

**RUAЕ**

**THE 5 MARK  
QUESTION**

**HIGHER ENGLISH**

# WHAT IS THE 5 MARK QUESTION?

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- It is one of the most obvious differences between National 5 and Higher
- At National 5 you were given one passage and 30 marks worth of questions to answer on it
- At Higher, there are two related passages and the 5 mark question asks you to find either similarities or differences between the ideas of each one
- It's another type of Understanding question – some use of own words/paraphrasing of each writer's ideas is required
- At Higher there continues to be 30 marks available for RUAЕ but there is an additional half hour of time allocated to Higher RUAЕ to reflect this additional challenge, as well as the need to analyse more examples of language and/or individual examples in more detail at Higher

# WHAT DOES IT LOOK LIKE?

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You will either be asked to find three areas of agreement between two passages or three areas of disagreement.

For example,

## Question on both passages

### 9. Look at both passages.

The writers agree that music being played in public places is undesirable.

Identify **three** key areas on which they agree. You should support the points by referring to important ideas in both passages.

You may answer this question in continuous prose or in a series of developed bullet points.

# AND A DISAGREEMENT QUESTION...

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## Question on both passages

9. Look at both passages.

The writers disagree on the challenges created by the internet.

Identify **three** key areas on which they disagree. You should support the points you make by referring to important ideas in both passages.

You may answer this question in continuous prose or in a series of developed bullet points.

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# HOW MUCH TIME SHOULD YOU SPEND ON IT?

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- If you are in a timed exam situation, you should aim to leave around 15-20 minutes at the end of the 1 hour and 30 minutes to allow yourself enough time to properly attempt this question
- It's worth remembering that by the time you get around to attempting this question, you will have answered 25 marks worth of questions on the first passage and should therefore have a pretty good sense of the ideas of the first writer at this stage
- It would not be sensible to read both passages at the start of the assessment as you don't really need to read the second passage until you are about to attempt the last question – reading both at the start could just be confusing and would likely waste time as you'll need to read it again later on anyway

# SOME IMPORTANT THINGS TO NOTE

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When you are looking for similarities or differences between the ideas of each passage, it's really important that you ensure these are ***thematically linked***, meaning that the ideas should be about the ***same aspect of the issue being discussed***

e.g. 'The writers agree that homeschooling is challenging because broadband access can be bad in rural areas of Scotland' - **this would be a valid selection as the ideas are both about the same aspect of homeschooling**

'The writers agree that homeschooling is challenging because passage one says parents are trying to work at home whilst also educating their kids and passage two says not every household has enough devices for home learning for all children at the same time'. - **this would be an invalid selection as while there is an agreement that homeschooling is challenging, the selection of ideas are on unrelated topics within the overarching issue of homeschooling**



# IDEAS SHOULD BE DISTINCT FROM EACH OTHER

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As with Understanding questions, your answers need to be distinct from each other to ensure that you maximise your potential to get marks.

e.g.

- ‘Both writers argue that poor internet access is a barrier to homeschooling’
- ‘The passages agree that broadband issues make home learning difficult.’

Although these look different on the face of it, they are too similar in meaning and therefore you would only be able to get one mark rather than two



# BE CAREFUL NOT TO REPEAT THE QUESTION

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The question will tell you what the passages agree or disagree on in a broad way, but you should avoid repeating this statement as one of your areas of agreement/disagreement

## Question on both passages

### 9. Look at both passages.

The writers agree that music being played in public places is undesirable.

Identify **three** key areas on which they agree. You should support the points by referring to important ideas in both passages.

You may answer this question in continuous prose or in a series of developed bullet points.

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In this example from 2017, lots of candidates lost marks as they put ‘Both writers dislike muzak’ as one of their areas of agreement. This area of agreement is implied in the question and therefore marks were not awarded if this was simply repeated in an answer.

# READ THE QUESTION CAREFULLY

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- The question is not always straightforward and it is therefore important that you are really clear about what you are being asked to do, which may differ year to year

8. Look at both passages.

Both writers agree on important qualities shared by major political figures.

Identify **three** key qualities **shared** by Nelson Mandela and Barack Obama. You should support the points you make by referring to important ideas in the passages.

You may answer this question in continuous prose or in a series of developed bullet points.

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- This example from 2018 was done badly by many candidates as they stated facts about each leader rather than thinking about shared qualities. For example, many pointed out similarities such as that they are both black and had historic election wins but what the SQA were looking for, were **qualities** such as charisma and self-respect.

# IMPORTANT TO NOTE

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Although you are being asked to identify three areas of agreement/disagreement, there are usually around 7 or 8 valid selections in the SQA marking scheme.

The setters of the exam carefully select and scrutinise the two passages they set to ensure that there are plenty of similarities or differences for you to identify.

This is the same for any of the other question types – when you look at the marking instructions for any of the RUAЕ or Set Texts papers, there are usually always more acceptable answers than there are marks available.

So although this task is new and may seem daunting, the papers are designed to help you succeed, not fail.



# EXAM TECHNIQUES

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- As with the other questions in the exam, highlighters will be your friend. Bringing three different colours of highlighter with you in to an exam or assessment, can be really helpful when identifying and picking out ideas.
- It is always ok to write on/highlight an exam paper and in fact, it is encouraged
- e.g. you might highlight an idea in passage one in **yellow** and do the same for the corresponding idea in passage two
- Once you have selected the ideas, you can then find where these are in each passage more quickly when you come to write up your answer

# HOW TO LAYOUT THE RESPONSE

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- As with the 10 mark question for Scottish Set Texts, having an understanding of how the question is marked, really helps you to get a better idea of the best way to present your ideas
- The question gives some idea of how you might approach it

You may answer this question in continuous prose or in a series of developed bullet points.

- As with the 10 mark question, bullet pointed responses are the most efficient and most clear way to present your ideas in the 5 mark question
- It is clearer for the marker and lets you do a quick mental check to see that you have covered everything

# HOW THE QUESTION IS MARKED

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In this question you are required to do the following –

- identify three areas of agreement or disagreement
- provide a more specific description of what the ideas of each writer are for each area

Logic would suggest that this would be better as a 6 mark question – two marks for each area of agreement/disagreement

However, an understanding of the marking process is key to understanding how to approach and layout your answer to get those five marks



# THE SQA MARKING PROCESS

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The SQA RUAЕ marking team are instructed to mark as follows

- a maximum of three marks is available for identification of three valid areas of agreement or disagreement. This becomes two marks if only two areas are identified and one mark\* for only one area - these should be awarded first
- An additional 1 or 2 marks can then be awarded to the overall response depending on the level of detail/insight of the discussion of the writer's ideas. You can quote from the passage but quoting alone will not get you additional marks. *There must be an attempt from you to explain the writer's ideas in your own words*
- The level of depth and insight has to be consistent across the answer for two marks to be awarded

\* there is only one additional mark available for describing the ideas of each writer, if only one valid area has been identified.

# TAKEN FROM THE SQA MARKING INSTRUCTIONS

Candidates can use bullet points in this final question or write a number of linked statements.

The following guidelines should be used:

Award **5 marks** for identification of three key areas of disagreement with detailed/insightful use of supporting evidence.

Award **4 marks** for identification of three key areas of disagreement with appropriate use of supporting evidence.

Award **3 marks** for identification of three key areas of disagreement.

Award **2 marks** for identification of two key areas of disagreement.

Award **1 mark** for identification of one key area of disagreement.

Award **0 marks** for failure to identify any key areas of disagreement and/or misunderstanding of the task.

NB: A candidate who identifies only two key areas of disagreement may be awarded up to a maximum of four marks, as follows:

- two marks for identification of two key areas of disagreement **plus:**

**either**

- a further mark for appropriate use of supporting evidence to a total of three marks

**or**

- a further two marks for detailed/insightful use of supporting evidence to a total of four marks

A candidate who identifies only one key area of disagreement may be awarded up to a maximum of two marks, as follows:

- one mark for identification of one key area of disagreement, plus a further mark for use of supporting evidence to a total of two marks

# TEMPLATE FOR ANSWER

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The passages agree/disagree about...

1 mark

- passage one...
- passage two...

The passages agree/disagree about...

1 mark

- passage one...
- passage two...

The passages agree/disagree about...

1 mark

- passage one...
- passage two...

Detailed and insightful evidence	+ 2 marks
Brief discussion of ideas of each writer	+ 1 mark
No evidence/quotation only	+ 0 marks

## WORKED EXAMPLE

1. Both passages agree that if you ask for the music to be turned off, people will be surprised.
  - The writer of passage one states that other people look at you with 'hostile stares' suggesting that any requests to turn the music down or off, are unwelcomed by others.
  - The writer of passage two gives an anecdote about a time he tried to turn the music in a café off but was reprimanded by the staff in the establishment.
2. Both passages agree that muzak is everywhere now and you can't escape it.
  - Passage one describes how background music is present everywhere you go and that listening to it is no longer a conscious decision made by an individual.
  - The writer in passage two describes how it is a British-wide problem, citing as evidence that he travels for work and finds muzak in almost all hotels/restaurants/cafes he visits.
3. Both passages agree that the music is of a poor quality.
  - The writer of passage one is critical of the amount of muzak that is generated by machines now and not by human talent, which results in the music all sounding the same.
  - Passage two describes muzak as 'tedious' and 'bland' which suggests that he thinks it is boring, monotonous and uninspiring, the opposite of what good music should be.

1

1

1

2

<b>Marks for areas of agreement</b>	3
<b>Marks for quality of explanation of writers' ideas</b>	2

# WHAT TO DO IF YOU ARE SHORT ON TIME

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- The best approach, if time is running out, would be to jot down your three areas of agreement/disagreement first, giving you a chance to get at least three marks, if these are valid. You could leave spaces under each to then go back and add in your supporting evidence
- If you attempt to give one area *and* supporting detail, your maximum number of marks would be 2 and therefore, the above approach is better in terms of how to use the little time you have more efficiently

## WHAT TO DO NEXT

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You are now going to use the '5 Mark Question' document to practise this skill. It provides further exemplification and there are some passages on there which are no longer available on the SQA website.