

Exploring the types of questions

To help you do well in your exams it is always worth studying how the questions are phrased and seeing what sort of information the examiners are looking for in the various sections of the exam papers.

1. Look at the questions below which are all from Section A of Paper 1 of the AQA spec A English exam. When they were published in the exam they had accompanying texts to look at but for now we are just interested in the style of the questions:

Explain the key points made in this article.

How are facts and opinions used in this article?

How do the writers of these Items use language to suit their purposes?

Compare how the writers and designers of these Items aim to interest the reader by their use of: pictures; layout.

What does Fay Weldon recommend as the best way to sell chocolate bars?

How does Fay Weldon use facts and opinions to support her argument?

How does Fay Weldon use language to try to make her argument effective?

Describe the methods used by McVitie's on the wrapper to sell Jaffa Cakes. To what extent do these methods avoid the criticisms made by Fay Weldon in 'Dull, dull, dull'?

What reasons are put forward for visiting Antarctica with Trailfinders?

How does Scott's use of fact and opinion help us in our understanding of his experiences?

What is the intended audience of the two items? Give your reasons.

How are presentation and language used to persuade the reader to go on this holiday?

What are the main points of Tony Allan's argument about the world's water shortages?

How do the views in the second item: agree with; disagree with Tony Allan's views?

How do the writers and designers of the leaflet persuade the reader to give money to their charity by their use of: layout; pictures; print styles?

How effectively are facts and opinions used to fulfil each writer's purpose?

2. With a partner, go through the questions and identify words and phrases which repeatedly appear in the questions.
3. Make a list of the type of questions that come up.
4. Find a newspaper, magazine, website article or an advertisement of some kind (or a selection) and try to write your own four questions for each, using these as a guide for style and content.