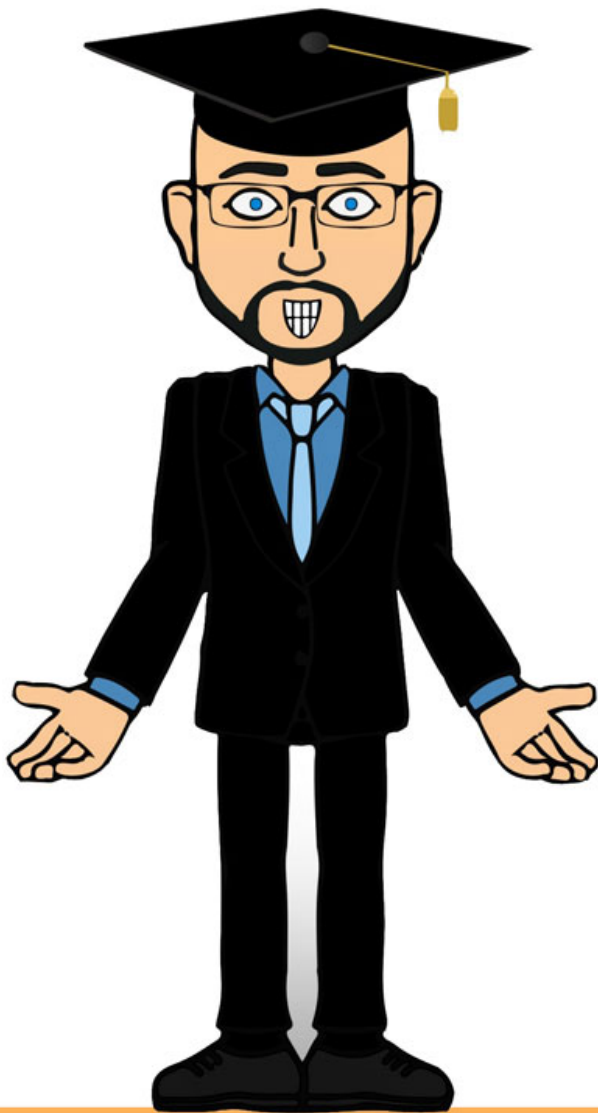


MR Bruff's Guide To

Mr Bruff

ONLINE REVISION

'GREAT EXPECTATIONS'



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SAMPLE

Assessment Objectives & Exam questions:

Several exam boards offer *Great Expectations* as a text for their literature exam.

All the exam boards have the same **Assessment Objectives** [AOs], 1-4:

AO1 Read, understand and respond to texts. Students should be able to: • maintain a critical style and develop an informed personal response • use textual references, including quotations, to support and illustrate interpretations.

AO2 Analyse the language, form and structure used by a writer to create meanings and effects, using relevant subject terminology where appropriate.

AO3 Show understanding of the relationships between texts and the contexts in which they were written.

AO4 Use a range of vocabulary and sentence structures for clarity, purpose and effect, with accurate spelling and punctuation.

What this means:

AO1 – Know the whole story, so that you can mention other relevant events or characters. This is **reference**.

- All the exam boards offer an extract: use relevant **quotes** from there and learn a few key quotes [just phrases] that could be relevant to several questions – character descriptions are particularly adaptable.

- Link what you write to the task set and keep showing how Dickens is achieving a purpose. This is what is meant by '**maintaining a critical style**'. Don't just re-tell the story!

AO2 - language: Discuss **imagery, language** that creates a **mood or** highlights an **attitude** in a character. Mention other **possible interpretations** of the language. Are there a series of **verbs** denoting action, for example, or lots of **adjectives** that emphasise the same thing? When you write about what effect Dickens achieves by using them, you'll be writing about language.

- **form:** *Great Expectations* is a **novel** first written in **serial** form. When you write about the use of **dialogue** in a passage, or detailed **descriptions** being used to slow the pace of a passage, you're writing about form. Are **opposites** being focused on, or does the way the extract is written **contrast** in style with other chapters, for example if characters speak simply, whereas in other chapters they are more verbose [wordy]?

- **structure:** When you say **what came before** your extract or chapter and **what it is preparing the reader for**, you're writing about structure. What effect does Dickens achieve by revealing information in the order he chooses, e.g. building suspense, **foreshadowing** etc. What has **changed** from the start of the extract/chapter to the end, how has the story or character been developed?

A03 – Context is the **background information** that helps the reader **orientate** the story. When you mention things that affect Dickens' work and the reader's response to it, you are writing about context. Only mention contextual information where it is relevant to the task/extract: do not tag it on as a paragraph of facts, only weave it in to explain attitudes or expectations.

If relevant, refer to:

Dicken's own life e.g. his changed financial & social situation, that he'd spent part of his youth in Kent, so knew the marshes well,

the **historical** setting, i.e. Victorian era, and **location** i.e. Kent & London, suggesting how this might influence the story,

social and **cultural** contexts e.g., attitudes in society, for example the way criminals were shipped off to Australia with no hope of returning to Britain, or that women like Estella were expected to make financially advantageous marriages; expectations of different cultural groups, like the fact that the classes were supposed to keep to their own place and dress differently

the **literary** context of the text, for example, literary movements or genres: in the nineteenth century novel the lives of ordinary people are also of interest to readers,

the way in which **texts are received and engaged with** by different audiences, at different times, for example, how a text may be **read differently** in the twenty-first century from when it was written – today the upbringing Miss Havisham submitted Estella to would be illegal in Britain rather than 'romantic'; Pip's change of fortune would not be quite so unusual etc.

A04 – Accuracy and style: this is something to work on well before the exam!

NB There are often no specific marks for A04 in this task, but it does affect the level at which the other AOs are judged, so don't neglect it!

Some tips for improving are:

- **Spell** names **correctly** – learn them, using memory aids if necessary. Also learn the spelling of key terms you will be likely to use, for example 'characterisation'. Breaking words up into their root word, prefix and suffix often helps, as does finding words within words or creating mnemonics.

- **Plan work!** Cluster together ideas that focus on the same thing and order your clusters. Check that what you plan to say does address the question and that you're including some possible interpretations or issues open to debate if you want top marks.

- **Opening** with a **short paragraph** which gives the **'short answer' to the question** – what you'd say if the question was only worth 2-4 marks – is a good way of stating your overarching point, the one you plan to explain and prove. Another effective opening is **placing the extract in its structural context** – say what has just happened in the relevant story thread before this and what the writer is preparing the reader for here.

- **Quote** from the text at least a few times to give **evidence** of what you claim. You can also **refer** to events, putting them in your own words. Do not make up quotes – the examiners know the texts! It is easier to remember some key phrases and words, rather than long quotes. **Embed** [insert] these quoted words and phrases in your sentences, making sure you use **quotation marks** so that they can be awarded marks for being quoted on purpose.

- **Linking** the ‘steps’ of your argument to each other by using connectives [‘However’] or discourse markers [‘Next’] gives your work clarity. It is also vital to link what you write **to the task**, so that it is obvious that what you say actually does engage with the task set.

Wording of questions:

Each exam board [aka awarding body] has its own style, but all provide an extract. If you are unsure whose exam you are doing, ask your teacher. Each board provides an example of how the question will be formulated. There are **examples on the specimen material** supplied by each board to your teacher, which for copyright reasons we can’t quote. However, here is the **type of question** they will ask, this is more or less how they will formulate or word the task:

Read/ Explore/ Use the following **extract** from Chapter of *Great Expectations* and **then answer the question that follows**. In this extract,[*here they briefly summarise that the extract is about*]

The extract that follows is about 15 to 30 lines long.

Starting with this extract, **write about how Dickens presents ideas about ...** in *Great Expectations*.

Write about: • what ... says about ... **in this extract** • how Dickens presents ideas about ... **in the novel as a whole**. [... marks – usually 30; 40; or 20 + 20]

The ‘trick’ is to do your close reading and quoting mainly from the extract - which you have in front of you- linking what you find to the rest of the novel by referring from memory to key characters, moments or examples as you develop your point. However, you may be asked to answer in two stages for 20 + 20 marks. In that case, focus on each stage separately.

Here are examples of other formulations:

- **Explore how Dickens presents ideas about ...** through the presentation of ..., in **this extract and elsewhere in the novel**. [... marks] In this extract,[*here they briefly summarise that the extract is about*]

NB *This exam board is the only one to offer an option that follows a separate form: it has one question that asks you to consider the whole novel, but focus on 2 episodes or ‘moments’ in the novel. No extract is given. This is an optional question, so you do either A or B*

- **Use this extract** to answer Question *Great Expectations*: Charles Dickens. In Chapter[*here they briefly summarise that the extract is about*] The extract follows...

Question – *Great Expectations* (a) Explore **how Dickens presents ...’s thoughts and feelings about ...** in this extract. **Give examples from the extract to support your ideas.** (20 marks)

(b) In this extract, ...’s ... is shown. Explain ... **elsewhere in the novel**. In your answer you must consider: • how... • the effect on ... (20 marks) (Total for Question = 40 marks)

To summarise:

All the exam boards have a question that follows this format in more or less the same way:

- 1] an extract is given, with a brief description of what it is about.
- 2] a question is set about a theme or character in the novel
- 3] you have to use the extract to write about the theme using quotes from the extract – ‘close reading’, then you need to relate what you glean from the extract to the text as a whole – *how does Dickens develop these ideas in the rest of the novel?*
- 4] there are two main types of extract question:

‘How Dickens presents ideas about’ ... - these are **thematic** questions, about themes.

‘How Dickens presents’s thoughts and feelings about...’ the development of ...’s character in the rest of the novel – these are **character** questions.

The next step is to practise some questions, so find a quiet place to work, get pen, paper and some sort of timing device so that you can begin to answer within the time limits set by your particular exam board.

Answering an exam question:

1] Planning:

You won’t cover all the AOs by accident, so make sure you have something to say about each of them from the planning stage.

Use a highlighter to pick out your quotes and annotate the points you’ll make on the extract – you are allowed to write on your question paper.

As you annotate, think of relevant links to the rest of the novel and jot them down too.

This might be a good ‘plan’ format to have in your head (but use what works for you!):

AO – ask what is relevant to...	Extract	Rest of the novel
1 Themes & characters Your opinion - justified Other interpretations		
2 Language Structure Form		
3 Victorian era, Dickens, Difference in attitude of readers then and now...		
4 Check spelling, especially of character names; use correct terms; use PEEL or similar in paragraphs with a clear topic sentence, quoted evidence or references, explanations that explore, expand and analyse as well as evaluate and link your points to the task and the paragraph to the next step in your answer with connectives.		

Let's try planning:

Explore how Dickens presents ideas about social class in this extract and elsewhere in *Great Expectations*.

In this extract from the end of chapter 27, Joe has come to visit Pip in London and the visit has not gone well. Joe is saying goodbye to Pip. As a start, think about:

- what Joe says about social class in this extract
- how Dickens presents ideas about social class in the novel as a whole.

“Pip, dear old chap, life is made of ever so many partings welded together, as I may say, and one man's a blacksmith, and one's a whitesmith, and one's a goldsmith, and one's a coppersmith. Divisions among such must come, and must be met as they come. If there's been any fault at all to-day, it's mine. You and me is not two figures to be together in London; nor yet anywheres else but what is private, and bekknown, and understood among friends. It ain't that I am proud, but that I want to be right, as you shall never see me no more in these clothes. I'm wrong in these clothes. I'm wrong out of the forge, the kitchen, or off th' meshes. You won't find half so much fault in me if you think of me in my forge dress, with my hammer in my hand, or even my pipe. You won't find half so much fault in me if, supposing as you should ever wish to see me, you come and put your head in at the forge window and see Joe the blacksmith, there, at the old anvil, in the old burnt apron, sticking to the old work. I'm awful dull, but I hope I've beat out something nigh the rights of this at last. And so GOD bless you, dear old Pip, old chap, GOD bless you!”

I had not been mistaken in my fancy that there was a simple dignity in him. The fashion of his dress could no more come in its way when he spoke these words, than it could come in its way in Heaven. He touched me gently on the forehead, and went out.

AO – ask what is relevant to...	Extract	Rest of the novel
1 Themes & characters Your opinion - justified Other interpretations		
2 Language Structure Form		
3 Victorian era, Dickens, Difference in attitude of readers then and now...		
4 Check spelling, especially of character names; use correct terms; use PEEL or similar in paragraphs with a clear topic sentence, quoted evidence or references, explanations that explore, expand and analyse as well as evaluate and link your points to the task and the paragraph to the next step in your answer with connectives.		

Now check your work – remember, your ideas may be different but valid; you could also benefit from including some different ideas found here.

Let's check planning:

Explore how Dickens presents ideas about social class in this extract and elsewhere in *Great Expectations*.

In this extract from the end of chapter 27, Joe has come to visit Pip in London and the visit has not gone well. Joe is saying goodbye to Pip. As a start, think about:

- what Joe says about social class in this extract
- how Dickens presents ideas about social class in the novel as a whole.

metaphorical language reflects Joe's trade

Joe's conservative views, reflect early Victorian beliefs about social position.

"Pip, dear old chap, life is made of ever so many partings welded together, as I may say, and one man's a blacksmith, and one's a whitesmith, and one's a goldsmith, and one's a coppersmith. Divisions among such must come, and must be met as they come. If there's been any fault at all to-day, it's mine. You and me is not two figures to be together in London; nor yet anywheres else but what is private, and beknown, and understood among friends. It ain't that I am proud, but that I want to be right, as you shall never see me no more in these clothes. I'm wrong in these clothes. I'm wrong out of the forge, the kitchen, or off th' meshes. You won't find half so much fault in me if you think of me in my forge dress, with my hammer in my hand, or even my pipe. You won't find half so much fault in me if, supposing as you should ever wish to see me, you come and put your head in at the forge window and see Joe the blacksmith, there, at the old anvil, in the old burnt apron, sticking to the old work. I'm awful dull, but I hope I've beat out something nigh the rights of this at last. And so GOD bless you, dear old Pip, old chap, GOD bless you!"

Type of work suggests social class-physical rather than intellectual.

Metaphor reflects Joe's trade.

Repetition of 'old' to denote fondness & familiarity.

I had not been mistaken in my fancy that there was a simple dignity in him. The fashion of his dress could no more come in its way when he spoke these words, than it could come in its way in Heaven. He touched me gently on the forehead, and went out.

Pip's reference to his own snobbery.

AO – ask what is relevant to...	Extract	Rest of the novel
1 Themes & characters Your opinion - justified Other interpretations	- Joe’s wisdom about social class and his place in it: ‘I’m wrong...’ - relationship between Joe and Pip and how Joe is shown to care for Pip	How attitudes towards social class are shown in a different part of the novel e.g. Bentley Drummle’s snide remarks about seeing ‘smithies’ on his ride in the countryside.
2 Language Structure Form	- Use of tools and clothing as metaphors for social position; - word ‘old’ to suggest both fondness and the status quo – Joe’s ideas are the conservative Victorian ones. - Presentation of Joe’s character in this extract, in particular as used to highlight Pip’s snobbery and pretension - Joe’s language, such as how the fluency of speech contrasts with the dialect words and phrasing – ‘off th’meshes’- and highlights his inherent wisdom.	- Compare Pip’s attitudes at this point in the novel to a later point when his character has learned wisdom e.g. when he meets Magwitch - Compare Pip’s treatment of Joe to Estella’s scorn of the young Pip and how differently they re-act: Joe is content to be who he is. - Compare Pip’s treatment of Joe to Matthew’s kindness in teaching him manners without being judgemental.
3 Victorian era, Dickens, Difference in attitude of readers then and now...	- Many Victorians believed God had ordained [intended] your place in society, so it was disobedient to aim higher. - Joe’s feelings about the lack of fluidity of social class e.g ‘sticking to the old work’ - social class was related to work: a gentleman shouldn’t work - Joe’s acknowledgement of Pip’s judgement and how it is formed by his attempt to behave and dress ‘out of his class’	Dickens explores – and had experience of – how money, esp. debt, makes a difference to social status. Matthew is a gentleman, but poverty makes him have to work, whereas Bentley has the money to lead a gentleman’s life, has the position, but not the manners- Orlick could be seen as his low-status counterpart.
4 Check spelling, especially of character names; use correct terms; use PEEL or similar in paragraphs with a clear topic sentence, quoted evidence or references, explanations that explore, expand and analyse as well as evaluate and link your points to the task and the paragraph to the next step in your answer with connectives.		

You won’t have time in an exam to write all this down, but by doing so when you practise, you develop the right habits of thinking. Even annotating the text is less detailed, just write a key word to remind you of your thoughts. So your plan may, in reality, look more like this:

Ao 1 - gulf betw’n classes - J: ‘wrong’ out’ve wrk clothes

2 - lang. - wrk - status ; frm - J’s farewell speech [most he’s said]

3 - Vic atts chng - s. stus god-ordained; evn gentlemen [Matt. P] wk fr liv’n; D’s own life - status shifts...

2] Structuring your answer:

There are three components to your essay -

- a] the short answer – this provides the over-arching point you ‘prove’ in the essay
- b] something to cover each AO
- c] your own thoughts, opinions and possible interpretations, either in conclusion or woven in

Let’s try structuring an essay:

a] Here are 3 possible openings – choose the one you like the most and develop it or write your own:

This extract explores the concept of what a gentleman really is: Joe, with the lower social status, is more of a gentleman in his behaviour than Pip...

OR

Because of his father’s recurring debt and then his own raised status as a famous writer, Dickens understood what it was like to change social class at a time when the prevailing thought was that God had decided what class you should be and you ought to stay there.

OR

In this extract Pip shows how his new status has turned him into a snob and the Pip who narrates the events in the extract now feels very ashamed of his behaviour.

b] Covering the AOs:

AO1 - AO3 : see table above and add your own ideas. Don’t write about the AOs separately, because some things, like ‘I’m wrong in these clothes’ cover several AOs – explore them all as you analyse and evaluate the effectiveness of the quote.

To cover **AO4**, check your work for accurate spelling, clear paragraphing, connectives that make your line of argument clear and embedded quotes.

Here are 3 possible endings – choose the one you like the most and put it in your own words:

3] *I think that Dickens is making Pip’s behaviour echo Estella’s – her snobbery made Pip ashamed of himself, his rough hands and the way he called the ‘knaves’ ‘Jacks’; in contrast, Joe does not feel ashamed of himself, he just sadly realises that away from the common ground of the forge, he and Pip are now divided by their social status.*

OR

This meeting foreshadows Pip’s meeting with Magwitch and I think because of learning his lesson with Joe, Pip is more understanding than he would have been when Magwitch reveals who he is.

OR

Perhaps what makes Pip so annoyed with Joe is that his visit is like a mirror through which Pip sees himself as he must have looked to Matthew when he first arrived in London. Joe reminds him that he is not a true gentleman, merely an overdressed ‘common labouring-boy’.

Now write your essay. Set the time limit your exam board suggests.

Here is an essay written in the time limit of 45 minutes, without a text. Read it and decide how successfully you think it has answered the question. What has been done well, what could be improved? Annotate the AOs you spot and comment on features.

Dickens uses Joe's visit to show what a snob Pip has become, as well as to link the past- Estella's snobbery towards him – with the future: his acceptance of Magwitch as his benefactor is made possible by what he learns from this encounter with Joe.

Just as Pip had to get new clothes for his move to London, Joe has been dressed up – presumably also by Trabb- with ridiculously high points to his collar, for his visit. The obviously uncomfortable new clothes – and his constantly falling hat- become a focus for Pip's resentment of his former companion and a symbol of Joe's efforts to make himself worthy of Pip's new social status. So when Joe says: "I'm wrong in these clothes", he is actually talking about being wrong in London, in Pip's new life and in trying to socialise with a gentleman. Their true friendship, he realises, can only be restored in the forge, where he is "Joe the blacksmith" in the "old burnt apron" at the "old anvil".

The repetition of the word "old" serves two functions. Firstly, it suggests a fondness for the familiar things – likewise evidenced by Dickens's use of metaphors that reflect Joe's trade: partings 'welded', thoughts 'beat out'. But it also emphasises Joe's conservatism- he sticks to the "old" ways. Many Victorians believed that your social status was God ordained and to wish for more was inviting trouble – Biddy and Joe represent this way of thinking. They believe contentment is found by accepting your lot.

However, the Victorian era was also a time of "self-help", when workers were encouraged to learn to read and write to better themselves; Dickens is ambiguous about this: both Pip and Joe learn to read and write, thanks in large part to Biddy.

In addition, Dickens himself had experience of moving from one social status to another- downwardly mobile when his father's debt caused him to have to leave school and work in a blacking factory and upwardly mobile through his own successful career.

Though Dickens's message on social status may be debatable – Joe's story after all has a happier ending than Pip's – it is clear that Magwitch, who has sponsored Pip's rise in status, is able to benefit from the insight Pip has gained through this meeting with Joe.

The forge, the kitchen, the "meshes", "with my hammer in my hand" is where he can be "Joe the blacksmith", in that private world of the two companions that have faced the "tickler". "You and me is not two figures to be together in London", Joe admits, but only because of Pip's own snobbery. Matthew finds no fault with Joe; Pip was once like Joe. So perhaps it is social pretension that Dickens exposes so harshly here. Pretending makes Pip hypersensitive to the social inequality represented by Joe.

In this extract, Dickens has given Joe a long, eloquent speech, which contrasts with the colloquial language he uses and with the character Pip's silence. Pip the narrator, looking back, comments on Joe's dignity. I think Dickens wants us to recognise in Joe's wisdom that he is the truer "gentleman".

Another contrast is between Pip's boyhood reaction to Estella's scorn – he felt deeply ashamed of his social class and therefore uncomfortable at the forge – and Joe's reaction to Pip's scorn. Joe decides to return to where he belongs, ever a friend, never an intruder. When Pip loses his social status as a result of losing his fortune, Joe is there to look after him, to serve. But as Pip recovers, he steps back, content to let Pip find his way in the world.

Maybe what Dickens is showing readers is that social class is shallow: true "class" comes from within. After all, Bentley Drummle and Orlick are two of a kind...

Here is an essay written in the time limit of 45minutes, without a text. Read it and decide how successfully you think it has answered the question. What has been done well, what could be improved?

Over-arching point –clear sense of place in novel’s structure

Clear ‘short answer’

Dickens uses Joe’s visit to show what a snob Pip has become, as well as to link the past- Estella’s snobbery towards him – with the future: his acceptance of Magwitch as his benefactor is made possible by what he learns from this encounter with Joe.

Precise references to support interpretations using subject terminology

Knowledge of text – AO1

Embedded quotes

Just as Pip had to get new clothes for his move to London, Joe has been dressed up – presumably also by Trabb- with ridiculously high points to his collar, for his visit. The obviously uncomfortable new clothes – and his constantly falling hat- become a focus for Pip’s resentment of his former companion and a symbol of Joe’s efforts to make himself worthy of Pip’s new social status. So when Joe say: “I’m wrong in these clothes”, he is actually talking about being wrong in London, in Pip’s new life and in trying to socialise with a gentleman. Their true friendship, he realises, can only be restored in the forge, where he is “Joe the blacksmith” in the “old burnt apron” at the “old anvil”.

Language – AO2

Context– AO3

The repetition of the word “old” serves two functions. Firstly, it suggests a fondness for the familiar things – likewise evidenced by Dickens’s use of metaphors that reflect Joe’s trade: partings ‘welded’, thoughts ‘beat out’. But it also emphasises Joe’s conservatism- he sticks to the “old” ways. Many Victorians believed that your social status was God ordained and to wish for more was inviting trouble – Bidy and Joe represent this way of thinking. They believe contentment is found by accepting your lot.

Analysis of writer’s methods

Context– AO3

Critical style – AO1

However, the Victorian era was also a time of “self-help”, when workers were encouraged to learn to read and write to better themselves; Dickens is ambiguous about this: both Pip and Joe learn to read and write, thanks in large part to Bidy.

detailed links between context, text & task

Context– AO3

In addition, Dicken himself had experience of moving from one social status to another- downwardly mobile when his father’s debt caused him to have to leave school and work in a blacking factory and upwardly mobile through his own successful career.

Critical style – AO1

Though Dicken’s message on social status may be debatable – Joe’s story after all has a happier ending than Pip’s – it is clear that Magwitch, who has sponsored Pip’s rise in status, is able to benefit from the insight Pip has gained through this meeting with Joe.

Writer’s purpose

Knowledge of text – AO1

The forge, the kitchen, the “meshes”, “with my hammer in my hand” is where he can be “Joe the blacksmith”, in that private world of the two companions that have faced the “tickler”. “You and me is not two figures to be together in London”, Joe admits, but only because of Pip’s own snobbery. Matthew finds no fault with Joe; Pip was once like Joe. So perhaps it is social pretension that Dickens exposes so harshly here. Pretending makes Pip hyper-sensitive to the social inequality represented by Joe.

Exploration o effects of writer’s methods on reader ;

Form – AO2

In this extract, Dickens has given Joe a long, eloquent speech, which contracts with the colloquial language he uses and with the character Pip’s silence. Pip the narrator, looking back, comments on Joe’s dignity. I think Dickens wants us to recognise in Joe’s wisdom that he is the truer “gentleman”.

Exploration o ideas & context

Structure – AO2

Another contrast is between Pip’s boyhood reaction to Estella’s scorn – he felt deeply ashamed of his social class and therefore uncomfortable at the forge – and Joe’s reaction to Pip’s scorn. Joe decides to return to where he belongs, ever a friend, never an intruder. When Pip loses his social status as a result of losing his fortune, Joe is there to look after him, to serve. But as Pip recovers, he steps back, content to let Pip find his way in the world.

Apt reference to support interpretator

Knowledge of text – AO1

Maybe what Dickens is showing readers is that social class is shallow: true “class” comes from within. After all, Bentley Drummle and Orlick are two of a kind...

Try again: Here is another essay written under the same conditions. How does it compare? Take what you like best from these two and use it in your own practice.

By presenting Joe Gargery as a sympathetic character, Dickens questions the established Victorian notions of wealth and class, and what effects they have on being a gentleman.

Joe Gargery is very much working class and his language is very much tied in with his trade. Metaphors such as 'life is made of ever so many partings welded together' - along with his colloquial speech - show that he has little education outside the confines of his job. However, he still shows a deep thoughtfulness and compassion ('God bless you old Pip') that is a far cry from the ignorant and bawdy lower class stereotype that pervaded the upper class Victorian imagination.

Even though he acknowledges his own low birth - 'I'm wrong in these clothes' - he is better mannered and kinder than the wealthier 'gentleman', Pip; an inversion of the stereotypes which to modern audiences almost seems stereotypical in itself (i.e. the idea that rich people are snobbish), but at the time (to Dickens's first readers) would have been far more shocking.

Therefore, the contrast between Joe and Pip, and in particular the presentation of Joe as caring and thoughtful, constitutes one way in which Dickens presents ideas about class in Great Expectations.

However, though Joe in some ways defies class stereotypes, the way Dickens has tied his language with his job also seems to imply that his class is who he is and is thus unavoidable; which ties in to the Victorian belief that classes were ordained by God and should not be defied. Biddy seems to imply this when she responds so coolly to Pip's request that she help Joe to improve his language skills so that he can try to 'raise him up' when he has come into his fortune.

Perhaps the story of Pip's inability to fit in with high society is intended as a moral tale about the dangers of social ambition... although since Dickens himself had risen considerably in wealth since his birth, this seems unlikely.

Regardless, Joe's constant references to smithing: 'one man's blacksmith', 'my hammer in my hand' and 'I'm wrong out of my forge' make him sound almost caricaturish in his inability to talk of anything other than his job. In this way Dickens seems to present the view that wealth and class determine personality and are inherent to members of those classes. Apart from Biddy, the characters of Pip's youth all seem to be verbose, as Joe is here, obscuring the message by their words rather than speaking plainly.

Elsewhere in the novel though, Dickens seems to imply that the lack of social mobility and Pip's struggle to fit in are perpetuated by the Victorian belief in class boundaries. As the narrator, Pip also serves as the protagonist and the reader supports him in his plight. Therefore, the snobbery and scorn Pip gets for his low birth - from characters like Drummle - doesn't seem righteous or divinely ordained: it seems unfair. Dickens presents

Now think about how you could improve this answer. Ask your teacher for a copy of your exam board's generic mark-scheme, or look on line for one they make available [under literature, the 19th century novel]- it always helps to know what your specific board wants, but they are more or less the same, focusing on the AOs. Weaker answers throw out bits of information, stronger ones build a cohesive [fitted together/ organised] argument and the best have an element of debate, possible interpretations and some evaluation of the effect on the reader or the writer's purpose as well.

In this extract Dickens writes very well to draw the reader in. Firstly there are lists: blacksmith, whitesmith, goldsmith and coppersmiths- all these words sound like the beat of a hammer. Joe is a blacksmith. Another list is 'my hammer, my hand, my pipe, and lastly old anvil, old apron and 'old work'. These lists are to make it true when Joe quotes: 'I'm awful dull but I hope I beat out something.'

Joe believes in God and says God bless you twice. This is repetition, to be like goodbye e.g. god-by-you. More Victorians did believe in God so Joe says God bless. He is leaving because Pip is a gentleman now and Joe has to go back to the forge and all his old stuff but Pip's is new because Jaggers gave him money to buy new clothes. I think this is a good description of Joe who is still poor and Pip who is rich 'not two figures to be in London' and because the hammer sounds are clever.

Although there are some good ideas about Dickens's purpose in using lists and repetition here which might be insightful in a stronger candidate, a generous examiner could award no more than a mid-level 2 for this answer.

There is no sense that the question is being answered at all. There is 'some awareness' of some elements in the extract, but not how they show how Dickens presents ideas about social class.

Nor does the candidate engage with Joe's views on the matter social class. AO1 is not met as the rest of the novel is not discussed and while the language element of AO2 is touched on, it is not linked to the task. The contextual information –AO3- is irrelevant.

Sadly, similar candidates often leave the exams feeling they have done well because they have - in their own minds- written about all the AOs. This is why a good way to start your essay answer is with the short answer. Then you have engaged with the actual task. From there it is easier to make your next steps actually 'proving' that answer by quoting from the text. Write about each quote in more detail, explaining its relevance [NB **not explaining the quote, but why it is evidence!**] and referring to other places in the novel where the same – or the opposite – is true. Then link the point you've made to the next point with a connective, or say how it answers the question.

The bottom line is:

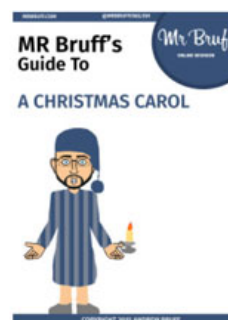
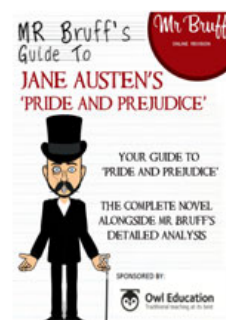
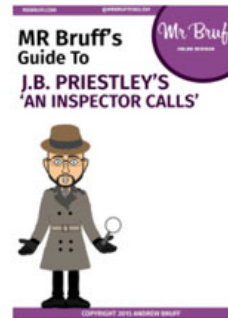
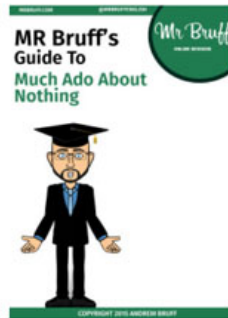
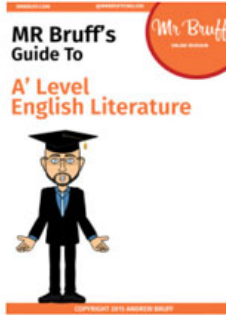
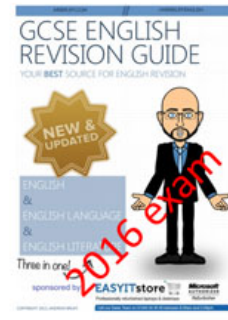
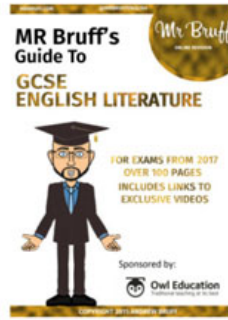
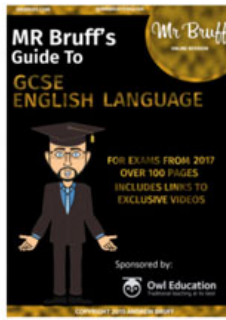
Begin correctly and the next steps fall more naturally into place.

Open with 'the short answer'

Prove it using PEEL/ PEAL while covering AO1, AO2 & AO3

End with a brief, final opinion.

Good luck and I 'OPE you do very well in the exams!



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