

**GCSE ENGLISH LANGUAGE**

**Exam - Weather (Year 8)**

**TEST PAPER**

1 hour 45 minutes



**INSTRUCTIONS TO CANDIDATES**

Use black ink or black ball-point pen.

Answer all questions in Section A.

Select one title to use for your writing in Section B.

Write your answers on a separate sheet.

You are advised to spend your time as follows:

- Section A
  - about 10 minutes reading
  - about 50 minutes answering the questions
- Section B
  - about 10 minutes planning
  - about 35 minutes writing

**INFORMATION FOR CANDIDATES**

Section A (Reading): 40 marks

Section B (Writing): 20 marks

The number of marks is given in brackets at the end of each question or part-question.

## UK snow: Bad weather? Just old-fashioned winter

It's not so cold this morning – only a couple of inches of ice on the horse-trough. Sunday night however saw the temperature drop to minus 12 or 13 and it required a good 10 minutes' work breaking ice with the heavy hammer to provide water for our horses.

As I write today, the sun is shining and although the temperature is still three or four degrees below zero it feels quite warm. In 10 days or so, we have all become acclimatised to real winter weather. More snow is on the way, or so we are assured, and it will get colder again but does it really matter? The children are happy, for most schools remain closed and so their Christmas holidays are prolonged. People are mostly smiling. "It's just like old times," they say, "a real old-fashioned winter."

It's not so nice for everyone. Many older people have been stranded in their homes with insufficient heating or food. One man was locked out of his house and almost froze to death in his garden. Then there was the woman who set out on December 19 to buy the Christmas turkey, and isn't back yet. She is stranded in a friend's caravan 11 miles from home.

Conditions are not as extreme in cities and towns. Few are stranded in their homes and most are able to reach a local shop. People are sliding and falling on pavements, but no worse than that, though failure to clear or grit pavements has had some citizens threatening not to pay council tax. Others are more philosophical and remember that residents and shopkeepers used to be expected to clear the pavement in front of their homes or premises themselves. Many of those travelling to work are complaining about ungritted minor roads and hazardous conditions. But public transport is mostly running as normal. Only a few roads are blocked.

So it's not as if it's a really bad winter yet, rather a reminder of what winter can be. So far the snow and ice have been with us for little more than a couple of weeks. Back in the Fifties and Sixties, that would have been counted as nothing – at school we were supposed to play rugby after Christmas. We rarely did so, sledging, skating or skiing instead.

In the country we tend to be a bit scornful about the fuss made down south when a couple of inches of snowfall can apparently cause chaos. We don't take full account of the circumstances and those of us who live in country districts where traffic is light at any time probably don't appreciate just what havoc even a light fall of snow can cause in a big city rush-hour.

So who knows? This may be only the beginning of a winter as severe as that of 1947 – the worst of the 20th century – and the whole country may grind to a halt, with supplies of grit and rock salt exhausted, the wrong kind of snow preventing the trains from running and airports closed even to would-be terrorists. Alternatively, we may get a false spring any day, despite what the forecasters say, or the real spring may come early and pleasantly. We just can't tell.

And now I must go out to see if the trough has frozen over again and if the hens' water is in the same condition. There's still an hour of sunlight and the sky is still blue and the temperature dropping – lovely winter weather, for those of us at least who don't have to venture far from home.

(Allan Massie The Daily Telegraph 06 January 2010

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/topics/weather/6939758/UK-snow-Bad-weather-Just-old-fashioned-winter.html>)

## Snow Bound

This is an extract from a travel diary by Isabella Bird who describes her adventures in the Rocky Mountains.

Snow-bound for three days! I never spent a more fearful night than two nights ago, alone in my cabin in the storm, with the roof lifting, the mud cracking and coming off, and the fine snow hissing through the chinks between the logs. All the while splittings and breaking of dead branches, went on incessantly, with screechings, howlings, thunder and lightning, and many unfamiliar sounds besides. After snowing fiercely all day another foot of it fell in the early night, and, after drifting against my door, blocked me in.

About midnight the mercury in my thermometer fell to zero, and soon after a gale rose, which lasted for ten hours. My window frame is welled, and shuts and my bed is six feet from it. I had gone to sleep with six blankets on, and a heavy sheet over my face. Between two and three I was awake by the cabin being shifted from underneath by the wind, and the sheet was frozen to my lips. I put out my hands, and the bed was thickly covered with fine snow. Getting up to investigate matters, I found the floor some inches deep in parts in fine snow and a gust of fine, needle-like snow stung my face. The bucket of water was solid ice. I lay in bed freezing till sunrise, when some of the men came to see if I "was alive," and to dig me out. They brought a can of hot water, which turned to ice before I could use it. I dressed standing in snow and my brushes, boots and etceteras were covered with snow. When I ran to the house, not a mountain or anything else could be seen, and the snow on one side was drifted higher than the roof. The air, as high as one could see, was one white, singing smoke of snow-drift—a terrific sight. In the living - room, the snow was driving through the chinks and Mrs Dewy was shovelling it from the floor. Mr. D.'s beard was hoary with frost in a room with a fire all night. Evans was lying ill, with his bed covered with snow. Returning from my cabin after breakfast, loaded with occupations for the day, I was lifted off my feet, and deposited in a drift, and all my things, writing-book and letter included, were carried in different directions. Some including a valuable photograph, are irrecoverable. The writing-book was found, some hours afterwards, under three feet of snow.

There are tracks of bears and deer close to the house, but no one can hunt in this gale, and the drift is blinding. We have been slightly overcrowded in our one room. Chess, music, and the card game Whist have been resorted to. One hunter, for very ennui, has devoted himself to keeping my ink from freezing. We all sat in great cloaks and coats, and kept up an enormous fire, with the pitch running out of the logs. The isolation is extreme, for we are literally snowed-up, and the other settler in the Park and "Mountain Jim" are both at Denver. Late in the evening the storm ceased. In some places the ground is bare of snow, while in others all irregularities are levelled, and the drifts are forty feet deep. Nature is grand under this new aspect. The cold is awful; the high wind with the mercury at zero would skin any part exposed to it.

(Extract from *A Lady's Life in the Rocky Mountains* by Isabella Bird (first published 1879)  
<https://archive.org/stream/inrockyladyslife00birdrich#page/154model/2up/search/snow>)

**SECTION A : 40 marks**

Answer **all** the following questions.

The extract from 'A Lady's Life in the Rocky Mountains' is by Isabella Bird.

The passage, 'UK snow: Bad weather? Just old-fashioned winter' is a newspaper article by Allan Massie.

**'Read the newspaper article by Allan Massie'**

A1. How long did it take Allan Massie to break through the ice on the horse trough? [1]

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A2. In the second paragraph, Allan Massie says, 'we have become acclimatised to real winter weather'. What does acclimatised mean? [1]

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A3. How far away from home was the woman who 'is stranded in a friend's caravan'? [1]

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A4. List two enjoyable things that people can do during winter weather. [2]

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- .....

A5. Alan Massie lives in the countryside. Explain how you know this. [3]

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A6. How does the writer persuade us that winter weather is not really that bad? [10]

To answer this question, you need to complete the grid below. Try to include 5 details from the text and explain how each detail persuades us that winter weather is not really that bad.

What does he say about winter weather?	How does this detail persuade us that winter weather is not really that bad?

**Read 'A Lady's Life in the Rocky Mountains' by Isabella Bird.**

A7. In the first paragraph, the writer tells us that she is 'fearful'. Explain what happens in the first paragraph to make her afraid? [4]

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A8. List two things that the people do to occupy themselves during the snow storm. [2]

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A9. **Read the second paragraph.** What are your thoughts and feelings about Isabella Bird in this paragraph? [6]

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A10. The two writers in these passages both experience winter weather. **Compare** the following:

- What happens to each writer
- The way that the weather is presented.

[10]

The two tables below may help you to organise your thoughts. You should then write up your answer.

Paragraph 1:

What happens to Allan Massie?	What happens to Isabella Bird?

Paragraph 2:

How does Allan Massie present winter?	How does Isabella Bird present winter?



**SECTION B : 20 marks**

*Answer Question B1*

*In this section you will be assessed for the quality of your writing skills.*

*For this question, 12 marks are awarded for content and organisation; 8 marks are awarded for vocabulary, sentence structure, punctuation and spelling.*

*Think about the purpose and audience for your writing.*

*You should aim to write about 300-400 words for this task.*

**B1.** In recent years we have experienced some very disruptive weather. Weather such as flooding, heatwaves and snow storms has caused problems. What can we do during such extreme weather?

You have been asked to prepare a talk for your classmates. Give examples of where weather has caused a problem and suggestions of what we can do during extreme weather conditions.

Remember to write in full sentences. Do not use abbreviations, text language or slang.

**Write your talk.**

[20]

*The space below can be used to plan your work.*