



A-Level English Language Essay Marking (Example)

This rubric assesses analytical essays responding to texts, language issues, or linguistic data.

Total suggested weighting: **40 marks** (but can be adapted).

1. Quality of Linguistic Analysis (0–15 marks)

Assesses how well the student identifies, explains, and interprets language features.

High Level (13–15)

- Identifies **precise, relevant linguistic features** (lexis, grammar, discourse, pragmatics, phonology where appropriate).
- Provides **clear, conceptually accurate explanations** of how these features operate.
- Shows **secure understanding of language frameworks** and applies them purposefully.
- Analysis is **integrated**, not feature-spotting; points build a coherent interpretation.
- Demonstrates **awareness of nuance**, ambiguity, and alternative readings.

Mid Level (7–12)

- Identifies a **range of appropriate features**, though some may be less relevant or unevenly explored.
- Explanations are generally accurate but may lack depth or precision.
- Some links between features and meaning/effect are made, though not always sustained.
- Occasional descriptive commentary rather than analysis.

Low Level (1–6)

- Identifies **few features**, often obvious or mislabelled.
- Explanations are **descriptive**, vague, or partially incorrect.
- Limited connection between language choices and meaning/effect.
- Analysis may rely on general impressions rather than linguistic evidence.

0 marks

- No linguistic analysis attempted.



2. Understanding of Context and Purpose (0–10 marks)

Assesses how well the student situates the text within its social, cultural, and communicative context.

High Level (9–10)

- Demonstrates **secure understanding** of contextual factors (audience, purpose, mode, genre, social attitudes, historical or cultural influences).
- Shows **clear, relevant connections** between context and language choices.
- Integrates contextual insight into the argument rather than adding it separately.
- Demonstrates awareness of **how meanings shift** depending on context.

Mid Level (5–8)

- Shows **general understanding** of context, though some points may be broad or underdeveloped.
- Makes some links between context and language, but these may be uneven.
- May rely on common-sense observations rather than linguistic evidence.

Low Level (1–4)

- Contextual points are **minimal**, generic, or inaccurate.
- Limited or no connection between context and language choices.
- May misinterpret purpose, audience, or situational factors.

0 marks

- No contextual understanding demonstrated.



3. Argument, Interpretation, and Critical Engagement (0–10 marks)

Assess the student's ability to construct a coherent argument and engage critically with ideas.

High Level (9–10)

- Presents a **clear, sustained argument** with a strong line of reasoning.
- Demonstrates **critical thinking**, offering alternative interpretations or evaluating significance.
- Integrates evidence smoothly to support claims.
- Shows **awareness of linguistic debates**, theories, or conceptual issues where relevant.

Mid Level (5–8)

- Argument is **mostly clear**, though may drift or become repetitive.
- Some critical engagement, but may rely on assertion rather than evaluation.
- Evidence is used but may be unevenly integrated.

Low Level (1–4)

- Argument is **unclear**, fragmented, or largely descriptive.
- Little or no critical engagement.
- Evidence is minimal, irrelevant, or absent.

0 marks

- No argument or interpretation.



4. Organisation, Clarity, and Academic Style (0–5 marks)

Assesses structure, coherence, and clarity of writing.

High Level (5)

- Writing is **logically structured**, with clear progression of ideas.
- Paragraphs are coherent and purposeful.
- Academic register is **consistent**, precise, and appropriate.
- Terminology is used accurately and confidently.

Mid Level (3–4)

- Structure is generally clear but may contain lapses in flow or coherence.
- Academic style is mostly appropriate but may be inconsistent.
- Some imprecise or misused terminology.

Low Level (1–2)

- Structure is weak or unclear.
- Writing may be repetitive, unfocused, or informal.
- Terminology is rarely used or frequently incorrect.

0 marks

- No coherent organisation.



5. Accuracy of Written Expression (0–5 marks)

Assesses grammar, punctuation, spelling, and clarity.

High Level (5)

- Writing is **consistently accurate** with minimal errors.
- Sentence structures are varied and controlled.
- Errors do not impede meaning.

Mid Level (3–4)

- Some errors in grammar or punctuation but meaning remains clear.
- Occasional awkward phrasing or lapses in clarity.

Low Level (1–2)

- Frequent errors that sometimes obscure meaning.
- Limited control of sentence structure.

0 marks

- Errors severely impede understanding.

Marking Notes

To ensure consistent automated marking:

- Each criterion should be scored independently.
- The examiner should extract **linguistic features**, **contextual references**, and **argument structure** explicitly.
- The examiner should check for **terminology accuracy** (e.g., modality, deixis, semantic fields, clause types).
- The examiner should evaluate whether claims are **supported by textual evidence**.
- The examiner should avoid rewarding **feature-spotting** without explanation.
- The examiner should penalise **generic statements** that could apply to any text.