



GCSE ENGLISH LANGUAGE UNIT 3: DESCRIPTIVE WRITING

The Descriptive Writing task in Unit 3 is worth 7.5% of the subject award and is marked out of 20. The mark given for each of the examples provided is supported by comments related to the criteria given in the specification for (i) Content & Organisation; (ii) Sentence Structure, Punctuation & Spelling. A notional grade is indicated in each case, based on the way that the same mark scale for Writing has been used in the past, and consistent with the uniform mark scale which will be used in the future to report results. However, it is important to note that in practice grade boundaries are determined when units are awarded, and that prior to this individual students' marks are subject to internal standardising and external moderation.

A School lunch hall

(Please note that this descriptive task is not available for the 2012 entry)

Condensation slides its way down the window, leaving behind it a ribbon of smooth, murky darkness. The sheer suffocating heat and humidity inside suggests the number of drenched bodies seeking refuge from the relentless onslaught of rain. In one corner, a single teacher loses the battle to restrain a group of shouting children and is swamped in a wave of uniformed bodies. Buzzing with anticipation, their instincts triggered by the promise of food, the mass of children charges past him into the canteen. Dragging back some small measure of control, he finally manages to stem the flow and continues to thin out the crowd at a steadier pace with many jealous glances towards the table where several of his fellow teachers lounge, indulging in a few sweet, children-free minutes.

As the room fills, the shouts, yells and vague discussion coming from the hoard of tatty teenagers rise to a pitch and volume that could shame a football crowd. Wanting to live up to their reputation, the children continue their barrage of sound, undeterred by the half-hearted efforts of their teachers. Finally, however, as the initial rush of eager bodies reduces, the disruption falls to a minimum and the children split off into groups.

At the centre of one such gathering sits a rather plain girl putting up with the unwanted attention of several of her social superiors. She is clearly used to this type of bullying, and she continues her meal in silence. Finally bored with watching their comments bounce off the girl without effect, the group turn their attention to a table surrounded by an invisible force field apparently coming from its dozen or so occupants. This group seems to reject any lesser being that attempts to come within three feet of their sacred ground. This creates a ring of admirers who look up to the mixture of reputation and charisma within.

Those teenagers within this bubble of admiration seem to have no intention of letting any others into the group. Enough gold and fake diamonds to replicate the entire crown jewels covers the same uniforms that seem to repel any similar attempt by any other pupil. One particular girl, smiling with all the dazzling intensity of a chat show host, is obviously a new addition to the group. Ecstatic at her place in this most sacred of circles, she looks down from the Mount Olympus of the dinner hall at the insignificant drones beneath her, attempting to display some of the haughty dignity of the established members of the gang.

As the initial lure of the dinner hall lessens, several of the hardier students decide to brave the weather outside and leave the overcrowded, damp stuffiness to those willing to endure it for its relative comfort and the knowledge that hours spent on hair will not have been in vain. Suddenly a loud crash echoes around the hall bringing most of the children out of their relaxed stupor. For once the whole student body is united in hilarity, all eagerly scanning the three-hundred or more people for the guilty party.

The culprit (a minute, year seven boy) stands next to the offending pile of broken china and, as several of the older students begin to whoop, proceeds to flush a deep red as he prays for an escape from the blinding spotlight. Unfortunately, the hole in the ground fails to appear for him as it has failed so many others in similar situations and he is left at the mercy of hundreds of delighted teenagers.

Finally, the yells subside, quelled by steely glances from several of the teachers, and they are replaced by the ominous tinny chime of the bell, forcing all the children out into the merciless rain.

Commentary

This student confidently fulfils the requirements of the descriptive task. The individual scenes are well observed and the whole piece is structured around a sensible time frame. SSPS aspects are handled with assurance and the vocabulary is extensive. This work deserves a mark of 20.

The Scene at a Funfair

Dazzling those around, the bright lights flash, almost blinding any who dare to look their way. The cacophony of sounds, each clashing horribly with the next, is almost deafening. The acrid taste of diesel fumes burns the back of the throat of anyone who gets too close to the rickety Teacup ride.

A group of excitable toddlers are being herded along by over protective mothers - bobbing along like brightly shining Chinese lanterns. One lags behind, gazing wistfully at the waltzers, while his mother tries to persuade him to go on the Teacups.

Teenagers are huddled on a corner, one clutching his can of lager like a newborn son. Another crushes his can beneath his foot and lobs it over the heads of the unsuspecting crowd. He is oblivious to his girlfriend, whose face is tearstained, as she shouts at him. "I can't believe you," she cries, hurls her last insult, and storms away, quickly followed by a small group of girls. They spend the rest of the evening throwing dirty looks at the boys, none of whom seem to care.

Spinning faster and faster, the waltzer's occupants scream hysterically. "The louder you scream, the faster we go," an impersonal voice claims on the intercom. As the ride explodes with noise, the operator yawns and throws a lever. Outside his soundproof hut the ride accelerates, then, climax over, it slows and stops. The controller stumbles out of the box and lets the flushed people off of the ride. Some go straight to the back of the queue, others teeter off, stumbling over their own feet.

Gritting his teeth, a man in the car park presses the accelerator to the floor, but to no avail. The grass is unrecognisable under all of the mud that has been churned up by the cars that have been coming and going all day. His face reddens as the wheels spin, spraying mud on to a shiny red Ferrari that someone was unsuspecting enough to bring. People are pointing and laughing and the owner of the Ferrari is shouting. Finally, someone is helpful enough to push him on his way and he leaves at top speed, without even bothering to say thank you.

On the rollercoaster, a young girl screams, while her older brother looks almost ready to fall asleep. Her best friend in the seat behind is looking slightly green and is very much ready to go home. The little girl whoops even louder at the top of a precipice and tries to get her brother to do the same. He is not going to comply, however, as he has resolved to never take his sister to a funfair again as she is embarrassing him.

Tantalizing wafts of delicious scents pour from the hotdog stalls and burger vans, enticing the weak willed civilians to sample their goods. Mothers turn out their pockets for enough to buy the over priced food for their screaming toddlers. Teenagers squabble over who owes who money, and the girl who split up with her boyfriend is treated to a hotdog by her friends.

Commentary

This description is accurate, has good details, and is written in the third person which is probably the best way to attempt it. The student takes a non-narrative approach using impressive vocabulary which is not overdone. Towards the end it becomes a little fragmented but the last few lines tie up with the opening, referring to the toddlers and teenager, though these references could be more explicit. There is a good range of well-chosen vocabulary and the description has some life and energy. The SSPS element is strong and suggests a secure grasp of the mechanics. This is good quality work and deserves a mark of 18 (12+6), notionally just into A*.

The Beach

Carefully choosing their places among the sea of sunbathers, the new arrivals to the beach lay down their towels on the glistening sand as a red-faced toddler chants, "I want ice cream, I want ice cream!" as he passes the multicoloured van with his already exasperated mother.

Shops and cafés line the beach, a cool summer's breeze wafting the savoury scent of hotdogs and burgers towards beach-goers and tourists, tempting them to buy the delicious treats. Seagulls circle the beach like vultures, occasionally pouncing on an empty crisps packet or fallen ice cream, only to be scared away by intrigued children or angry parents.

Lounging on their luxurious houseboats, the wealthy residents of the marina gaze out to sea, watching the gentle waves move against weathered rocky outcrops. On one of the larger houseboats, a family of five dine on a bronzed lobster talking happily to each other.

Scuttling along the sea-stained sand, crabs of all shapes and sizes frantically make their escape from determined rock poolers. Wielding her flimsy pink net, a young girl of around five perches on a boulder, laughing joyously as she scatters shrimp and prawns alike.

Staring happily at his collection of shells, a young boy laughs as the waves lap at his feet.

Ice cream in hand, his mother watches him lazily from under the cheap, colourful umbrella.

As if on a mission, a younger boy of around three digs at the sand, sweating as the sun beats down on him.

On a cliff, high above the beach, stands an aged man, grimacing at the inferior beings below. Clad in a huge overcoat, heavy black boots and a scarf wrapped around his neck, the greying individual turns and begins his journey home.

Carelessly floating on a pair of lilos, two teenagers talk ceaselessly - breaking out in laughter and falling off their bright pink lilos every so often. The scent of hotdogs makes them hungry as they drag their lilos to the shore, intent on coercing their parents into opening their wallets.

Rain begins to fall on the beach, awakening sunbathers and scattering beach goers. As people start to pack up and leave, the rain grows heavier, causing bikini-clad girls to scream and take cover under umbrellas and food stalls. Engines roar in to life, and the beach is completely empty.

Commentary

This work is accurate and stays on task. A number of scenes are considered in a 'zoomed in' and clear fashion but the work is the rather fragmented. The structure and links could be better. However, the accuracy is impressive and this deserves a mark of 16 (10+6), notionally grade A.

The scene at a funfair

As the ground, caked in thick, slushy mud, vibrated, crowds swarmed like ants. Thumping through the rides, a myriad of sounds boom through the speakers; passers by are sub-consciously moving away from speakers as if in a trance.

One little boy, with chestnut locks, ivory skin and frightened, emerald eyes, stands shivering in a corner. As a rowdy bunch of drunken lads shove past, his small, soft, blue teddy bear is knocked out of his hands. Scared still and speechless, he begins to wail even more heartily. His hands clutch tightly to his dummy, his knees are cutely knocked and his toes pointing inwards. Slowly, snot trickles down as his face begin to sweat slightly.

Meanwhile, a blond teenager, dressed in a skimpy top and high heels like stilts, eats her generously filled chip butty with a bored expression. Boys surrounding her are childishly goofing around and she sighs deeply. Her shoulders are slumped forward, her elbows perched on her crossed legs and her lipstick smudged. She isn't noticed by anyone around and slumps off sulkily.

Bright lights pierce through gaps between rides and children are momentarily blinded. Couples kiss passionately, children gape in awe, girls gleefully giggle and parents protectively cling to their children.

A couple are striding towards the hotdog stall, allured by the tempting aroma. Gently, the man guides his girlfriend while fishing out his loaded wallet. He lifts his chin to smell the delicious tantalizing smell of hotdogs and grins. Hungrily, he licks his dry lips and smacks them together. Leaking out, fatty smells enclose customers and circle them almost tempting them to leave without paying.

Trapped by cold, steel bars people are locked into rides and pushed against the hard, chipped plastic seats. Kids squirm. Uncomfortably, they wriggle around until noticing the thrilling view of the funfair. Gasping in true amazement, a scrawny girl - with two French plaits - points and cries, "Oh mama! Look there!" in her high pitched, squeaking voice. A mammoth of a woman, dressed in pink, replies smiling and tugs her back as if afraid her most precious treasure may fall.

Commentary

In this piece, the student is perhaps too ambitious with the vocabulary which results in the description having a slightly forced feel to it. Some sections, for example those relating to the little boy and the teenage girl, are not clearly linked to the task. Nevertheless, the work is competent and interesting. The student could have given it more shape – returning to the little boy at the end perhaps. As it stands, it seems to be a bit fragmented with a number of free standing sections. Still, this is good work and deserves a mark of 15 (10 +5), notionally B.

The scene at a funfair

The fair was shining with all the lights gleaming and glinting in the night sky. Every stall and ride was a buzz with excitement. The sound of laughter filled the air as a jolly old man was dunked into a pool of ice cold foul smelling gunge by a cocky teen having a night out with his girlfriend. The texture of the cotton candy that tasted oh so sweet in your mouth as you greedily scoff it down. Every time a prize was won by a small child, having the time of his life, you could see the delight on his face while he hugged his new novelty bear.

The line for the helter-skelter was nearly out of the entrance booth as one by one a small girl or boy would come wizzing into view on the tatty, worn out rug that was then passed along to the next person in the line. A tall and lanky girl made the twenty foot climb up the stairs to continue the cycle. Down she went, the view un-noticed by dripping eyes as she accelerated down. Safely landing at the bottom, she handed over the rug and raced to the back of the line.

Over at the hook a duck stall, prizes were going like hot cakes. Every lucky person bagging one of the bigger prizes, while every unlucky person won a smaller and less enjoyable prize. One boy, about sixteen, hanging out with his friends was teasing a certain duck with the long metal pole that was there. "Here ducky, come to daddy, come on ducky." He tempted but, being made of plastic, the duck did not respond and carried on drifting away lazily to the other side of the pond. Accusing the game of 'being fixed' he stomped off throwing his Hello Kitty doll to the dirt.

The fair was now packed with eager children, tugging on their parent's arms to get them a hot dog or let them go on the ghost train or... well you get the picture. Gambeling dads bet on the 'test your strength games' and anxious mothers kept a vicelike grip onto the utterly bewildered children by their sides.

A gang of hooded teens had just been allowed entry to the park. and immediately ran behind the bouncy castle and lit up their cigeretes, gingerly puffing out smoke to impress each other. One started to cough and wheeze as he drew in and almost immediately collapsed to the floor. The majority of the boys laughed but the smartest of them all whipped out his phone and, dailing 999 he summoned an ambulance to rescue the choking boy and another rang his mother, who was their faster than the ambulance, to smother her son and give him, and the others, an earful about why smoking is bad as the sound of the siren vanished into the buzz and excitment of the continued fair ground fun.

Commentary

In places this description becomes a little generalised and the end is over-dramatic and moving towards narrative. A number of the details could have been developed more fully. The inclusion of the speech fragment is good and adds life to the description. The piece is not overlong but contains a lively view of the situation with some respectable vocabulary. SSPS aspects are generally sound though there are a number of spelling errors and the occasional verbless sentence. Nevertheless, the work deserves 14 (9+5), notionally B.

Fun Fair

It was early evening when I first approached the fun fair. It was full of life and everyone was laughing and smiling. Lights lit up the dark sky. There were queues around the main stalls, forming a snake shape so people could get past.

In one corner of the park was a sweet stall. It had everything from gum, sweets and chocolates to slushys! Kids were crowding around so they could get first pick of the sugary goodness, climbing over and pushing each other like a group of wild apes fighting for the last banana. They waved their hotly clenched money in their hands looking for attention. The older people looked on in disgust at their greed.

To the right was the ultimate fun fair ride- the Bumper cars with the sound of bangs when they hit each other, the screeching of the tyres. Parents with their children laughed as they were shoved and jolted from side to side. Standing in the corner was a tall boy, with dark spiky hair and big brown eyes. He wore ripped jeans and an old top and looked really bored and day dreamy as he was exchanging money so people could go for the bumper thrilling fun. Walking further up, I could hear screams from the Ghost Train which was clearly being enjoyed by the daredevil groups of teenage boys determined to frighten their petrified girl friends. Further on, excited children queued for the Helter Skelter each receiving a mat before rushing up the stairs to slide down cheered on by doting parents. Many returned to the queue wanting to repeat the experience.

In the distance was a stall of hot food. The smell of bacon sandwiches invited me in. As I approached the stall I could hear the sizzling of the bacon. Cuts of chicken and turkey were ready to be served as the hunger driven people to desperately feed their appetites.

Commentary

The main problem with this piece is brevity. However, the student draws some interesting pictures and the vocabulary is varied and appropriate. The approach is a little narrative driven which is often the case when the first person is chosen but there are some detailed sections to the work. The SSPS aspect is strong. This balances the relative brevity a little to result in a mark of 13 (8+5), notionally C.

Railway Station

Great white pillars guard the entrance to the railway which hold hand crafted iron gates, that have been there since the place has been built, now rusting under the attack from rain.

Chaotic noises fill the inside: the quick paced footsteps of travelers searching for their train or train times and the frantic voice of the tannoy alerting people where to go. Ammoungst the myriad of confused people, there stands a frail old lady, her hair a delecate grey colour like when, on a cloudless night, the moon shines upon water. Glasses perched on nose, she scans the plethora of train facts and figures to try locate the stand where her train is. To the right of the old lady, next to an out of date dull red phone box, there sits a sleepy beggar who smells like a unpleasant concoction of alchohol and vomit. Grasping his cup, the man pleads for spare change from passers-by. Speech slurred, noone understands him and they walk quickly on by. The sadness which the beggar is feeling at this point intoxicates the room like ink in water.

Later on as the day draws to a close, the once busy station is now a ghost town. Rail workers pack their bag and return to loving familys whereas for the night watchers the day has just began. The sun climbs down turning everything orangy chrome colour and short sharp breezes continue to turn the litter into the only thing bieng heard. In the distance, a final train, probably with no more than 20 people on it, can be spotted. Mice dart from shadow to shadow quite noticably yet sneakly. The station now waits for another day of people to come.

Commentary

This is an ambitious piece in terms of the vocabulary used but sometimes the student over-reaches a little making it slightly artificial. Occasionally, words are misused ('...intoxicates...'). The expression is also awkward in places ('*Great white pillars guard the entrance to the railway which hold hand crafted iron gates, that have been there...*') The detailed descriptions of the old lady and the beggar are good but there are a number of errors within the piece with simple words misspelled ('*ammoungst*', '*delecate*', '*bieng*' etc.) and also an agreement error ('...*pack their bag...*'). It is also brief. All in all, balancing the ambition with the brevity and errors this work deserves 12 marks (9+3), notionally C.

Funfair

Carnival chaos causing crazy cookey corruption fills the frantic atmosphere whilst bundles of smiling, exhilarated faces shiver at the ear-wrenching, spine tingling screams which escape the living nightmare which is the horrific House of Horrors.

A myriad of peaceful melodic music echoed smoothy from the merry-go-round, soothing the manic emotions which uplifted the firey fair. Panting, plastic ponies aimlessly drifted around the multi-coloured stage, each individual taking its turn to be admired by envious children.

Immense, electric lights frantically flash, spin, turn tumble then rapidly change, shooting into the ebony black sky, mascarding as silver colonies of shimmering stars. Like a moth to a flame, the hyponotized audience pushed, shoved and grasped at the magical illusion the merry-go-round was creating, intising them to experience the adreniline which pumped through their veins, keeping the ride alive. The essence of sweet rippling candy-floss hinted the air, distracting the hyperative families. A plump, peachy women smiled whilst she elegantly coiled and twisted the fluffy concoction around a stick, playfully perfecting the sugary mixture.

Commentary

This piece is too brief. Clearly the student is able but the overall effect of the writing is not convincing. The ability to use ambitious vocabulary is a valuable asset but it must be used with restraint. In this piece, it is clear the student is determined to make the prose as dense as possible. This has a negative affect disengaging the reader who is left wondering why candyfloss should be '*rippling*' and why faces should be described as '*bundles*'. '*Myriad*' of '*music*' also sounds strained. The student is too consciously trying to show the width of the vocabulary choices available without always thinking about which words are the most suitable. Hence, the work becomes over-rich and artificial. This is not an uncommon problem in descriptive writing and students are best advised to be as realistic as possible. The work should remain natural. In addition, this piece is fragmented and has no clear structure. The SSPS aspects are by no means perfect and there are number of errors. This piece is just worth a mark of 11 (7+4) given the brevity and the occasional confusion, notionally D.

Beach

The huts lay across the path like a giant Rainbow in the sky. All different colours, the sheds sitting silently; staring out too sea in content. Each shed lay in perfect distance apart; never were there two colours the same.

People, families and couples gently passed. Admiring their beautiful beach. The smiles on their faces showed how proud they were to say that this wonderful place belonged to them.

Families often wandered past; raising their index finger and pointing out to the unique blue sea, showing their children that there was a wonderful world out there.

Childrens faces gleamed! as if father christmas had come early, their faces lit up as if they had never seen a beach like this before. But they were right, they haddent.

The beaches sand always seemed to be silky smooth. As if someone had sat out late and night had made the same into complete perfection. Butterflies were always around, flying gracefully without a care in the world. Beautiful colour they were, bright shocking blue ones landed within close distance and passed slowly; like they knew no harm would come upon them.

Couples would lay down on the beach together, holding hands. It was as if their bodies sank into the thick sand as soon as they sat down. Hand in hand they would just sit and watch life go by. Smiling into complete nothingness, but the glistening shore and the tight clench of each others palms.

Further down the beach. Mayhem struck; tiny children clenching onto their buckets and spades whining at their worn out looking parents to move faster. Sandcastle off all heights, shapes and sizes lay across the small section of the beach with their creators towering over them no one dare too knock them down.

Inside the cafe gazing out of the windows were stressed out mothers, taking time out. They stopped every few seconds too check every thing was okay; and when they saw there children playing in complete content. They would swivel their heads round and sip on their tea. Only to be forced to gaze again from that steamed out window, trying to make sure every thing was in place. The smells of strong coffee floated in the air. Women buying cookies for the dribbling children. Sitting anxiously waiting to dig there gritty nails into the soggy cookies. As the cookies were laid out directly in-front of them mums would whisper 'now what do you say' and the children with confused faces would answer with hesitation, 'Thank you. Mum'. After this there was no stopping the greedy animals, as they dug their claws in and made all signs of food scarce.

The blissfull beach has lots of amazing views. This beach is my home.

Commentary

The student tries very hard with this piece and it is clear that she has grasped the basic idea of looking at detail closely. The shaky sentence construction and other errors (*Childrens faces gleamed! as if father Christmas had come early.*) are worrying. There are a number of verbless sentences too (e.g. lines 2-4) which reduce the overall effect. Spelling is sometimes wayward (*'haddent', 'there children'*) but the content is quite reasonable and it is a good length. The final paragraph adds little to the essay as a whole. This essay is a perfect example of a piece where, if the mechanics had been correct, it would be easy to award a C grade. However, the SSPS aspects are so weak (particularly the problem with verbs) that a lower mark of 10 (7+3) – notionally D – must be given.

Railway Station

I first saw the Train station on a miserable, wet day in London. The stairs leading down to the under ground were Damp and dirty from Peoples foot prints. The handrail was even more gritty, There was chewing gum underneath, Old Train ticket stuck to the bottom and Spray paint along it.

The smell was unbarable, it smelt like 3 month old curry and garlic mayonise. When you open your mouth you could even taste the curry.

The sound of the station was seriously terrofiing, The sound of Rumbling train tracks, screeching breaks and the muttering of Thousands of people entering the Train Station.

In the corner there were some young dancers Busking for money. One of them was wearing a strange hoodie with a zip going all the way up to the top of the hood. The Sound of the music was getting quiter as the big crowd of Buisness men and women were scampering to get a Seat on the train. As the train arrived the sound of thumping feet got louder as more People came down the stairs.

As the seconds went by more and more people arrived and left, then a fight broke out. The fight lasted for about 5 minutes until a police Man came and arrested both of the boys. Then there was a quiet muffled voice saying "welcome to london my Italian Friend".

The sound of sirens got quieter and quieter as it drove away into the distance. Then there was a cry of laughter as a young girl was getting tickled by her dad. A beam of happiness shone from her smile, the world is full of kindness for her but for us it is full of war and hate

Commentary

This is a good try from a student of obviously limited ability. He has included a variety of detail with some attempt at development (e.g. in the first paragraph) and the contrast of the sirens with the girl's laugh at the end is pleasing. The problem is, of course, the mechanical aspect. He tends to use capital letters indiscriminately and comma splices abound. However, it's not a bad length and covers some ground, fulfilling the requirements of the task. A mark of 9 (7+2) – notionally E – does not seem unreasonable.

The scene at a fun fair

Brightly, the lights beam of illuminous hot pink, baby green and blinding yellow. The music booms like an elephant running through a forest. Then another flash of illuminous colours. Walking through the rusty, pyramid-shaped entrance. A whole new atmosphere envelopes you. Peircing, screams of joy and happiness. Reving sounds of rides preparing to zoom away. Music booming out like an elephant running through a jungle and then 'BANG' the ride finishes and the next load is led on.

A little Boy brimmed with happiness. His smile taking over his chubby cheeks. He sprinted over to the big dipper and cwtched on to the front of cart. Anxiously, his mum watched on "be careful and hold on," she yelled. Before he could reply the ride set off. Twisting and turning through all the different obstacles in the ride.-Upsidedown and then back again. 2 minutes later and the ride zoom's back to base. The boy's cheeks little chubby and red now. But his smile still rapidly getting bigger. His mother sighed with relief and glared at her little puff ball son that was nicely wrapped up in his overly insulated coat, with pride.

Looking round, some little children seemed to be engulfed by the magic within these walls. However, a group of teenagers didn't seem to be that impressed. Sitting intimadatingly by the waltzers. There faces bored and unhealthy pale. One smoked a cigarette whilst another gulped 2 cans of lager. Parents stared in awe as to why they were wasting their lifes and influencing littler children into bad habits. An elderly lady timidly walked past them. Chucking a can of larger at her, one of them chuckled away to herself and widened her merry brown eyes to try and take - a rise out of her.

Commentary

There is some ambition in this work and some of the descriptive details are sound. However, the sentence structuring and the mechanics are weak in places and this reduces that aspect of the mark. Also the student twice includes similes which do not work very effectively and this demonstrates the point that it is important any imagery used is appropriate and sensible. Some images become so common (e.g. 'as fast as a cheetah') that they become clichéd. Others are so inappropriate as to be ridiculous. Such approaches will not impress the moderators. This work is worthy of a mark of 9 (6+3), again notionally E. If the student had been prepared to check for incorrect punctuation and sentence structure, the mark could have been considerably higher.

Funfair

Walking towards the fairground was a thrill in itself - One that built with every step. The night was cool but dry; perfect for a great night out! The fair wouldn't be visible until we turned the final corner but already our expectations and the sheer suspense of it all were building to a peak. Sounds were already beginning to pour through the air, "Boom Boom Boom!" and laser lights were lighting up the clouds making them seem somehow unearthly and weird. We were going to have the time of our lives.

London and wow was it big! It shone like a circle of diamonds in the sky. Spangled, bright and vivid. Surely the London eye can't be bigger than this right? How can they transport such huge things on a back of a lorry?

The next thing that we was a glorious warm smell unique to funfairs: a mingling of frying hot dogs, cheeseburgers, fried onions, candyfloss, toffee apples and diesel fumes! This was a delight for the senses.

Commentary

This is brief work. As the student does not actually reach the funfair until the second paragraph (i.e. half way through), there is a problem of relevance as well. The opening of the second paragraph does not make much sense ('London and wow was it big.'). On the plus side, the work is fairly accurate until the final paragraph when the spelling collapses. Brevity, however, remains the main problem since the student has not included a great deal of detail in her work apart from the 'smell' paragraph. This is a major weakness. Ever since descriptive writing became a requirement in the legacy specification, we have suggested that the best approach for the student is to 'zoom in' on detail if he/she wants high marks. This work is worth 8 marks (5+3) – notionally E. Lack of detail, too much time spent on the arrival and brevity are the main problems along with the spelling weaknesses in the last paragraph.

Beach scene

As I look at the beach I can see the rocks with waves crashing against them and I can also see a boat that is lonely as a planet in a black hole and as crooked as a broken photo frame. The sand looks sticky as a swamp and the sky is as grey as my mum's jumper.

I can smell the salty sea. I can smell fish and chips from the van. And I can hear a dog barking down the beach.

I can hear the seagulls squaking and the waves crashing against the rocks and the little children shouting about their sandcastles, I can taste the salt and vinegar in my crisps. I can hear my mum calling me to go and have a picnic.

Commentary

This piece is very brief and often inaccurate. However, it is on task and attempts to convey some of the experiences one may come across on a beach. The student chooses to work through the 'senses' and this does her few favours as the sentence structures are repetitive. There are a large number of errors though sentence demarcation is clear and she attempts some imagery. This is worth a mark of 6 (4+2) – notionally F.