in the process of learning how to do this, begin with a series of steps. In the exam itself, you would be expected to write between 150–200 words. You will be told how many you need to write on the exam paper.

You could be asked to write in a number of different genres and styles, and your course so far should have introduced you to reading a wide variety of different sorts of texts with the aim of being able to imitate them.

The task may not require that you write a complete piece of writing. It could ask you, for example, for the opening paragraph of an article or the opening of a presentation.

You are being asked to choose vocabulary, style and structure in order to fit a specific form, purpose and audience.

### Comparative commentary (Section A, Question 1b)

In this question, you will be asked to compare your piece of writing with the original. You will be asked to consider matters of genre by implication, but the question will also mention form, structure and language.

#### EXAMINER TIP

You *must* focus on writing a piece that imitates the genre requested. Before you start to write, you will need to think hard about precisely which features of the genre you want to include.

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This will help to get you to identify and comment on features of *both* texts.

You will need to convey your insights in an appropriate style and in a structured piece of writing.

**What skills will I need?**

The tasks ask that you bring your knowledge of another genre (in this case, email) to the original.

You also need to select relevantly from material in the original text.

You will need strategies to ensure that you write a comparison, not simply a description of the characteristics of each of the pieces of writing.

**What do I already know?**

You need to bring to your thinking your other knowledge about how writing works.

For Question 1a, the following checklist contains questions you should ask yourself:

Text features	Questions for my writing
Sentence structure (grammar and syntax)	Should I write long sentences, short sentences, fragments?
Point of view	Should I write in the first person (using the word 'I') or be more impersonal? I could also address the reader.
Layout	Are there any genre features (headlines, etc.) that I should try to replicate?
Lexis, diction (word choice)	What sort of words should I use?
Images/metaphors (figurative language)	Should I try to make points by using non-literal language?
Tone	Am I trying to be formal/informal?
Structure/shape of the whole	How is the piece of writing made coherent?

Table 1.1: SPLITS letters to help with writing

**EXAMINER TIP**

As soon as you get into the exam, write down the mnemonic 'SPLITS'. It will remind you of what you are looking for in the original text, and also what aspects of genre you should be considering for your own writing.

**Reflection:** All the features in Table 1.1 combine to create what you might call an author's written style. Are you able to think of 15 words ('terse' or 'verbose' might be examples) of words you could use to characterise a writer's style?

For Question 1b, you will need a strategy for comparing your own writing against the original. You will be making use of Table 1.1 and Table 2.1 on p. 19.

**KEY TERM**

**lexis:** all the words in a language

**EXAMINER TIP**

You need to think about why a writer chooses a word and what effect, in particular, they are hoping to achieve. For example 'cheerful,' 'exultant', 'glad' are close synonyms but each would have a different effect in a sentence.

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**Reflection:** Do you have a good understanding of the terms 'audience', 'purpose' and 'genre'?

In order to check this, write yourself a definition of each of these terms. Leave some space to add to your definitions as you work through the tasks involved in Paper 1.

### Re-cap of skills and knowledge needed

In Question 1a, you need to demonstrate that you can:

- read a text
- reflect on how the original creates meaning
- reflect on the genre requirements of the requested task
- select material from the original and re-purpose it for the new task
- complete the task (150–200 words) in the genre requested.

In Question 1b, you need to demonstrate that you can:

- analyse the original piece
- compare it effectively to your own piece.