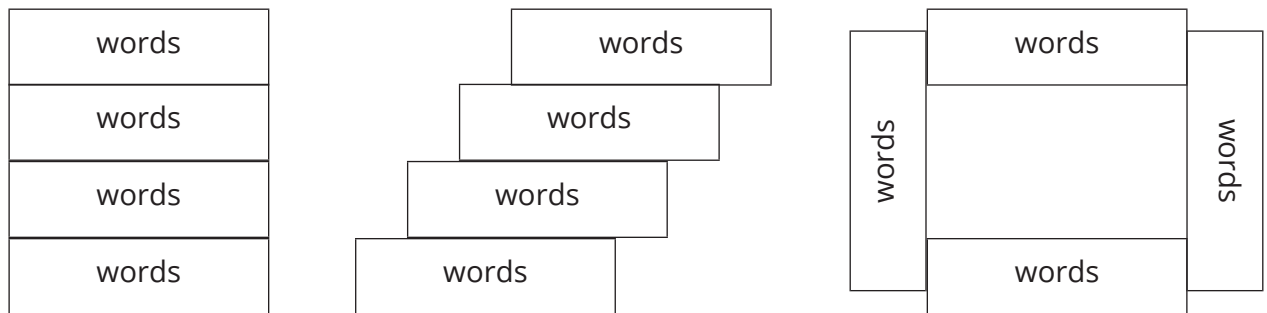


# Step Up Unit 1: AQA GCSE English Language

## Section A - Lesson Four **Structure**

AO2: Explain, comment on and analyse how writers use language and structure to achieve effects and influence readers, using relevant subject terminology to support their views

Question 3 of Paper 1 is dedicated to analysing the structure of the text. What does this mean? How is it different from analysing language? The diagrams below might provide some ideas.



In pairs, define what you think is meant by structure, then share your definitions as a group.

**structure** noun :

### A Place Beyond

She ran her hand over the coarse railings, their cracked paintwork scraping abrasively against her supple fingertips. Once majestic barriers, the sands of time had worn them down to dereliction. Wandering aimlessly, Ayila's hand trailed across the arcs, curves and lumpen adornments, flowing like tributaries and leading eventually to the grandiose gate which she now stood before, her touch lingering on the rose motif at the heart of it. Noticeably smoother than any other part of the perimeter, this floral garland also retained some colour; where much of the oppressive black surface had given way to a silvery grey, the rose flushed an autumnal auburn. She wondered if its coating had been expensive gold leaf. Placing her palm upon this most ornate detail, she slowly enfolded her fingers around it, then suddenly recoiled as she felt its sharp edges prick her flesh.

For the first time on her travels, Ayila felt vulnerable. The gothic façade of the place had not given her pause for thought, so entranced was she with the idea of adventure and a quest that offered much-needed respite from the dreariness of domestic life. That momentary sensation of pain, however, served to remind this ordinary girl that she was sleepwalking into unknown territory. What was her hitherto tedious existence being swapped for?

Fortified by the realisation that there was no returning to the remote land from which she'd come, Ayila reached for the latch and gave it a decisive push. As the rickety gate swung open, the granite gatepost crumbled further, hunks of formerly proud masonry sent tumbling into a shallow grave of upturned soil. With a self-assurance that felt alien to someone who'd been raised to believe



that meekness was a virtue, the bold young woman strode across the boundary, along the gravel pathway and up to the imposing front door. Taking its rusty brass knocker in hand, she repeated her purposeful action with the gate latch, banging it forcefully against the solid oak admission point. Then she waited.

Read the extract **A Place Beyond**. In the space provided, track the journey of the text by writing a summary of each paragraph and signposting the differences between them. It might help you to consider the TIPTOP rules for paragraphing: **T**ime **P**lace **T**opic **P**erson.

Road Map

Signpost shifts

Ti

P

To

P

+

Ti

P

To

P

+

Hints towards past life

Still 3rd person but moves deeper into Ayila's thoughts

Signpost shifts

Ti

P

To

P

+

Paragraph 1	Paragraph 2	Paragraph 3

Start

Finish



### **Extension:**

What might the title suggest about the journey of the text?

What is the effect of the conclusion? i.e. Where does it lead readers to think we might be headed next?

Q3 requires you to analyse the structure. This means going beyond a description of the structure and writing about the effect that it has on the reader.

### **Sample question:**

#### **3. How has the writer structured the text to interest the reader?**

**You may want to write about:**

- **what you are focused on at the beginning;**
- **how the writer changes focus and why;**
- **any other parts of the structure that you find interesting. [8 marks]**

Model paragraph:

The extract begins with the pronoun 'She' and it is only in the third sentence that we learn the character's name is Ayila. This helps to create a sense of mystery as readers wonder who this person is and how she has come to this place. This is reinforced by the fact that we're not told exactly where she is either; the writer focuses in on small details to describe the location, which is also made to seem mysterious. What, for example, caused a 'once majestic' setting to become derelict?

Using the observations that you have signposted, continue the journey by writing a paragraph of your own. Remember that higher marks come from writing about the reader's response to the journey that the text takes them on. You will revisit this paragraph in the next session.