QUESTION 2

Question 2 is based around another section of the same text, typically the segment that follows that examined in question 1. Question 2 is worth 8 marks, and you should spend around 10 minutes on it.

This question assesses the language element of AO2: 'Explain, comment on and analyse how different writers use language and structure to achieve effects and influence readers, using relevant subject terminology to support their views'.
So, what do we mean when we refer to language analysis? Put simply, we mean to investigate a writer's use of words, language features and sentence forms. You are looking for occasions **where it seems that the writer has deliberately used these to achieve a specific effect**. Let's look at a sample question:

Question 2
Take a detailed look at lines 1-7 of the source:
It was on a dreary night of November that I beheld the accomplishment of my toils. With an anxiety that almost amounted to agony, I collected the instruments of life around me, that I might infuse a spark of being into the lifeless thing that lay at my feet. It was already one in the morning; the rain pattered dismally against the panes, and my candle was nearly burnt out, when, by the glimmer of the half-extinguished light, I saw the dull yellow eye of the creature open; it breathed hard, and a convulsive motion agitated its limbs.

How does the writer use language to describe the setting?
You could write about:
- Individual words and phrases
- Language features and techniques
- Sentence forms

[8 marks]

To achieve full marks, you need to write answers that are perceptive. 'Perceptive' basically means thinking beyond the obvious. This involves examining the language usage beyond just its surface level meaning. A helpful tip is to explore examples of language that hold deeper, figurative meanings.

The bullet points in this question serve as a useful reminder of the things you can write about. However, in the November 2018 exam, the extract had no sentence forms worthy of analysis, so don't panic if you feel you can't cover all three areas in your answer. You do not have to cover all three bullet points – the key word in the question is **could**.

Let's look at the three bullet points in detail, starting with individual words and phrases.

INDIVIDUAL WORDS AND PHRASES
You need to avoid writing about vague, generalised effects in your answer to question 2. If you write things like 'this makes the reader want to read on', or 'it paints a picture in the reader's head', you will fail to achieve high marks. You need to

avoid comments that could be applied to ANY text by making your comments specific to the text that you are reading.

So how do you avoid these generalised comments? The best thing to do is this: read the lines in question and ask yourself, *What is the specific effect the writer is aiming to achieve?* Try to put a word or phrase to it. It could be a sense of boredom, energy, danger, threat, humour, etc. Choose the desired effect, and THEN look for the language uses that achieve this effect. This will help you to focus your analysis and avoid vague comments.

NOTE: The effect does not always have to be emotive. Be specific in your analysis. Once you have a clear idea of the effect the writer wishes to achieve, you can scan the extract for language which achieves that effect. In our example, the setting is described in negative terms, creating a sense of danger or threat, so you might like to pick words or phrases which create this effect:
'dreary'
'night',
'dismally'
'burnt out'
'half-extinguished'

Now let's put a couple of those quotations into a paragraph. The key thing with your answer to this question is to explain how the writer creates an effect. In this case, danger or threat.

> Shelley uses a wide range of negative language to create a sense of danger in describing the setting. To begin with, the rain not only falls, but it patters 'dismally'. This adverb contributes to a sense of dread, suggesting that something bad is about to happen. Similarly, the night is described with the adjective 'dreary', which has connotations of desolation, foreshadowing something bad to come. Shelley's use of emotive language in describing setting therefore creates a mood of threat and danger.

LANGUAGE FEATURES AND TECHNIQUES

This bullet point is all about figurative language, where a writer goes beyond the literal meaning of a word or phrase. You will probably be familiar with many of these examples from your work on GCSE English Literature. Here are a few common examples:

Alliteration: Repetition of the same sound at the beginning of words. For example: *The man moved mountains.*
Assonance: Repetition of vowel sounds in nearby words. For example: *Light the fire up high.*
Consonance: Repetition of consonant sounds in words which are close together in a sentence. For example: *I think I thanked the wrong uncle.*
Note: remember, consonance is repetition of sounds, not necessarily letters. Consonance is often a tricky device to spot, because the repetition does not have to

occur at the beginning of the word (that's alliteration). For example,: *Matt picked up the ticket.*

Euphemism: An indirect or mild word/phrase used to replace one that is thought to be too harsh or offensive. For example*: I'm going to have to let you go* (instead of *sack you*).

Hyperbole: Deliberate exaggeration for effect. For example: *I've told you a million times, no Xbox after 10pm!*

Idiom: An expression that holds a different meaning to its literal meaning. For example: *Granddad kicked the bucket.* This idiom means 'died', and does not refer to any literal bucket kicking.

Metaphor: Describing something by stating that it is something else. For example: *He flew down the road in his car.* He did not literally fly, but the metaphor suggests the idea that he drove so fast that he achieved speeds like those of an aircraft. Sometimes you will find a metaphor that is used throughout a piece of writing (or in this case, an extract). This is called an **extended metaphor**.

Personification: Giving human characteristics to something that is not human. For example: *The flames danced playfully in the fire.* Flames cannot dance–this is a human characteristic to describe the way the flames move around.

Onomatopoeia: Where the word imitates the sound of the thing it is naming. For example: *I saved my work with a click of the mouse.* When you say the word 'click', it makes the sound of a 'click'. Other examples are *splash, drip* and *bang*.

Oxymoron: Placing two words together which are opposite to each other. For example: *Act naturally, pretty ugly, jumbo shrimp.*

Pun: A joke about words that sound alike but they have different meanings. For example: *Santa's little helpers are called subordinate clauses.*

Pathetic Fallacy: Pathetic Fallacy: is where the environment or weather mirrors the emotions of the characters or the atmosphere of the situation. For example: 'The rain pattered dismally against the panes'. Here the rain reflects the mood of the narrator.

Sibilance: most commonly, the repetition of the soft –s and –sh sounds in words. This is like alliteration, but the sounds can be anywhere in a word. For example: *The silken sad uncertain rustling sound.*

Simile: Describing something by stating that it is like something else, using the word 'as' or 'like'. For example: *He was as cold as ice.* The difference between a simile and a metaphor is that a simile describes something as if it is *like* something else whereas a metaphor describes something as if it *is* something else.

Here's what I spotted in our question 2 extract:

1. Alliteration: 'night of November'
2. Pathetic fallacy: 'rain pattered dismally'
3. Onomatopoeia: 'pattered'

It's not enough to simply identify the language features—you must explain the **effect** or the reason behind the writer's choices. This is the hardest bit. Put simply, you should ask yourself: why did the writer use that device? Does it help create the effect you decided on earlier?

Something that has become clear in past exams is that you might find figurative language but not be able to explain how it creates a specific effect. For example, 'night of November' is certainly alliteration, but does it create a sense of danger or

threat? Not really. In that case, it's best to leave it and move on to something else. Let's look at the other two examples:

Pathetic fallacy: 'rain pattered dismally'
What is the effect of the fact that it is raining? We could argue that the grim weather reflects and foreshadows Frankenstein's mood over his creation: the setting mirrors the emotional state of the character. You can play around with different ideas when writing about pathetic fallacy—no single answer is the 'correct' answer. If you can explain your thinking, then anything is valid.

Onomatopoeia: 'pattered'
By describing the sound made by the rain as it hits the window, the reader can imagine the scene more vividly—it's as if we too can hear the raindrops. This then scares the reader and increases the sense of danger. We begin to experience the events of this chapter as if we are in the room with Frankenstein himself.

Let's look at a sample answer:

> In this extract, Shelley uses the literary device of pathetic fallacy, using setting to create a foreboding sense of threat and danger. Shelley's use of grim weather, with rain that 'pattered dismally', reflects and foreshadows Frankenstein's mood over his creation. Through using the setting to mirror the main character's inner turmoil, the writer amplifies the tension.
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> The use of onomatopoeia further amplifies this tension. The sensory description of how the rain 'pattered' as it hit the window engages the auditory senses of the reader, allowing them to imagine the scene more vividly–it's as if we too can hear the raindrops. The incessant noise, added to the visual imagery employed, allows the reader to fully immerse themselves in Frankenstein's environment. We are not simply observing what takes place but begin to experience the events as if we are in the room with Frankenstein himself, heightening our shared anxiety and sense of danger.

SENTENCE FORMS
Thirdly, let's look at the writer's use of sentence forms. You can approach this in terms of sentence length, or if you're confident with grammar you might look for the different sentence types:

Simple Sentences
Simple sentences contain a subject and a verb.
Example: *He laughed.*
In this example, we have a verb (in this case, an action): 'laughed'. If we ask ourselves who or what is 'doing' the verb, the answer is 'he'. Therefore, 'he' is the subject. Simple sentences are mostly, but not always, short.
It's possible to add adjectives and adverbs to simple sentences: *The tired old man walked slowly along the ancient stone path.* Although this sentence is longer, it still only contains one subject and one verb: 'man' and 'walked', so it is a simple sentence.

Compound Sentences

Compound sentences join two independent clauses (that look like simple sentences) with one of the following words, called co-ordinating conjunctions:

For
And
Nor
But
Or
Yet
So

You might have heard about them in school as 'FANBOYS'. (The conjunction 'for' is a slightly old-fashioned word, used to mean 'because'.)

We usually have a comma before these conjunctions.

Example: *The man laughed, and his wife cried.*
Here we have two independent clauses:
The man laughed (subject = man, verb = laughed)
His wife cried (subject = wife, verb = cried).

All we've done is join them together with one of the FANBOYS conjunctions and added a comma.

Complex Sentences

Complex sentences have different (subordinating) conjunctions such as:

although
because
even if
if
while

Example: *I love you although you drive me crazy.*
If the subordinating conjunction is in the middle of the sentence, there is no comma.
If the sentence starts with a subordinating conjunction, there is a comma:
Example: *Although you drive me crazy, I love you.*
Complex sentences can be divided into two parts:
1. The part which makes sense on its own. We call this the main clause and it looks like a simple sentence. In the above example, the main clause is 'I love you'.
2. The part which does not make sense on its own. We call this the subordinate clause. In the example above, the subordinate clause begins with the subordinating conjunction 'although you drive me crazy'.
The above is just one example of many different types of complex sentence.

Compound-complex sentences

A compound-complex sentence consists of a compound sentence (two independent clauses joined with a FANBOYS, or co-ordinating, conjunction) and at least one subordinate clause.
Example: *I bought this book because it looked useful, but now I am confused.*
Let's break it down:

'I bought this book' = independent clause
'because it looked useful' = subordinate clause
'but' = FANBOYS (co-ordinating) conjunction
'now I am confused' = independent clause

Minor sentences (or fragments)
A minor sentence, sometimes called a fragment, is a word, phrase or clause that does not have the grammar of the above sentences.
Examples: Yes, please! No pain, no gain. Hi!

WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?
It's not enough just to identify the sentence types used in an extract. You need to think about **why** they are used. Probably the easiest way to do this is to think about sentence length. Writers often use very long sentences to create an overwhelming or depressing atmosphere. Very short sentences, in contrast, create a sense of energy, pace and panic. Why? Because long sentences are hard to read (overwhelming, you could say), and short sentences create pace as you are forced to take so many short breaths in time with the full stops**.** If you're confident with grammar, you might be able to write about the sentence types that are employed (minor, simple, compound, complex or compound-complex). If not, just write about long and short sentences. So, let's look back at the extract and consider the sentence types. Remember, we're just looking at the bits that describe the setting. In our extract, you'll see the penultimate sentence is incredibly long, but can we analyse how that links to an effect? I think we can:

Shelley uses sentence structure to reflect the intense atmosphere created by the bad weather setting in the extract. The long sentence 'It was already one in the morning…a convulsive motion agitated its limbs' is full of different clauses, making it hard to read in one breath. Shelley uses this long-winded sentence to give off a feeling of being overwhelmed, much like how Frankenstein feels. With its two semicolons and five commas, this sentence feels chaotic and confusing. This disorderly sentence form matches the unpredictable and wild weather in the scene, and also reflects the unpredictable nature of the experiment that's happening.

You'll see that I did not quote the whole sentence. To do so would take too many of my precious 10 minutes. If you're quoting a long section of the text, just quote the start and end, and place an ellipsis in the middle.