

N5 & HIGHER ENGLISH

UAE – EFFECTIVE OPENINGS & CONCLUSIONS

Past Paper Questions (N5)

National 5 2015

Explain fully why the first paragraph (lines 1–4) is an effective opening to the passage as a whole.

National 5 2017

Select any expression in lines 60–64 and explain how it contributes to the passage's effective conclusion.

National 5 2018

Look at lines 56–64. Select any expression from these lines and explain how it contributes to the passage's effective conclusion.

Past Paper Questions (Higher)

Higher 2015

Read lines 56—63.

Evaluate the effectiveness of the final paragraph as a conclusion to the writer's criticism of industrial farming.

Higher 2016

Read lines 1–5.

Analyse two ways in which the writer attempts to engage the reader's interest in the opening paragraph.

General Advice

- *What* is the introduction/conclusion saying, in relation to the ideas of the whole passage?
 - Ideas in own words and explain how they relate to the passage as a whole.
- *How* is the writer expressing themselves in the introduction/conclusion?
 - Analysis of techniques
 - Sentence structure
 - Tone
 - Word choice
 - Imagery

Effective Introductions

- *What* is it saying?
 - Introduces the key idea of the passage?
- *How* is it saying it?
 - Techniques that engage the reader.
 - Rhetorical questions? *Makes the reader think.*
 - Short sentences or minor sentences? *Dramatic effect; attention grabbing; perhaps abrupt; perhaps comes at the end of the paragraph to emphasise a key idea.*
 - Single sentence paragraph? *Dramatic effect; attention grabbing; perhaps helps to emphasise a key idea.*
 - Use of 2nd person, 'you'? *Directly addressing the reader to engage them effectively.*
 - Colon? *Creates dramatic pause, emphasising key idea.*
 - Repetition? *Emphasises a key idea.*
 - Informal or humorous tone? *Engaging opening.*

For Example

Imagine you woke up this morning on a dirt floor. Lying beside you are your four sleeping siblings, but you don't want to wake them yet because you know they are sick and need to rest. But you must rise. You have a long walk ahead of you and it is best to make it before the sun is high and the day hot. You stifle a cough as you step out of your straw round house and wonder if you too are getting sick. But you push the thought away, knowing that even if you are the 8 mile walk must still be made, as it must be made every morning, to collect the one thing you need most of all: clean water.

- Use of second person 'you'.
- Engages the reader in the opening story by directly addressing them.
- Colon – '...most of all: clean water.'
- Creates a dramatic pause emphasising the introduction of the passage's key idea.

For Example

Plenty more fish in the sea? In a world plagued by overfishing the old saying has never sounded so hollow. But what can be done to save our oceans? The answer, it turns out, is simple, but not easy. Eat less fish.

- Opens with rhetorical question – “Plenty more fish in the sea?”
- Engages the reader immediately, calling into question the validity of a well-known expression.
- Short sentence – “Eat less fish.”
- Emphasises the central argument of the whole passage, especially so as it comes at the end of the opening paragraph.

Effective Conclusions

- *What* is it saying?
 - Sums up the key ideas?
 - Returns to a key idea?
 - Returns to the same place/idea as the opening?

Effective Conclusions

- *How* is it saying it?
 - Techniques that highlight key ideas to the reader.
 - Rhetorical questions? *Leaves the reader with something to think about; emphasises that the issue is hard to resolve.*
 - Short sentences or minor sentences? *Dramatic effect; perhaps emphasises a key idea.*
 - Single sentence paragraph? *Dramatic effect; perhaps helps to emphasise a key idea.*
 - Use of 2nd person, 'you'? *Addresses the reader, perhaps to challenge them on the issue directly.*
 - Colon? *Creates dramatic pause, emphasising key idea.*
 - Repetition? *Emphasises a key idea.*
 - Informal or humorous tone? *Memorable ending; perhaps in keeping with the tone of the whole passage.*
 - 'If... then...' or 'Perhaps...but...' or similar structures? *Emphasises complexity of problem? Offers a way forward?*

For Example

Now imagine this: tomorrow morning, you wake up on the same dirt floor. Your four siblings sleep beside you, but they are not sick from preventable waterborne diseases, and you do not have to sneak out away before sunrise to search for something safe to drink. Half a mile from your straw round house there is a community run borehole, and behind you there is a full tank with more water than your family can drink in a week. You smile and go back to sleep.

- The final paragraph ends in with a similar imaginary situation as the opening, but now it has been transformed by easy access to clean water. This emphasises the amazing difference that this single change makes and provides a satisfying conclusion to the article.
- Final thought of someone contentedly snoozing provides a hopeful ending to the passage that is in keeping with the optimism of the writer throughout, shown in expressions such as “This can change...” and “Relief is coming...”

For Example

At the end of the line, however, is us, the consumer. We can't go on wringing our hands about the state of our oceans, while tucking into the fish and chips we bought without asking basic questions of sourcing and sustainability. We can't pretend that we're serious about overfishing, if we're not serious about our overconsumption of fish. We can't change the world, if we're not prepared to change ourselves. Disconnecting our values from our behaviour is self-deception. Our oceans will pay a dreadful price if we continue to fall for this trick, hook, line and sinker.

- Repetition – “We can't... We can't... We can't...”
- Emphasises the challenge the writer gives to the reader in the final paragraph to alter their habits, a fitting conclusion to the passage as this has been emphasised throughout.
- Use of fishing metaphor – “hook, line, and sinker’.
- Just as a greedy fish would be completely fooled by the fisherman's bait and swallow the whole fishing tackle, ensuring that it is caught, so our greed makes us too easily tricked into thinking that we don't have to change to save the oceans. This is a fitting way to conclude the passage because it explains the writer's main idea using a fishing metaphor.