

Touching the Void  
Foundation Tier

The purpose of this pack is to provide centres with the question paper, mark scheme and a set of exemplar materials with commentaries.

The individual documents can be found on our website at [www.edexcel.com](http://www.edexcel.com)

Included in this pack:

- Question and extract from Summer 2012 Paper
- Marked scripts with the mark and band
- Examiner commentary and mark scheme

**Use this extract to answer Question 1.**

***Touching the Void***

**Extract taken from Chapter 11.**

When I at last tired of the game, the silence was overwhelming. My boisterous mood vanished and I felt despairingly lonely and silly. I thought of what the words meant, and of the dream, and was close to tears.

My feet had been buried by drifting snow and I yelled at the burning stabs in my knee when I tried to kick them free. While I struggled to roll the wet clinging sleeping bag back over my lower legs I accidentally broke a hole in the cave roof. Bright sunshine suddenly burnt away the snow shadows in the cave and I knew at once that the storm was over. I reached for my axe and swept away the rest of the roof. It was going to be a hot day. The sun rapidly melted away the cold night shivers, and I sat in the hole that was left of the cave gazing around me. At my feet, a slope ran down to an old snow-filled crevasse. I was facing the moraines but I couldn't see them from the glacier. Everything was white and alarmingly smooth. The storm had made a good job of covering the footprints I had been following the previous night. For as far as I could see, the surface of the glacier undulated away in unblemished waves of fresh snow.

As I slowly packed the bag into my sack and fumbled to roll up my Karrimat with numb fingers, I realised how desperately thirsty I was. If it had been bad yesterday I couldn't imagine what it would be like today. I tried to think where the nearest flowing water might be. I could remember seeing water only at Bomb Alley, and that was miles away. I would be lucky to reach it today. As soon as the thought struck me I was shocked to see how planned everything had become. I couldn't remember consciously deciding how long it would take to get to camp, yet there was no doubt that I had done so for I had already dismissed any hope of reaching Bomb Alley. Strange things seemed to be going on in my head. I had no clear memory of the sequence of events on the previous day. Vague snatches of unconnected memories came to me – the hollow floor in the crevasse and the sunbeam, an avalanche blast in the storm, falling down the slope where I snow-holed, and that obscene ice cliff – but where had the rest of the day gone? Was this due to lack of food and water? How many days had I been without them? Three days, no, two days and three nights! God Almighty! The thought appalled me. I knew that at this height I needed to consume at least one and a half litres of fluid each day, just to combat the dehydration of altitude. I was running on empty.

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## Touching the Void – Foundation Tier – part (a) (i)

(a) (i) Give **three** examples of the writer's use of language in the extract.

Identify the language feature for each example chosen.

An example has been given to help you.

Example: *fresh snow*

Feature: *This is an adjective.*

(3)

### Script 1 response to part a)

3 marks

Example 1: *God Almighty!*

Feature: *Short sentences.*

Example 2: *How many days had I been without them?*

Feature: *Rhetorical question*

Example 3: *Bright sunshine.*

Feature: *Adjectives*

### Examiner summary:

*The candidate correctly identifies three language features and uses valid examples from the extract.*

## Touching the Void – Foundation Tier – part (a) (ii)

- (ii) Explain how the language in the extract influences your view of how Joe copes with loneliness and hardship.

In your answer, you **must** give examples of the language the writer uses.

You may include the examples you have used in your answer to 1(a)(i).

(13)

### Script 1 response to part (a) (ii)

#### Band 4 – 11 marks

(a)(ii) The language in the extract influences my view of how Joe copes with loneliness and hardship. There is a lot of emotive language used and the writer's use of language makes the situation Joe's going through very realistic, it's almost as if the reader is re-living the situation. By using rhetorical questions like 'but where had the rest of the day gone? Was this due to lack of food and water?' it makes the reader feel great sympathy for Joe. The short sentences 'God Almighty' really emphasise the situation. It puts a lot of tension into the story and creates sympathy for Joe. The adjectives make the story more interesting to read and make the story more realistic. ~~and~~ without any of these the story would be very boring to read.

The candidate shows generally sound understanding of the extract and the writer's use of language.

and the extract wouldn't influence my view of how Joe copes with loneliness and hardship. In the extract it really does emphasise the physical pain and the mental state Joe is in. And although everything he is going through he still continues to carry on his journey to find Simon and refuses to give up which makes me feel a great deal of sympathy for him and shows that he has an awful lot of courage and determination. He copes with his ~~own~~ loneliness by re-living old memories and thinking how he is ~~going~~ going to manage to find ~~a~~ Simon in the state that he is in. He manages to tell himself that there is no other choice and he convinces himself that if he stays in one place he will only end up dying there so he refuses to give up and with a great deal of confidence he carries on his journey.

This part of the response is more general with no specific reference to the extract or the writer's use of language.

**Examiner summary:**

*The candidate picks out points on how language is used and these are well supported with quotations from the extract. The second half of this response strays from the extract and becomes too generalised.*

**Band this response achieves in the mark scheme:**

4	9-11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Generally sound understanding of the text</li> <li>• Generally sound understanding of the writer's ideas</li> <li>• Generally sound understanding of how the writer uses language</li> <li>• Mostly clear reference to the extract to support response.</li> </ul>
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**To move up to the next band:** This response needs to show more clearly how the writer uses language and support this sound understanding with clear references to the extract.

## Touching the Void – Foundation Tier – part (b)

(b) In this extract, Joe is alone.

Describe **one other** part of *Touching the Void* in which Joe has to cope with being alone on the mountain.

In your answer, you **must** give examples of the language the writer uses.

You may wish to consider how the writer:

- describes the situation he is in
- shows the difficulties he is facing
- describes how he copes with the situation.

(24)

### Script 1 response to part (b)

#### Band 5 – 22 marks

(b) One other part of *Touching the Void* in which Joe has to cope with being alone on the mountain is when Simon is forced to cut the rope on Joe and Joe ~~is~~ ends up falling and getting stuck inside the crevasse. The writer describes the situation Joe is in very well. When Joe falls down the crevasse he describes it as 'The stars went out, and I fell. Like something come alive, the rope lashed violently against my face and I fell silently, endlessly into nothingness, as if dreaming of falling.' By Joe describing this as a dream it makes me think ~~that~~ it seemed to him like it was almost unreal. Again rhetorical questions are used in this part of the book as Joe says

The candidate chooses a valid 'other part' of the novel and also refers to the writer's use of language

'What should I do now?' This makes the reader really think about the situation Joe has just been faced with and all the possibilities that could happen. The writer shows the difficulties he is facing when Joe says 'Just keep still. That's it... don't move... Ah! I couldn't stop myself. Pain in my knee jolted through me, demanding movement. I had to get my weight off it I moved, and slipped. Every muscle gripped down at the ~~sees~~ 'DON'T MOVE' This tells me that Joe is going through serious pain. He doesn't know what to do and is unaware of his surroundings. Joe doesn't know whether to cry or laugh and at this point in the book he is unaware of the problem he is faced with. He is dealing with the situation at first by laughing seems to me like a bit of a nervous laugh. He realises he's alive ~~and~~ at the point where he says 'A burning, searing agony reached up from my leg. It was ~~being~~ bent beneath me. As the burning increased so the ~~the~~ sense of living became fact. This part of the book shows a great deal of tension and really makes the reader feel a lot of sympathy for Joe as he is faced with a life or death situation and is experiencing serious pain. It ~~is~~ must be a very hard situation to be in.

The candidate refers to the writer's use of language and uses examples from the text.

**Examiner summary:**

*A suitable other part of the novel is chosen with an appropriate focus on the use of language; sound understanding of how the writer's use of language creates effect.*

**Band this response achieves in the mark scheme:**

5	20-24	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sound explanation of how the writer uses techniques to create effect.</li> <li>• Sound understanding of how techniques contribute to presentation of ideas, themes or settings.</li> <li>• Sound relevant connection made between techniques and presentation of ideas, themes or settings.</li> <li>• Clear, relevant textual reference to support response.</li> </ul>
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**To move up the band:** This response achieves almost maximum marks; shorter, quotations with a little more explanation would help achieve maximum marks.