This full-colour workbook helps to prepare students for the requirements of the AQA Key Stage 3 English Language optional test papers. The workbook is structured around the individual test paper questions and skills, with clear explanations, support and activities, enabling students to practise and demonstrate their reading and writing skills in the context of the test paper requirements.
Question 3

Structure

Objectives

● Identify structural features
● Analyse effects of structure

A typical Question 3 might be:

How does the writer use structure to intrigue the reader?

Read the following opening sentence to a novel called Dragon’s Rock and then complete Activity 1:

That day it came for him again.

Activity 1

1. What effect does the opening sentence above have on the reader?

2. What questions might you ask yourself after reading the opening sentence?

3. Do you think this is a good opening for a story? Explain your answer.
That day it came for him again.

He remembered leaning back and resting, and rocking to the motion of the train. And closing his eyes.

The next moment it was upon him, racing like an angry fire through the landscape of his sleep. He ran, gasping for air in the stifling heat of its breath, but it was no good. He was already starting to weaken, starting to give up. And he could feel it drawing closer, closer, roaring its fury after him. Any moment now it would appear, any moment now he would have to face it and suffer for the wrong he sensed he had done it. Any moment now he would—

'The next station will be Exeter St Davids. Exeter St Davids the next station. Thank you.'

He blinked his eyes open, unsure for a moment whether he was still dreaming.

But there was no dragon before him. Only a man watching him over the top of his newspaper.

'Are you all right, lad?'

'What … what do—?'

'You were moaning while you were asleep.'

He looked out of the window at the fields rushing past.

'I’m all right, it’s just … just—'

'A bad dream maybe.'

'Yes,’ he said quickly. ‘A bad dream. And something…’ He stared over the wintry land as far as the horizon.

Something I’ve got to put right.

He closed his eyes once more, but this time resisted sleep. Sleep had become a place of fear, a place where the dragon hunted him; and so it had been since that first fateful visit six years ago. But now he had a chance, to go back and put things right, and start to live again. And perhaps then the dragon would let him be.

He opened his eyes again, ignored the man’s quizzical glance and looked up at the sky, and for a while found his mind drifting away from the dragon. To the farm, the fields, the forest, his nervousness about seeing Toby again; but most of all to the things that had haunted him since that visit. The things he had seen but would never forget.

And one in particular, though he’d glimpsed it for but a second.

The face of a frightened woman.
The main focus of Question 3 is structure and its effect on the reader. The effect of the opening sentence on page 10 is to intrigue the reader, and the writer uses a range of structural features to sustain the effect throughout the extract. The reader wants to find out more about the character of the boy: why he has visions of dragons, what happened six years ago and who was the frightened woman.

Activity 2

Use different coloured pens to highlight the sections of the text on page 11 where the writer has chosen the following structural focus:

- focus on the vision of the dragon
- focus on the inside of the train carriage
- focus on the world outside the window
- focus on the past
- focus on the boy's thoughts.

You will see from your response to Activity 2 that the writer’s focus shifts back and forth. As you read the text, you are first drawn into the private world of the boy’s dream and then suddenly brought back into the train carriage by the voice of the conductor. The writer uses structural features in the text to create a clear contrast between the dream world of dragon nightmares and the real world of travelling on a train.

Activity 3

Answer the following questions about the text on page 11. Make sure you refer to the structure of the text in your answers.

1. How does the writer create a contrast in line 13–14?

2. Why do you think the writer chose to include dialogue in the middle of this extract?

3. What do you think is significant about the boy opening and closing his eyes?

Key term

dialogue
conversation between two or more characters

Top tip

When you are exploring the structure of a text, it can be helpful to think about how a writer might have organized the story differently and what effect it would have had. This may help you to understand why the writer has structured it the way they have.
The writer could have started this story by writing ‘A boy is travelling by train to Exeter to see his friend Toby and has a dream about a dragon, which reminds him about what happened last time he visited’, but it would not have had the effect of intriguing the reader. The writer uses five different structural features to organize the opening of Dragon’s Rock:

- *single sentence paragraphs:* to highlight and dramatize important ideas
- *shift from inside the boy’s head to outside:* to contrast the dream world and reality
- *sudden change in pace:* to thrill and excite the reader
- *switches from third- to first-person perspective:* to help the reader empathize with the boy
- *use of symbolism:* of eyes opening and closing to signal the shift between dream and reality.

When you write your answer to Question 3 in the test, you need to refer to the structural features and their effects, and support what you say with quotations or details from the text. For example, read what one student wrote about a structural feature used in the text:

> The writer structures the opening to the novel by shifting the reader’s perspective from inside the character’s head to what is happening in the world around him. He moves from a focus on the boy’s dream, which is ‘racing like an angry fire through the landscape of his sleep’, to the dull, familiar voice of the train conductor announcing: ‘The next station will be Exeter.’ The focus on the boy’s dream encourages the reader to feel the dragon’s breath, too, and appreciate his fear. The shift back to the train carriage brings the reader back to reality with a sudden bump, interrupting the dream at its climax. Any moment now he would… creating an increase in drama and an anticipation of what the dragon might reveal about the boy.

**Comment on structure**

**Comment on effect**

**Supporting quotation**

**Key terms**

- **climax** the most exciting point in a story
- **empathize** to understand and share someone else’s feelings
- **first-person narrative** a story told from the point of view of a character involved in the action, using ‘I’
- **pace** the speed at which something happens
- **symbolism** the use of symbols to represent something else
- **third-person narrative** a story told by someone not involved in the action, using ‘he’, ‘she’ or ‘they’

**Top tip**

Remember to use subject terminology when you write about structure. Words such as ‘shift’, ‘focus’, ‘contrast’ and ‘climax’, for example, will help you to explain how structural features work.

**Activity 4**

Using what you have learned about structure, complete the following task:

> How does the writer use structure in the opening extract on page 11 to intrigue the reader?

Write your answer on separate paper.
In the Writing section of Paper 1, you are given a choice of two tasks for Question 5. You must choose one of these tasks. Both tasks are creative writing questions, asking you to write either a description or a narrative (a story). They may both be description tasks or both narrative tasks, so you need to prepare for both. One of the questions will have a picture as a starting point for your ideas.

A typical narrative writing question might be:

**Write a story that takes place at night.**

In stories, characters are very important, so to plan your story you could start by creating one or two interesting characters and develop your ideas around them.

For example, you might have an idea for a story about two friends who go to a firework party. To engage the reader, these two friends both need to be interesting, but in different ways. One might be very upset by a family argument and refusing to go home and the other might be showing off and going too close to the fire. The contrast between the characters makes the story more interesting.

**Activity 1**

Develop three interesting characters for your own night-time story by completing the character profiles below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Example</th>
<th>Character profile 1</th>
<th>Character profile 2</th>
<th>Character profile 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jade, 14, schoolgirl</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wants to leave home</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Worried about brother</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hates noise of fireworks</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gets burnt hand from a sparkler</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Key term**

**narrative** a written story or account

**Top tip**

It is the details about the character's life, thoughts and feelings that make them unique and interesting, not the colour of their hair or what they are wearing.
Now you have some ideas for characters, you need to think about how you are going to present them. Read how two students introduced the character of Jade in 50 words, below.

**Student A**
One night, Jade and her friend from school went to a fireworks party. Jade was 14. She wanted to run away because she had an argument with her step-mum, but she was worried about her little brother. She hated the fireworks because of the loud bangs, but she liked sparklers.

**Student B**
Bang! Whizz! Bang... bang... bang! Whooosh! Jade put her cold hands over her ears to block out the noise. She had always hated the sudden bang of fireworks. She wished she had remembered to bring her gloves, but she had left the house still screaming at her step-mum.

Which is more interesting? Student A has included more details about the character, but telling the reader everything at the start is very dull. Student B has used fewer details but has already succeeded in making Jade's character more interesting and believable.

**Activity 2**
In approximately 50 words, introduce one of the characters you created in Activity 1.
Question 3 on Paper 2 is about language. The question will ask you to read one of the two texts again (Source A or Source B) and comment on the way language is used. A typical question you might be asked is:

How does the writer use language to express his thoughts and feelings?

To answer Question 3, you need to identify some interesting choices of language, choose quotations to support your choices and comment on what effect the language has on you, the reader.

Read the text below, which is an extract from an autobiography written by Joe Simpson. It is an account of how he and fellow mountaineer Simon went climbing in South America. Here he describes what happens when he falls down an ice cliff, held only by a rope.

Source A: Touching the Void by Joe Simpson

I hit the slope at the base of the cliff before I saw it coming. I was facing into the slope and both knees locked as I struck it. I felt a shattering blow in my knee, felt bones splitting, and screamed. The impact catapulted me over backwards and down the slope of the East Face. I slid, head-first, on my back. The rushing speed of it confused me. I thought of the drop below but felt nothing. Simon would be ripped off the mountain. He couldn’t hold this. I screamed again as I jerked to a sudden violent stop.

Everything was still, silent. My thoughts raced madly. Then pain flooded down my thigh – a fierce burning fire coming down the inside of my thigh, seeming to ball in my groin, building and building until I cried out at it, and my breathing came in ragged gasps. My leg! ...

My leg!

I hung, head down, on my back, left leg tangled in the rope above me and my right leg hanging slackly to one side. I lifted my head from the snow and stared, up across my chest, at a grotesque distortion in the right knee, twisting the leg into a strange zigzag. I didn’t connect it with the pain which burnt my groin. That had nothing to do with my knee. I kicked my left leg free of the rope and swung round until I was hanging against the snow on my chest, feet down. The pain eased. I kicked my left foot into the slope and stood up.

A wave of nausea surged over me. I pressed my face into the snow, and the sharp cold seemed to calm me. Something terrible, something dark with dread occurred to me, and as I thought about it I felt the dark thought break into panic: ‘I’ve broken my leg, that’s it. I’m dead. Everyone said it … if there’s just two of you a broken ankle could turn into a death sentence … if it’s broken … if … It doesn’t hurt so much, maybe I’ve just ripped something.’
I kicked my right leg against the slope, feeling sure it wasn’t broken. My knee exploded. Bone grated, and the fireball rushed from groin to knee. I screamed. I looked down at the knee and could see it was broken, yet I tried not to believe what I was seeing. It wasn’t just broken, it was ruptured, twisted, crushed …

Activity 1

1. Use a coloured pen to underline words and phrases in the first paragraph of the text non page 32 that are **technical** or to do with mountaineering.

2. Use a different coloured pen to identify words and phrases in the same paragraph that are more imaginative or expressive.

Source A is a non-fiction text – these events happened in real life. Joe Simpson is writing about his own incredible experience. To express his thoughts and feelings, he has used a combination of technical and imaginative language.

The technical language is important because it gives the text authenticity; Simpson wants the reader to believe that it is a real experience. However, the imagery is also crucial because he is describing an experience that is unique and therefore he has to find different ways to help the reader imagine what it was like. One way he achieves this is through his careful choice of verbs.

Activity 2

Choose verbs from the text on pages 32–34 that fit the categories listed below:

1. Violent verbs: ripped, screamed, ____________
   ____________, ____________, ____________

2. Present participle verbs: shattering, ____________
   ____________, ____________

3. Less dramatic verbs: surged, lifted, ____________
   ____________, ____________

Key terms

**present participle** part of the verb used for something that has happened and is still happening

**technical** relating to a particular subject, e.g. mountaineering or mechanics
Question 3 is focused on language and how it has been used. As you can see from Activity 2 on page 33, the writer of *Touching the Void* has a particular focus on verbs. This is because the text is an account of an event based on action: climbing and falling. Read what Student A wrote about the use of verbs in the text on page 32:

**Student A**

The violent verbs are used to increase the sense of drama, while the less violent verbs are used to create a contrast. The writer uses *past tense* verbs, such as ‘kicked’, because the event has already happened, but the present participles have the effect of making it seem as if the action is still going on.

What Student A has written is true, but the comments are all general. There is only one quotation from the text and there are no comments about what effect the verbs have in this particular text. Now read what Student B wrote about the use of verbs:

**Student B**

The writer uses violent verbs, such as ‘ripped’, ‘exploded’ and ‘crushed’ to increase the drama of his fall down the mountain. The word ‘ripped’ suggests a vicious, destructive action, as if some giant power doesn’t care about their fragile human lives and would wrench them both off the mountain, like a wound being gashed open. The word ‘exploded’...

**Top tip**

When writing about the effect of words and phrases, try using similes (‘as’ or ‘like’) to describe the effects, like Student B.

**Activity 3**

Continue Student B’s answer by writing about the effect of the words ‘exploded’ and ‘crushed’.

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As well as using verbs, adjectives and adverbs to help the reader visualize and share his experience, the writer also uses metaphors in the text on pages 32–33. A metaphor is an imaginative comparison and the writer uses them here to describe something abstract. Abstract ideas, such as love, anger or pain, are invisible and therefore to describe them effectively, writers often use imagery. The writer of Touching the Void uses metaphors so that the reader can appreciate the physical pain he feels.

Activity 4
In each of the metaphors below, taken from the text on page 32–33, identify the two things that are being compared.

1. ‘the impact catapulted me Joe is compared to a missile

2. ‘the pain flooded down my thigh’ ______________ is compared to ______________

3. ‘a wave of nausea surged over me’ ______________ is compared to ______________

In the metaphor ‘a fierce burning fire’ the writer compares his pain to fire. This creates a visual as well as a sensory effect. The reader imagines that the pain is like flames creeping down his leg and visualizes the fear vividly. The reader is also encouraged by the metaphor to think of the sensation of ‘burning’, which is something most people have experienced. The writer intensifies the effect by adding ‘fierce’ as if he is being attacked by the fire.

Activity 5
Using all you have learned about language, answer the following question about the source text on pages 32–33:

How does the writer use language to express his thoughts and feelings about the accident?

Write your answer on separate paper.
On Paper 2, the Writing section has only one question, Question 5, and there is no choice of task. Question 5 provides you with a statement on the same theme or subject as the non-fiction texts you have read in Paper 2 Section A: Reading. Your task is to respond to the statement by presenting your own point of view. A typical task might be:

A journalist wrote in a newspaper article: ‘The problem with watching women playing sport is that they are just not as good as men.’

Write a letter to the editor of the newspaper, arguing your point of view on this subject.

The key words in the question have been highlighted to show the **form**, the audience and the **purpose** of the task. These words tell you that you need to set out your response as a letter, using language appropriate for a newspaper editor, and that you have to present your point of view in a strong and forceful way. All the writing tasks in Question 5 have a clear form, purpose and audience.

### Activity 1

Decide whether you are going to argue for or against the statement above. Then add to the spider diagram below with a range of ideas in response to the statement.

- Women in sport
- Women are less competitive than men
- Women’s sport needs more coverage on TV

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**Objectives**

- Select and sequence ideas
- Explore tone and register
- Develop sentence forms

**Key terms**

- **form**: the type of text, e.g. a letter or an article
- **purpose**: the reason for writing a text, e.g. to entertain, to inform or to persuade

**Top tip**

In the test, highlight the key words in the question to help focus your response.
You know from the question on page 42 that you have to write a letter, which means you should start with your address in the top right-hand corner, followed by the date underneath. The letter should be addressed ‘Dear Sir/Madam’ or ‘Dear Editor’ and end with ‘Yours faithfully’ followed by your name.

How you organize your ideas in the letter is very important. The opening paragraph should be a clear statement of your point of view. Each of the next three paragraphs should explore in detail one of the ideas that you have selected from Activity 1. The final paragraph is a chance to reinforce your point of view.

**Activity 2**

When presenting a point of view, it is a good idea to build up your argument and keep your best idea for the end.

1. Put a star next to your three strongest ideas in Activity 1.
2. Number the ideas you have chosen in Activity 1 to show the order you will write about each one in your letter.

When you structure an argument, in a letter or an article, it is important to link your ideas. The connectives you use to make these links help the reader to follow your argument and make them more likely to agree with you. There are connectives to signal that you are building up ideas, such as ‘moreover’, ‘furthermore’ and ‘in addition’. There are also connectives to signal that you are disagreeing with an idea, such as ‘however’, ‘on the other hand’ and ‘in contrast’.

Read Student A’s paragraph below. Notice how Student A uses connectives to link ideas about women in sport:

> Our international women’s teams have had much more success recently than male teams, in rugby, football and cricket. Furthermore, our female sports stars make much better role models than many of the men. It may be true that far more people watch men playing sport on television. However, people don’t have much choice, as there is so little coverage of women’s sporting events.

**Top tip**

It is sometimes useful to include a contrasting argument (as Student A does here) that you can then dismiss to make your own point of view even stronger.