

Essay Writing Skills: Structured Essay Question

GCSE 'O' Levels: 2273



CHAPTER ANALYSIS



MASTERY

- Structure of SEQ exam
- Types of part a and part b questions
- Writing a strong body paragraph



EXAM

- Time breakdown of each component for SEQ
- Understanding what the question demands



WEIGHTAGE

- Constitute to exactly 40% of final paper grade
- 40 mins for part a and part b

STRUCTURED ESSAY QUESTION SKILLS

PART A QUESTIONS

PART B QUESTIONS

HOW TO WRITE A STRONG BODY PARAGRAPH

7





Part A Questions

Break down of time constraint

Part A questions are worth 8 marks out of the 20 for a single SEQ question. You should only spend a maximum of **15 minutes** on a single Part A question.

Marking Scheme

L3 (5-8m)	Identifies and explains key points and specifically addresses question demands.
L2 (3-4m)	Identifies key points, vaguely addresses question but points are not sufficiently elaborated on.
L1 (1-2m)	Writes generally about the topic at hand but does not address the question.

Part A Questions

Common Problems faced by Students

Most students score between the L2 band. Their main issue is not explaining their identified factors well enough and not directly relating it to the question demands.

*refer to slide on (How to write a good body paragraph)



Part A Questions

Part A answer template

Introduction: Provide a brief summary of question demands and factors you identified that answer the question (*3 sentences maximum*)

Body paragraph 1: A thorough explanation of the most critical and important factor. Address it in direct relation to the question (*at least ½ page long*)

Body paragraph 2: Explanation of the next most important factor. While an explanation in detail is ideal, a shorter paragraph that addresses the question demand is sufficient if you're short on time (*min 1/3 page long*)



Part B Questions



Part B questions are different from Part A in that they are **argumentative in nature**. The examiner wants you to evaluate both sides of the argument and use your own reasoning to reach a balanced conclusion.

Breakdown of time constraint

Part B questions are worth 12 marks out of the 20 for a single SEQ question. You should only spend a maximum of 25 min here. Allocate 10 mins for each body paragraph and 5 mins to write a balanced conclusion

Part B Questions

Marking Scheme

L4 (10-12m)	Explains both sides of the argument with strong elaboration. Weighs the strengths of the arguments to come to a balanced conclusion
L3 (7-10m)	2-sided arguments that answers yes and no to the question. Does not come to a balanced conclusion
L2 (3-6m)	A 1-sided argument that lacks strong elaboration
L1 (1-2m)	Explains vaguely on some points, but without focus on the question demand

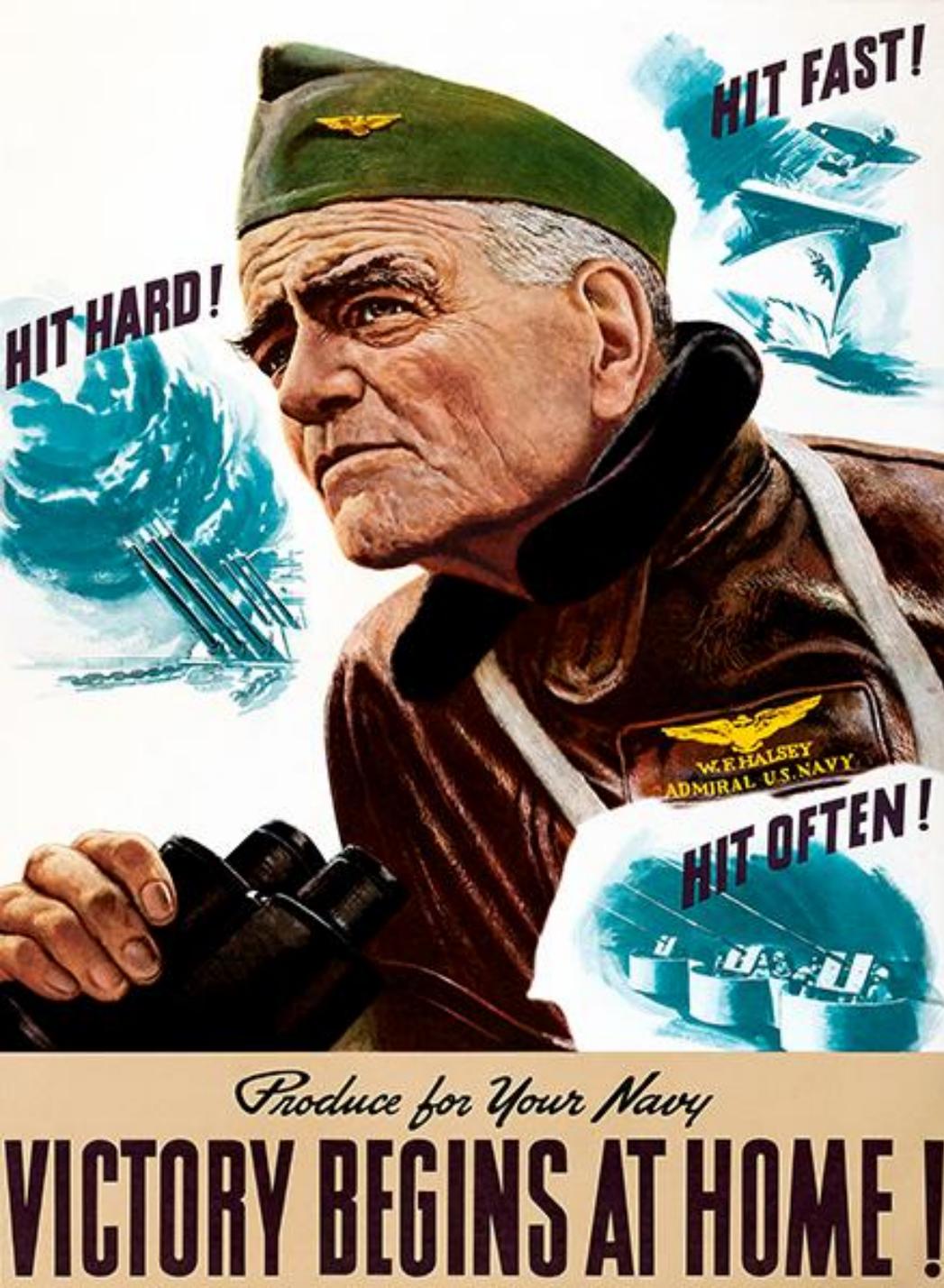
Part B Questions

Common Problems faced by Students

Time Management - Most students have poor time management when it comes to Part B questions. Remember to plan and stick closely to the guidance provided above.

Insufficiently understanding the question demand – Don't rush into writing your essay. Take at least a minute to plan in your head what you intend to write for the essay. Make sure every paragraph links to the main essay question at hand!





Part B Questions

Part B answer template

Introduction: Provide a brief summary of question demand and outline for and against arguments. State your stand on the topic and why (*max 4 sentences, not necessary if insufficient time*)

Body paragraph 1: Explanation of for argument, elaborated and explained in relation to the question (*min 1/3 page long*)

Body paragraph 2: Explanation of against argument, elaborated and explained in relation to the question. Make sure you highlight the basis for this opposing viewpoint (*min 1/3 page long*)

Conclusion: State your stand and justify why you came to that conclusion after evaluating the for and against arguments. (E.g Root cause, Long-term/Short-term impact) (*min 1/3 page long*)

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Writing a strong body paragraph

Structure

Point: Write a short and succinct statement that directly answers to the question while mentioning the factor you are explaining

Elaboration: Thoroughly explain the process of the factor you raised, accompanied with evidence

Explanation: Explain how the evidence and your elaboration leads to the outcomes in question

Link: Reiterate the link of your given factor back to the question. Make sure that it must directly answer to the given question at hand

We Can Do It!



Body Paragraph Sample

Note how the evidence here is explained and directly linked to an outcome

Explain how Hitler was able to rise to power in 1933

P: One of the factors that contributed to Hitler's rise to power was the economic instability as a result of the Great Depression.

E: The Great Depression resulted in severe economic crisis in Germany. There was massive inflation which made German currency useless for the average German and about 6 million Germans lost their jobs. This made the German people lose faith in the Weimar government due to its inability to resolve the ailing economic woes of Germany.

E: Effectively, this created conditions favorable for an alternative party such as the Nazi Party to criticize the Weimar government and seize the golden opportunity to sway public opinion through appealing to popular opinion, promising the German people jobs and hope. As a result, the Nazi Party won its largest percentage of votes at the height of the Great Depression.

L: Evidently, the Great Depression created a favorable context for the Nazi Party to exploit to further their political agenda which in turn enabled Hitler's rise to power in 1933.

Note how the link here returns to directly address the question demand

We Can Do It!



Tips and Tricks to becoming a better Writer

- Always read back once you're done writing your content paragraph. Ideally, it should be **crystal clear** such that any layman without having studied history should be able to understand the point that you are trying to drive across.
- **Practice!!** Practice makes perfect and practice allows you to improve your time management. You don't have to practice entire essays, just 1 body paragraph at a time
- By practicing and writing different body paragraphs, you are basically committing them to memory. This enables you to write more quickly in the exam and ace your History paper.
- **Less is more.** Do not fall into the pitfall of overwriting to compensate for your insecurity in your writing. Write concisely and follow the prescribed format. Always remember to be strategic with your time in the examination.

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