



National  
Qualifications  
2025

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**2025 English**

**Reading for Understanding, Analysis and  
Evaluation**

**National 5**

**Question Paper Finalised Marking Instructions**

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## General marking principles for National 5 English: Reading for Understanding, Analysis and Evaluation

*This information is provided to help you understand the general principles you must apply when marking candidate responses to questions in this paper. These principles must be read in conjunction with the detailed marking instructions, which identify the key features required in candidate responses.*

- (a) Marks for each candidate response must **always** be assigned in line with these general marking principles and the detailed marking instructions for this assessment.
- (b) Marking should always be positive. This means that, for each candidate response, marks are accumulated for the demonstration of relevant skills, knowledge and understanding: they are not deducted from a maximum on the basis of errors or omissions.
- (c) If a specific candidate response does not seem to be covered by either the principles or detailed marking instructions, and you are uncertain how to assess it, you must seek guidance from your team leader.
- (d) Candidates should gain credit for their understanding of the ideas of the passage, and their analysis and evaluation of the writer's use of language.
- (e) Unless quoting from the passage, the candidates should use their own words as far as possible.

*The following notes are offered to support markers in making judgements on candidates' evidence.*

Marking instructions for each question

Question		Expected response(s)	Max mark	Additional guidance
1.		<p>Any two points.</p> <p><b>NB</b> Accept 'writers' or 'writing' or 'write'</p>	2	<p><b>Possible answers</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 'being able to create characters' glossed by eg he can make up (stories about) people/he is imaginative (1)</li> <li>• 'tap into human feelings' glossed by eg he can understand people's emotions (1)</li> <li>• 'tap into . . . ways of processing things' glossed by eg he can understand how people think (1)</li> <li>• 'feeling worthless' glossed by eg he thinks he is of little value/he is insecure (1)</li> <li>• 'I'm not as good as the writers I admire' glossed by eg he compares himself unfavourably with others (1)</li> <li>• 'feeling that I'm not writing enough'/'what I should be able to get done in a day' glossed by eg he's not sufficiently productive (1)</li> <li>• 'feeling that I'm (wasting time) on the wrong project' glossed by eg he believes he is pursuing work that is not fruitful (1)</li> <li>• 'I always have been tough on myself'/'my parents used to tell me this'/'my wife still tells me this' glossed by eg he has been constantly self-critical/is reluctant to accept reassurance (1)</li> <li>• 'I have an idealised version of . . . what I should look like' glossed by eg he has a view of what his appearance ought to be (1)</li> <li>• 'I have an idealised version of . . . what my kids and students think of me' glossed by eg he cares about how others view him (1)</li> <li>• 'I have an idealised version of . . . how my writing turns out' glossed by eg he is a perfectionist in his work (1)</li> <li>• 'I am a far cry from this goal self' glossed by eg he feels he is falling short of where he wants to be/he sets high standards for himself (1)</li> </ul>

Question	Expected response(s)	Max mark	Additional guidance
2.	<p><b>Word choice:</b> Reference (1) Comment (1)</p> <p><b>Sentence structure:</b> Reference (1) Comment (1)</p>	4	<p><b>Possible answers</b></p> <p><b>Word choice:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ‘I hadn’t written anything new’ (1) suggests eg he has not produced any fresh work (1)</li> <li>• ‘since spring’ (1) suggests eg it is a long time since he has created something (1)</li> <li>• ‘kept thinking (about)’ (1) suggests eg it’s always on his mind (1)</li> <li>• ‘every time (I sat down)’/‘every idea’ (1) suggests eg constant struggle (1)</li> <li>• ‘(I’d get) distracted’ (1) suggests eg how easy it is to lose focus (1)</li> <li>• ‘taunting’/reference to personification of ‘taunting’ (1) suggests eg his tools are mocking him/he is being mocked (1)</li> <li>• ‘nothing down’/‘blank’ (1) suggests eg no progress (1)</li> <li>• ‘(Every idea felt) ridiculous’ (1) suggests eg all thoughts seemed nonsense/useless (1)</li> <li>• ‘said everything already’ (1) suggests eg hard to come up with original ideas (1)</li> </ul> <p><b>Sentence structure:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ‘but’ (1) emphasises the obstacles to writing faced by the writer (1)</li> <li>• ‘Every idea felt ridiculous.’/short sentence (1) emphasises writer’s dissatisfaction with content he has come up with (1)</li> <li>• reference to colon/list/repetition of ‘every’ (1) introduces/emphasises all the things the writer believes he has already written about (1)</li> </ul>

Question		Expected response(s)	Max mark	Additional guidance
3.		Any pair <b>OR</b> two selections covering different directions.	2	<p><b>Possible answers</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ‘I didn’t feel like I was getting anywhere’ links back <b>(1)</b> to ‘I realised I hadn’t written anything new since spring’ <b>OR</b> ‘I’d get distracted’ <b>OR</b> ‘end up putting nothing down’ <b>OR</b> ‘(taunting) blank . . . screen’ <b>OR</b> ‘Every idea felt ridiculous’ <b>OR</b> ‘I felt as though I had said everything already (every . . . every possible setting and storyline)’ <b>OR</b> paraphrase of any of the above <b>(1)</b></li> <li>• ‘(then came) Taylor’ links forward <b>(1)</b> to ‘My younger daughter, Frankie, had been listening to Taylor Swift nonstop’ <b>OR</b> ‘wanted tickets to the Eras tour’ <b>OR</b> ‘selected in the Taylor lottery’ <b>OR</b> ‘all was right in the Taylor-loving universe’ <b>OR</b> paraphrase of any of the above <b>(1)</b></li> <li>• ‘I didn’t feel like I was getting anywhere’ links back <b>(1)</b> ‘(then came) Taylor’ links forward <b>(1)</b></li> </ul>

Question		Expected response(s)	Max mark	Additional guidance
4.		Any four points.	4	<p><b>Possible answers</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ‘the ubiquitous Taylor’ / ‘global reach’ glossed by eg she was/seemed to be everywhere (1)</li> <li>• ‘I didn’t know much beyond seeing her on TV or whatever was in the news’ glossed by eg limited information from the media (1)</li> <li>• ‘But I knew she had become the kind of phenomenon’ glossed by eg she was a remarkable person (1)</li> <li>• ‘(the kind of phenomenon) I love to see in our culture’ glossed by eg she was a type of person he approved of (1)</li> <li>• ‘someone who for years has been tested and tried’ glossed by eg she has faced lots of challenges (1)</li> <li>• ‘and is reliably good’ glossed by eg she consistently does well/is consistently impressive/is always virtuous or upstanding (1)</li> <li>• ‘an Oprah, a Dolly Parton, a Stephen King’ glossed by eg she is comparable to hugely successful figures (1)</li> <li>• ‘You don’t have that many hits by accident’ glossed by eg she has earned her success/she is not just lucky (1)</li> <li>• ‘many hits’ glossed by eg she has lots of successful songs (1)</li> <li>• ‘(You don’t build a) loyal fan base’ glossed by eg her devotees stay with her (1)</li> <li>• ‘fan base of millions’ glossed by eg she has a huge number of followers (1)</li> <li>• ‘(I remember learning how) she spoke out politically’ glossed by eg she expresses opinions about current affairs/issues (1)</li> <li>• ‘(admiring her) for using her platform and global reach for good’ glossed by eg she makes use of her fame in positive ways (1)</li> <li>• ‘it takes guts (to let the world know what you believe)’ glossed by eg she is brave/principled (1)</li> </ul>

Question		Expected response(s)	Max mark	Additional guidance
5.		Reference (1) Comment (1)	2	<p><b>Possible answers</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ‘ten-minute (version)’ (1) suggests eg bold move (1)</li> <li>• ‘(she said) calmly’ (1) suggests eg she is not expecting opposition/is not tentative or pleading (1)</li> <li>• ‘I smiled politely’ (1) suggests eg he isn’t going to oppose her (1)</li> <li>• ‘(Frankie) didn’t blink.’/reference to short sentence (1) suggests/emphasises eg she will go through with her plan/is confident of success/is determined (1)</li> <li>• “‘It won’t be long enough’” (1) suggests eg she is sure her father will enjoy it/she is telling her father what to think (1)</li> <li>• ‘clicked’/reference to onomatopoeia (1) suggests eg assertive action (1)</li> <li>• ‘She clicked play’ (1) suggests eg she takes action (1)</li> <li>• ‘I listened.’ (1) suggests eg her father is passive/he is doing what she commands (1)</li> <li>• ‘She clicked play and I listened.’/use of single line paragraph/reference to short sentence (1) emphasises eg assertiveness (1)</li> </ul>

Question	Expected response(s)	Max mark	Additional guidance
6.	<p>Any six points.</p> <p><b>NB</b> Accept lifts of ‘words’ and ‘language’</p>	6	<p><b>Possible answers</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ‘Songs never grab me the first time, but this one was good’ glossed by eg the music had immediate impact (1)</li> <li>• ‘I loved the lyrics’/‘the words sounded great’ glossed by eg the quality of language (1)</li> <li>• ‘I liked how passionately she sang’/‘what struck me most was the . . . rawness’ glossed by eg the strong emotion communicated/energy of performance (1)</li> <li>• ‘This was no bubblegum pop’ glossed by eg the music’s depth (1)</li> <li>• ‘This was about love and pain and being wronged’/‘And watching the front door waiting for the loved one to return.’/‘loves someone who can’t get over something’/‘weeps’ glossed by eg the subject matter of loss/longing/heartbreak (1)</li> <li>• ‘I found myself playing it again’/‘I listened to it over and over, never tiring of any section.’/‘repeatedly’ glossed by eg it can stand up to frequent listenings/is addictive (1)</li> <li>• ‘The lyrics were speaking to me’/‘I believed every single word’ glossed by eg the song’s words communicate directly/were relevant (1)</li> <li>• ‘I am a sucker for objects . . . a scarf the lover kept.’/‘And a photo album.’ glossed by eg he liked music which focused on things/personal possessions (1)</li> <li>• ‘And the dad in me aches . . . console his daughter after the breakup.’ glossed by eg he recognises things in the songs which remind him of his own experience as a parent (1)</li> <li>• ‘her beautiful voice’ glossed by eg Swift’s vocal ability/lovely singing (1)</li> <li>• ‘(what struck me most was the) honesty’ glossed by eg truthfulness (1)</li> </ul>

Question	Expected response(s)	Max mark	Additional guidance
7.	Any four points.	4	<p><b>Possible answers</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ‘Taylor made me want to recapture this.’ glossed by eg he wanted to recreate the same feelings/effects of listening to her music (1)</li> <li>• ‘She made me want to write.’ glossed by eg he was inspired to create (1)</li> <li>• ‘I felt something free itself that had been stuck.’ glossed by eg his writer’s block was resolved (1)</li> <li>• ‘Taylor was giving this back to me.’/‘what we do as writers’ glossed by eg he was reminded of what being a writer is all about/rediscovered his purpose as a writer (1)</li> <li>• ‘She was taking away the worthlessness I felt’ glossed by eg he regained his confidence/sense of value (1)</li> <li>• ‘she was telling me we all get through things’ glossed by eg he gained resilience (1)</li> <li>• ‘I understood why every fan wanted to be at the concert that summer’/‘I understood why in every video the audience is singing along, overcome.’ glossed by eg he developed an affinity with/respect for Swift’s followers (1)</li> <li>• “‘All Too Well” became our family anthem’ glossed by eg his whole family were united in liking the song/Swift (1)</li> <li>• ‘we played it on every car ride’/‘We even started to measure distance with it’ glossed by eg Swift’s music/the song became part of his family’s everyday life (1)</li> <li>• ‘in my Intro to Poetry class . . . dissected the lyrics’ glossed by eg he brought Swift into his working life/her music influenced his teaching (1)</li> </ul>

Question	Expected response(s)	Max mark	Additional guidance
8.	Reference (1) Comment (1) x2	4	<p><b>Possible answers</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ‘Taylor would never think like that’ (1) suggests eg she isn’t afraid to try new things (1)</li> <li>• ‘so successful’ (1) suggests eg outstanding achievement (1)</li> <li>• ‘lasted this long’ (1) suggests eg she has staying power/enduring popularity (1)</li> <li>• ‘cultivated such a fan base’ (1) suggests eg she has created a large following (1)</li> <li>• ‘she’s produced ten more’/‘plus re-recorded versions’/‘has more on the way’ (1) suggests eg she is prolific/extremely hard working (1)</li> <li>• ‘reinvented (herself)’ (1) suggests eg she doesn’t stand still creatively/she is not complacent/she moves with the times (1)</li> <li>• ‘(written and performed in) so many styles’ (1) suggests eg she is multi-dimensional/comfortable in different genres (1)</li> <li>• ‘(so many styles): pop, country, indie and alternative’/reference to list/reference to colon (1) emphasises variety of her output (1)</li> <li>• ‘(She’s incorporated) memoir, fiction, myth and legend (into her songs)’/reference to list (1) emphasises eg the depth/breadth of her influences (1)</li> <li>• ‘loyal base’ (1) suggests she has a devoted following (1)</li> <li>• ‘Swifties’ (1) suggests there is even a (widely known) name for her fans (1)</li> </ul>

Question	Expected response(s)	Max mark	Additional guidance
9.	<p>Selection (1) Comment (1)</p> <p><b>NB</b> do not reward a response which simply says 'it sums up the main ideas of the passage etc' unless the candidate goes on to explain what the main ideas are.</p>	2	<p><b>Possible answers</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 'After a couple of weeks, I had pages again' (1) refers to earlier idea of 'I hadn't written anything new since spring' (1)</li> <li>• '(By the time Gia and Frankie went to) the Eras concert' (1) repeats earlier mention of 'the Eras tour' (1)</li> <li>• 'I was polishing the first hundred pages of my new book' (1) refers to earlier idea(s) of 'end up putting nothing down on my taunting blank screen'/'I felt something free itself that had been stuck'/'started to write again' etc (1)</li> <li>• 'listening to "All Too Well"' (1) repeats earlier mention(s) of listening to Taylor Swift's songs (1)</li> <li>• 'I'm still not sick of it' (1) repeats earlier ideas of "'It won't be long enough'"/'I found myself playing it again'/'I listened to it over and over'/'never tiring of any section' etc (1)</li> <li>• 'The song had shown me' (1) repeats earlier idea of the impact/positive effects of listening to Swift's music (1)</li> <li>• 'it's ok to feel things deeply' (1) repeats earlier ideas of 'This was about love and pain and being wronged'/'what struck me the most was the honesty and rawness' (1)</li> <li>• 'to care too much' (1) repeats earlier ideas of 'I liked how passionately she sang'/'the dad in me aches when she sings about her father trying to console his daughter after the breakup' etc (1)</li> <li>• 'her love for words' (1) repeats earlier idea of 'I loved the lyrics'/'This was no bubblegum pop'/'It made me love language again' etc (1)</li> <li>• 'I'd got back something' (1) repeats earlier idea of 'Taylor was giving this back to me'/'and started to write again' etc (1)</li> </ul>

Question			Expected response(s)	Max mark	Additional guidance
					<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ‘something I didn’t think I was worthy of’ (1) repeats earlier idea of ‘feeling worthless’/‘Feeling I’m not as good as . . .’/reference to title, etc (1)</li> <li>• ‘I’d got back something I didn’t think I was worthy of’ (1) emphatic/positive statement sums up effect Taylor Swift has on writer’s ability to create (1)</li> </ul>

[END OF MARKING INSTRUCTIONS]