

# Revision Guide

AQA GCSE ENGLISH LANGUAGE PAPER 2

# Practice Exam Paper: Travel + Exploration

Scrbblly.

Here's a full example paper created for AQA GCSE English Language Paper 2 (Writers' Viewpoints and Perspectives).

The overall topic is 'Travel and Exploration', so you should think about how both writers connect to that theme. Text A is a nonfiction piece of travel writing in letter form on the subject of visiting Japan for the first time — written by Isabella Bird, a famous Victorian explorer and naturalist. Text B is also nonfiction: a diary entry by Captain Scott, who travelled to the Antarctic and attempted to be the first man to reach the South Pole.

The exam-style questions below are based on the wording of official AQA Exam papers. You could use an official AQA mark scheme from a previous year to mark your answers.

## TEXT A: ISABELLA BIRD'S LETTERS

### *Introduction*

*Isabella Bird (1831–1904) was an English explorer, writer and photographer. She is known for her 'bright, descriptive letters' which document her travels all around the world. The letter below documents her first impressions of Japan, and seeing Mount Fuji (Fujisan) for the first time.*

## LETTER 1: FIRST VIEW OF JAPAN

Eighteen days of unintermitted rolling over “desolate rainy seas” brought the “City of Tokyo” early yesterday morning to Cape King, and by noon we were steaming up the Gulf of Yedo, quite near the shore. The day was soft and grey with a little faint blue sky, and, though the coast of Japan is much more prepossessing than most coasts, there were no startling surprises either of colour or form. Broken wooden ridges, deeply cleft, rise from the water’s edge, grey, deep-roofed villages cluster about the mouths of the ravines, and terraces of rice cultivation, bright with the greenness of English lawns, run up to a great height among the dark masses of upland forest. The populousness of the coast is very impressive, and the gulf everywhere was equally populated with fishing-boats, of which we passed not only hundreds, but thousands, in five hours. The coast and sea were pale, and the boats were pale too, their hulls being unpainted wood, and their sails pure white duck. Now and then a high-sterned junk drifted by like a phantom galley,

Then we slackened speed to avoid exterminating a fleet of triangular-looking fishing-boats with white square sails, and so on through the grayness and dumbness hour after hour.

For long I looked in vain for Fujisan, and failed to see it, though I heard ecstasies all over the deck, till, accidentally looking heavenwards instead of earthwards, I saw far above any possibility of height, as one would have thought, a huge, truncated cone of pure snow, 13,080 feet above the sea, from which it sweeps upwards in a glorious curve, very wan, against a very pale blue sky, with its base and intervening country veiled in a pale grey mist. It was a wonderful vision, and shortly, as a vision, vanished...

I never saw a mountain rise in such lonely majesty, with nothing near or far to detract from its height and grandeur. No wonder that it is a sacred mountain, and so dear to the Japanese that their art is never weary of representing it...

The air and water alike motionless, the mist was still and pale, grey clouds lay restfully on a bluish sky, the reflections of the white sails of the fishing-boats scarcely quivered; it was all so pale, wan,

and ghastly, that the turbulence of crumpled foam which we left behind us, and our noisy, throbbing progress, seemed a boisterous intrusion upon sleeping Asia. The gulf narrowed, the forest-crested hills, the terraced ravines, the picturesque grey villages, the quiet beach life, and the pale blue masses of the mountains of the interior, became more visible. Fuji retired into the mist in which he enfolds his grandeur for most of the summer...

## **VOCABULARY**

**Prepossessing** — attractive, striking

**junk** — a type of medium or large sailing ship

**phantom galley** — a ghostly war ship

**Fujisan** — the Japanese name for 'Mt Fuji', a famous mountain

**wan** — sickly pale, ill

## TEXT B: CAPTAIN SCOTT'S DIARY

### Introduction

*Captain Robert Falcon Scott (1868–1912) was a famous Royal Navy officer and explorer. He and his four companions went on Scott's second expedition to the Antarctic; they reached the South Pole on 17 January 1912, just one month after their rival Norwegian party, led by Roald Amundsen. They realised that they had been beaten and tried to make it back to their base camp 700 miles away, but the journey back was full of misfortunes and tragically all of the men died, the last two (Scott himself and one other) being caught in a blizzard.*

**Tuesday, August 29th, 1911 -**

I find that the card of the sunshine recorder showed an hour and a half's burn yesterday and was very faintly marked on Saturday; already, therefore, the sun has given us warmth, even if it can only be measured instrumentally.

Last night Meares told us of his adventures in and about Lolo land, a wild Central Asian country ... He had no pictures and very makeshift maps, yet he held us really entranced for nearly two hours by the sheer interest of his adventures. The spirit of the wanderer is in Meares' blood: he has no happiness but in the wild places of the earth. I have never met so extreme type. Even now he is looking forward to getting away by himself to Hut Point, tired already of our scant measure of civilisation.

[...]

We are all adventurers here, I suppose, and wild doings in wild countries appeal to us as nothing else could do. It is good to know that there remain wild corners of this dreadfully civilised world.

We have had a bright fine day.



## Wednesday, January 17 1912—

Camp 69. T. -22 degrees at start. Night -21 degrees. The Pole. Yes, but under very different circumstances from those expected. We have had a horrible day — add to our disappointment a head wind 4 to 5, with a temperature -22 degrees, and companions labouring on with cold feet and hands.

We started at 7.30, none of us having slept much after the shock of our discovery. We followed the Norwegian sledge tracks for some way; as far as we make out there are only two men. In about three miles we passed two small cairns. Then the weather overcast, and the tracks being increasingly drifted up and obviously going too far to the West, we decided to make straight for the Pole according to our calculations. At 12.30 Evans had such cold hands we camped for lunch — an excellent 'week-end one.' ...To-night little Bowers is laying himself out to get sights in terrible difficult circumstances; the wind is blowing hard, T. — 21 degrees, and there is that curious damp, cold feeling in the air which chills one to the bone in no time. We have been descending again, I think, but there looks to be a rise ahead; otherwise there is very little that is different from the awful monotony of past days.

Great God! this is an awful place and terrible enough for us to have laboured to it without the reward of priority. Well, it is something to have got here, and the wind may be our friend to-morrow. ...Now for the run home and a desperate struggle. I wonder if we can do it.

Friday, March 16 or Saturday 17 1912— Lost track of dates, but think the last is correct. Tragedy all along the line. At lunch, the day before yesterday, poor Titus Oates said he couldn't go on; he proposed we should leave him in his sleeping-bag. That we could not do, and we induced him to come on, on with the afternoon march. In spite of its awful nature for him he struggled on and we made a few miles. At night he was worse and we knew the end had come.

Should this be found I want these facts recorded. Oates' last thoughts were of his Mother, but immediately before he took pride in thinking that his regiment would be pleased with the bold way in which he met his death. We can testify to his bravery. He has borne intense suffering for weeks without complaint, and to the very last was able and willing to discuss outside subjects. He did not — would not — give up hope till the very end.

He was a brave soul. This was the end. He slept through the night before last, hoping not to wake; but he woke in the morning — yesterday. It was blowing a blizzard. He said, 'I am just going outside and may be some time.' He went out into the blizzard and we have not seen him since."



# EXAM STYLE QUESTIONS

1. Read again the first part of the Source in Text A, up to the end of the first paragraph ending in "...like a phantom galley.". Choose four statements below which are TRUE. (4 marks)

- There was constant rain during the journey to Japan, but the sky cleared when they arrived there.
- Isabella travelled to Japan by boat.
- Isabella thought that Japan was completely different from England and bore no resemblance to the landscape she was used to back at home.
- The landscape of Japan included rice fields.
- Isabella saw dense forests rising upwards from the coastline.
- Not many people lived in the little fishing villages around the coasts.
- There were lots of vibrant and lively colours when Isabella first encountered the Japanese scenery.
- Some of the boats were frighteningly large and silent, like ghosts.

**2. You need to refer to Source A and Source B for this question. Use details from both Sources. Write a summary of the differences between the writers' experiences of visiting new places. (8 marks)**

### **Alternative Question:**

If you're not confident yet on writing a comparative summary and you'd just like to practice a straightforward summary question first, try this one below:

**Write a summary of the first impressions that Isabella encounters when she arrives in Japan, including her experience of the landscape, Mount Fuji and the people. Use quotations and short analysis to justify your response. (8 marks)**

**3. How does Isabella use language to try and influence the reader's beliefs about Japan? Write PEE paragraphs to justify your response. (12 marks)**

4. For this question, you need to refer to the whole of Source A, together with the final diary entry of Source B, entitled “Friday, March 16 or Saturday 17 1912”. Compare how the writers convey their different attitudes to travelling and exploration. (16 marks)

In your answer, you could:

- Compare their different attitudes about travelling / exploration
- Compare the methods they use to convey their attitudes
- Support your ideas with references to both texts

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