

# NQ English Writing Folio

## Marking Instructions – Higher

---

### The Marking Process

#### 1 Judging against the Performance Criteria

Each piece of writing should first be read to establish whether it achieves success in all the Performance Criteria below, including the standards for technical accuracy (see 2 below).

**Content**

Content is relevant and appropriate for purpose and audience, reveals depth and complexity of thought and sustained development.

**Structure**

Structure is effective and appropriate for purpose, audience and genre; content is sequenced and organised in ways which assist impact.

**Expression**

Capable use of techniques relevant to the genre and effective choice of words and sentence structures sustain a style and tone which clearly communicate a point of view/stance consistent with purpose and audience.

#### 2 Confirming Technical Accuracy

A piece of writing which does not satisfy the requirement for “consistent” technical accuracy cannot pass. If, however, technical accuracy is deemed “consistent”, then there are no penalties or deductions for any errors.

**Consistently accurate**

Few errors will be present. Paragraphs, sentences and punctuation are accurate and organised so that the writing can be clearly and readily understood. Spelling errors (particularly of high frequency words) are infrequent.

### 3 Assigning a Category and Mark

Each piece of writing should then be assigned to the appropriate Category as outlined in the Broad Descriptors, supported by reference to the Detailed Descriptors.

#### (a) Broad Descriptors

Pieces of writing which **pass** (ie meet the minimum requirements of the Performance Criteria) should be assigned to one of four categories as follows:

Category	Mark(s)	Broad descriptor
I	25	Outstanding
II	21 or 23	Very sound
III	17 or 19	Comfortably achieves all Performance Criteria
IV	13 or 15	Just succeeds in achieving the Performance Criteria

Pieces of writing which **fail** to meet the minimum requirements of one or more than one Performance Criterion should be assigned to one of two categories as follows:

Category	Mark(s)	Broad descriptor
V	11 or 9	Fails to achieve one or more than one Performance Criterion and/or to achieve consistent technical accuracy
VI*	7 or 5**	Serious shortcomings

In Categories II – VI, the choice of which mark to award should be determined by the level of certainty with which the piece of writing has been assigned to the Category.

\* Pieces of writing in this Category will be extremely rare. It should be used only in cases of extreme thinness or serious weaknesses in expression and/or technical accuracy.

\*\* Marks below 5 can, in exceptional circumstances be awarded, for example to a piece of writing which is of extreme brevity, perhaps just a few lines.

**(b) Detailed descriptors**

In order to avoid excessive length in these descriptors, Argumentative, Persuasive and Report have been treated generically as “Discursive”. To assist Markers, some key statements about the three types are given on page 5.

**Category I (25 marks):**

A sophisticated and stylish piece of writing in which the content is particularly well selected and shows qualities of insight/imagination/sophisticated thought. The structure is highly appropriate and there is skilful organisation which significantly enhances the overall impact of the writing. Expression is concise and effective. Word choice is consistently apposite, and sentence structures are skilfully varied to achieve effects. Techniques associated with the genre are used very effectively.

**Imaginative** writing in this Category will be characterised by a strong sense that the writer has command of and insight into the genre and is skilfully introducing and developing thematic concerns; the writing has flair and individuality which permeate the ideas and use of language.

**Personal/Reflective** writing in this Category will be characterised by a strong sense of mature reflection; the writer’s personality and individuality permeate the ideas and use of language.

**Discursive** writing in this Category will, as appropriate to the specific genre and purpose, be characterised by a strong sense of engagement with the ideas/issues and a sophisticated understanding of them; the line of thought is subtle and sustained; as appropriate, the writer’s stance permeates the ideas and use of language.

**Category II (21 or 23 marks):**

A very sound piece of writing in which the content is well selected and shows evidence of insight/imagination/sophisticated thought. The structure is appropriate and the organisation of content enhances the overall impact of the writing. Expression is skilful and confident. Word choice is apposite, and sentence structures are varied to achieve effects. Techniques associated with the genre are used effectively.

**Imaginative** writing in this Category will be characterised by a clear sense that the writer has command of and some insight into the genre and is able to introduce and develop thematic concerns; the writing is skilful and language is deployed to create a strong impact.

**Personal/Reflective** writing in this Category will be characterised by a clear sense of mature reflection; the writer’s personality and individuality come across strongly; the writing is confident and language is deployed to create a strong impact.

**Discursive** writing in this Category will, as appropriate to the specific genre and purpose, be characterised by a clear sense of engagement with the ideas/issues and a strong understanding of them; the line of thought is clear and sustained; the writing is skilful and language is used confidently.

**Category III** (17 or 19 marks):

A clearly competent piece of writing in which the content shows some evidence of insight/imagination/sophisticated thought. The structure is appropriate and contributes to the overall impact of the writing. Expression is controlled. Word choice is mostly apposite, and there is suitable variation in sentence structures. Techniques associated with the genre are in evidence.

**Imaginative** writing in this Category will be characterised by a sense that the writer has some insight into the genre and is attempting to introduce and develop thematic concerns; the writing is controlled and language is deployed to create some impact.

**Personal/Reflective** writing in this Category will be characterised by a clear sense of reflection; there is a clear sense of the writer's personality; the writing is controlled and language is deployed to create some impact.

**Discursive** writing in this Category will, as appropriate to the specific genre and purpose, be characterised by a sense of engagement with the ideas/issues and a clear understanding of them; the line of thought is clear; the writing is controlled and language is used appropriately throughout.

**Category IV** (13 or 15 marks):

A sufficiently competent piece of writing in which the content shows some signs of depth of thought and there is sufficient development. The structure is appropriate for the genre. Expression is adequate. There is evidence that choice of words and sentence structures has been made to achieve some effect, and there is use of some of the techniques associated with the genre.

**Imaginative** writing in this Category will be characterised by some sense that the writer has an understanding of the genre; the writing is mostly controlled and there is some evidence the writer is trying to deploy language to create impact.

**Personal/Reflective** writing in this Category will be characterised by a limited sense of reflection; there is some sense of the writer's personality; the writing is mostly controlled and there is some evidence the writer is trying to deploy language to create impact.

**Discursive** writing in this Category will, as appropriate to the specific genre and purpose, be characterised by a sense that the ideas/issues are clearly understood; the line of thought is recognisable; for the most part, the writing is controlled and language is used appropriately.

**Category V** (11 or 9 marks):

A piece of writing will fall into this Category for a variety of reasons: it fails to achieve consistent technical accuracy; the structure is not sufficiently organised to carry the writer's ideas clearly; the language is mundane and unvaried, the content is simply too thin.

**Imaginative** writing in this Category will be characterised by one or more of the following: clumsy and/or naïve use of the genre, dull or inappropriate language, serious inconsistency of style or tone, overall thinness of content.

**Personal/Reflective** writing in this Category will be characterised by one or more of the following: little or no sense of the writer's personality, dull or inappropriate language, absence of any sense of style or tone, overall thinness of content.

**Discursive** writing in this Category will be characterised by one or more of the following: evidence that ideas/issue are not understood, weaknesses in structure, inappropriate language or tone, failure to follow the stated remit, overall thinness of content.

## **“Discursive” writing: key statements from the Arrangements document for Higher:**

### **Argumentative Writing:**

Argumentative writing will treat a topic or issue in a way which presents a line of argument, dealing with two or more varying viewpoints.

The main requirements of the **argumentative** essay are that it will:

- ◆ communicate a clear and balanced line of argument
- ◆ present two sides of an argument (or more, if applicable)
- ◆ distinguish between facts and opinions
- ◆ convey an argumentative tone which is measured, reasonable and yet carries personal conviction
- ◆ communicate to the reader a clear sense that the writer has weighed up different aspects of the argument before reaching conclusions
- ◆ make effective use of a number of argumentative techniques such as comparison, contrast, confirmation, refutation, counter-argument, proof, disproof.

### **Persuasive Writing:**

Persuasive writing will persuade to a purpose or point of view (for example, to sell a product, or influence opinion/belief), usually concerning itself with a single topic or issue.

The main requirements of the **persuasive** essay are that it will:

- ◆ carry a clear sense of conviction or inducement; tone may range from encouragement, through cajoling to pressurising
- ◆ make effective use of a number of persuasive techniques, such as manipulating information, claiming necessity/exclusivity, flattering, employing technical jargon/rhetoric.

### **Report:**

The report must contain relevant complex information selected from at least two sources. In order to meet the requirements of the performance criteria, material drawn from sources must be recast or paraphrased appropriately for purpose. The report must fulfil a clearly expressed remit and be prefaced by a concise statement outlining purpose and describing procedures used to gather information. The writer's point of view and the tone will depend on the nature of the remit.

The writing should have a logical structure. It is important that the structure used matches the one described in the concise statement. At this level, it is reasonable to expect that the chosen structure should clearly identify the constituent aspects of the report and how they are linked.

Diagrams, tables, charts and graphs may be included, if appropriate to the chosen form. Headings, appendices, bibliographies and a lettering or numbering system to separate the constituent sections may also be used.