



ENGLISH WRITING MARK SCHEMES

LEVEL 6 TESTS

Writing mark schemes
Creating a character
World improvement

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Introduction

This booklet contains the mark schemes for the Optional level 6 writing test. They were devised after trialling the tests with pupils. The mark schemes indicate the criteria on which judgements should be made.

The same set of assessment focuses has been used for the Optional level 6 test in writing as for national curriculum end of key stage tests. The assessment focuses are drawn from the national curriculum, directly related to the national strategies and form the basis of the Assessing Pupil Progress framework.

The last section of this booklet provides information about interpreting the scores from the tests.

Assessment focuses

The assessment focuses assess pupils' ability to:

-
- AF1** Write imaginative, interesting and thoughtful texts
-
- AF2** Produce texts which are appropriate to the task, reader and purpose
-
- AF3** Organise and present whole texts effectively, sequencing and structuring information, ideas and events
-
- AF4** Construct paragraphs and use cohesion within and between paragraphs
-
- AF5** Vary sentences for clarity, purpose and effect
-
- AF6** Write with technical accuracy of syntax and punctuation in phrases, clauses and sentences
-
- AF7** Select appropriate and effective vocabulary
-
- AF8** Use the correct spelling
-

Copies of the writing tasks are provided for reference. The writing mark scheme comprises three sections: the longer writing task, the shorter writing task and criteria for marking spelling. For both tasks, the mark scheme describes performance at the target level first, then performance at the level below the target level. Performance above the target level is not described as the test is seeking to confirm that a pupil is working at the level of the test. To support markers in reaching a judgement, two exemplar scripts for each task, with commentaries, have been included.

The mark schemes are organised in strands in the same way as national curriculum end of key stage tests. Features described in each strand are customised to be task specific, but are drawn from the generic writing mark scheme for single level tests. This matches the requirements of the mark scheme used to develop national curriculum test writing mark schemes.

Longer writing task mark scheme

Assessment focuses are grouped into strands, as follows:

Strand	Acronym	Assessment focus	Marks available
Sentence structure and punctuation	SSP	AF5 AF6	Up to 4 marks
Text structure and organisation	TSO	AF3 AF4	Up to 4 marks
Composition and effect	CE	AF1 AF2	Up to 6 marks
Spelling	S	AF8	Up to 2 marks

The total number of marks available for the longer writing task is 16.

Vocabulary (AF7) is relevant to all strands and is identified in the criteria where appropriate.

The key areas related to each strand and how these are reflected in the bullet points in the criteria are shown below.

Strand	Bullet points
Sentence structure and punctuation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Variety, clarity and accuracy of sentence structures • Accuracy of sentence grammar and punctuation
Text structure and organisation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coherence <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – how the whole text hangs together, including order and sequence, and structural features such as openings and closings • Cohesion <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – how different sections of the text are organised including grouping of material, connecting and developing ideas within paragraphs / sections
Composition and effect	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adaptation to purpose, form and reader • Viewpoint <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – establishing and maintaining the position / stance of author, narrator, characters or others • Style <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – stylistic features in choice of language and technical or literary devices
Spelling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accuracy of spelling, including complex regular patterns, and that of irregular words

Shorter writing task mark scheme

For the purposes of marking the shorter writing task, related assessment focuses have been drawn together into two strands, in a slightly different way from those of the longer writing task.

Strand	Acronym	Assessment focus	Marks available
Sentence structure, punctuation and text organisation	SSPTO	AF4 AF5 AF6	Up to 3 marks
Composition and effect	CE	AF1 AF2	Up to 4 marks

The total number of marks available for the shorter writing task is 7.

Vocabulary (AF7) is relevant to all strands and is identified in the criteria where appropriate.

Because the task is designed to elicit succinct responses, there is some change of emphasis in the assessment focuses grouped to form sentence structure, punctuation and text organisation: AF3 is not assessed, nor is *construct paragraphs* or *cohesion between paragraphs* from AF4.

The key areas related to each strand and how these are reflected in the bullet points in the criteria are shown below.

Strand	Bullet points
Sentence structure, punctuation and text organisation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Variety, clarity and accuracy of sentence structures • Accuracy of sentence grammar and punctuation • Cohesion – how different sections of the text are organised including grouping of material, connecting and developing ideas within paragraphs / sections
Composition and effect	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adaptation to purpose, form and reader • Viewpoint – establishing and maintaining the position / stance of author, narrator, characters or others • Style – stylistic features in choice of language and technical or literary devices

Spelling

Spelling is assessed on the longer writing task. The criteria given in the mark scheme are based on the national curriculum level descriptors. Pupils' spelling should be reviewed after both tasks have been marked. The criteria for the target level describe the types of words a pupil would be expected to spell correctly. Qualifiers such as *usually*, *some* and *most* are used to guide the application of the criteria.

The tasks

Shorter writing task: Creating a character

Your class has been concentrating on different elements of short stories. As part of this work, you have been asked to create a character in a short story, using one or two of the objects below. The object(s) should be important to the character in some way.



Two tickets



A strange shaped parcel



A book of poetry



An antique watch

Your task is to write the first two or three paragraphs of a short story, introducing the character.

Planning

Think about:

- why the object(s) is/are important to the character
- how the character can be shown in your writing (eg behaviour, appearance).

Longer writing task: **World improvement**

A current affairs magazine is running a competition for young writers.

The editor wants articles that continue from the following words:
'The world would be a better place if ...'.

The best writing, in the judgement of the editor, will be published in the magazine. The content and title of the article are left open for the writers.

Your task is to write an engaging, imaginative and well-argued article, continuing from the introductory words provided by the magazine, 'The world would be a better place if ...'.

Planning page: use this page to make **notes**. This page will not be marked.

World improvement

Think about:

- themes and topics
- developing your ideas
- ways to engage the reader.

Mark schemes

Marking procedures

The criteria should be applied in the order they are given so that a picture of the strengths and weaknesses of each response is built up cumulatively. For each strand, a judgement has to be made about whether the writing fulfils the requirements of the target level. If there is some doubt, then the criteria from the level below should be considered, and then a judgement made about the description which best matches the script. Once a decision has been reached, markers must decide which of the mark points to award. The full range of mark points should be employed, as the test is not assessing performance at the level above the target level.

The examples and italicised features are not requirements of the writing. Instead, they illustrate common ways in which the feature was exemplified in pupils' writing during pre-testing. They are not intended to be evidence of achievement at that level nor a hurdle for pupils where they are not seen.

Level 6 writing mark scheme: longer task – World improvement

Assessment focus	AF5	AF6	AF3	AF4	AF1	AF2
	Vary sentences for clarity, purpose and effect.	Write with technical accuracy of syntax and punctuation in phrases clauses and sentences.	Organise and present whole texts effectively, sequencing and structuring information, ideas and events.	Construct paragraphs and use cohesion within and between paragraphs.	Write imaginative, interesting and thoughtful texts.	Produce texts which are appropriate to the task, reader and purpose.
Strand	Composition and effect					
Level 6	<p>Sentence structure and punctuation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Generally controlled use of a variety of simple and complex sentences with a range of grammatical structures used to vary length and focus, eg effective placing of clauses and complex noun or prepositional phrases supports meaning and purpose (<i>May I suggest...; often broken homes</i>). Use of a range of verb forms, eg impersonal constructions or passive voice to contribute sense of objectivity (<i>something has to be done</i>). Mostly secure range of appropriate punctuation used to mark the structure of sentences and to give clarity, eg some slips in use of comma or semicolon. 	<p>Text structure and organisation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Structure of the article is controlled and focused on the purpose. Paragraphs are linked in a variety of ways to signal overall direction clearly for the reader, eg linking ideas both forwards and backwards; anticipating reader's questions / reactions (<i>Read on to find out...</i>); concluding the argument with a summative sentence or challenge to the reader. Within paragraphs, ideas are organised and developed to support opinion and purpose using a range of cohesive devices, eg adverbials to begin sentences, guidance to the reader / reference chains (<i>As I said earlier; culprit / enslave / torture</i>). 	<p>Composition and effect</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The article explains ideas thoroughly (<i>giving money to charity would make the world a better place</i>), achieving its intended purpose and firmly engaging the reader's interest. Ideas are convincingly argued and well developed, eg a range of supporting reasons and evidence is given (<i>people would be much healthier</i>). The viewpoint is well focused and maintained, eg a strongly held position; an awareness of wider perspective; the use of an impersonal viewpoint (<i>some are of the opinion that...</i>). A range of stylistic features is used to achieve purpose and express opinions, attitudes and feelings, eg figurative or persuasive language (<i>the world is crying out for help; those planet-destroying machines</i>); rhetorical questions (<i>Why do we sit back and do nothing?</i>); deliberate use of colloquial language (<i>It is down to you!</i>). 			
Marks	3 or 4	3 or 4	3 or 4	4, 5 or 6	4, 5 or 6	4, 5 or 6

Level 6 writing mark scheme: longer task – World improvement

Assessment focus	AF5	AF6	AF3	AF4	AF1	AF2	
Strand	Composition and effect						
Below level 6	Sentence structure and punctuation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Variety in sentence structure, length, and subject provides clarity and emphasis, with phrases and clauses building up relevant detail and information (<i>the clean fresh air</i>). Some effective choices of subordinating connectives articulate development of argument (<i>it is because of this; although it may seem difficult</i>). Generally accurate use of complex verb phrases (<i>could involve; has been</i>); movement between tenses is used to add comment. A range of punctuation used almost always accurately to demarcate sentences, with generally accurate use of commas within sentences, eg some errors where ambitious structures attempted. 	Text structure and organisation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The article is structured clearly with paragraphs used to manage its overall argument and direction generally effectively, eg closings that refer back to openings, paragraphs that are in a logical order. Within paragraphs, a range of cohesive devices is used to develop or elaborate ideas, eg wider use of pronouns, use of <i>furthermore / for example</i>. 	Composition and effect <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Aspects of the article are adapted and engage the reader's attention, eg by creating interest; use of repetition to emphasise conclusion; some development of the reasons for the choice. A clear and consistent viewpoint is established and controlled, eg explanation shows some awareness of the ways in which their idea could make the world a better place. Some stylistic features add emphasis and interest, eg use of persuasive / figurative language to add emphasis. 	Composition and effect <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Aspects of the article are adapted and engage the reader's attention, eg by creating interest; use of repetition to emphasise conclusion; some development of the reasons for the choice. A clear and consistent viewpoint is established and controlled, eg explanation shows some awareness of the ways in which their idea could make the world a better place. Some stylistic features add emphasis and interest, eg use of persuasive / figurative language to add emphasis. 	Composition and effect <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Aspects of the article are adapted and engage the reader's attention, eg by creating interest; use of repetition to emphasise conclusion; some development of the reasons for the choice. A clear and consistent viewpoint is established and controlled, eg explanation shows some awareness of the ways in which their idea could make the world a better place. Some stylistic features add emphasis and interest, eg use of persuasive / figurative language to add emphasis. 	Composition and effect <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Aspects of the article are adapted and engage the reader's attention, eg by creating interest; use of repetition to emphasise conclusion; some development of the reasons for the choice. A clear and consistent viewpoint is established and controlled, eg explanation shows some awareness of the ways in which their idea could make the world a better place. Some stylistic features add emphasis and interest, eg use of persuasive / figurative language to add emphasis. 	Composition and effect <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Aspects of the article are adapted and engage the reader's attention, eg by creating interest; use of repetition to emphasise conclusion; some development of the reasons for the choice. A clear and consistent viewpoint is established and controlled, eg explanation shows some awareness of the ways in which their idea could make the world a better place. Some stylistic features add emphasis and interest, eg use of persuasive / figurative language to add emphasis.
Marks	1 or 2	1 or 2	1 or 2	1 or 2	1, 2 or 3	1, 2 or 3	
	A response that does not meet the criteria for below level 6 should be awarded 0 marks.						

Level 6 writing mark scheme: spelling

Spelling should be assessed on the longer task only. The table below indicates the features of spelling likely to be seen at level 6 and below level 6. Common error patterns should not override evidence drawn from successful spelling when deciding the level.

Features of spelling	
Level 6	Spelling is generally accurate, including that of irregular words..
Marks	2
Below level 6	Words with complex regular patterns usually spelled correctly.
Marks	1
	Spelling which does not meet the criteria for below level 6 should be awarded 0 marks.

Examples of pupils' work

Creating a character – example 1

Jonathan Medway was a friendly and cheerful man. He had a nice home, a good wife and two beautiful children. He wore smart clothes and in his top pocket he had a small antique watch. This was his prized possession. It went with him everywhere. Now, being a well mannered and very polite person he always liked to make sure he had a book of poetry with him as he found reading poems calmed him down if someone irritated him.

Jonathan's job was very important. He worked in a bank. It was from this bank he made a very good friend, which he was eternally grateful for. The same friend gave him his train tickets so that, rather than walk, he could take a relaxing steam train ride through the countryside from his home. When he was back home his wife Gertrude always had dinner on the table. Sometimes it was pork and vegetables with apple crumble for pudding or a roast dinner with a slice of delicious, home made victoria sponge cake.

One day, when he was back from work, he found a strange looking parcel on the table waiting for him. Jonathan had never seen such a bazaar looking parcel. He walked over, and being a curious man, opened it.

Sentence structure, punctuation and text organisation	Composition and effect
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Varied sentence lengths, with some well-controlled complex sentences that develop aspects of the character's attitudes and feelings (<i>which he was eternally grateful for</i>) Some use of adverbials to shift sentence focus (<i>One day, when he was back from work...</i>) Accurate punctuation, including commas to give clarity A range of cohesive devices provide links: demonstrative pronouns (<i>This was his prized possession</i>); varied reference (<i>a very good friend / The same friend</i>); itemising of food. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The description of the character is developed, incorporating several of the items to provide details of character and give context (work and home life), before using another (<i>a strange looking parcel</i>) as an effective plot device Mainly controlled narrative voice (<i>Now, being a well mannered...</i>) varied between telling (<i>a friendly and cheerful man</i>) and using details to illustrate the character (<i>he always liked to make sure he had a book of poetry with him</i>) Some descriptive details (<i>a relaxing steam train ride; delicious, home made victoria sponge cake</i>) add interest and are used to reveal the character's attitudes. More stylistic features would be needed for a higher mark.
1 mark	2 marks

Creating a character – example 2

Sachir stepped into the open court yard. The lush green grass rippled, vibrations dancing on their tips in the wind. Hot and sticky the sun beat down on Sachir's fair, freckled skin and a pair of misty glasses sat on the end of his twisted nose. He looked bedraggled: the rags of clothes hung off his arms, sweat running through the creases. His cold breaths out, cold, like ice on the hot air, evaporated. His brown hair licked at his hunched shoulders. There was an antique clock hung over the position of his heart, ticking just ticking.

Sachir shook vigorously as he walked, almost as if the clock was controlling him as there was a discreet rock forward every second. As he ticked backwards and forwards he steadily moved towards the wooden doorframe. His eyes flickered and he was swallowed up by the rush of cool air. There were things that were quite unusual about the building: the cabinets of sports trophies, nothing like the man that stood there today; the clouded, dark computers, entangled in moss and ivy and then there was a little strange shaped parcel in the far corner. This was what he made his way towards first.

His rusty tin shoes clacked and clopped on his way over and the weedy plants appeared to swivel away from the man's odour. The parcel seemed to connect with the man as his finger tips touched it gently. A spark, and the parcel seemed to change shape. Not only that, but Sachir's crooked nose seemed slightly less crooked.

As he entered his room, the venacular changed drastically and there was an array of colours. His tick seemed less vigorous and he lay down and went to sleep.

Sentence structure, punctuation and text organisation

- Variety of sentence structures which are generally controlled in length with effective placing of phrases and clauses to extend description (*sweat running through the creases; cold, like ice on the hot air*); subjects used effectively to shift sentence focus (*Sachir; the long green grass; There was an antique clock*)
- Verb forms managed well: simple past tense for narration (*Sachir shook vigorously*); passive (*he was swallowed up*); impersonal constructions to suggest a change of setting (*There were things...*) and verbs of perception to create uncertainty (*seemed to change shape*)
- Punctuation is accurate and appropriate for the form
- Cohesion achieved through the use of pronouns to refer to objects (*This was what he made his way towards first*) and ideas (*Not only that, but...*) and the recurrent theme of the ticking clock.

3 marks

Composition and effect

- The description engages the reader's interest, embedding the image of the watch in the character's behaviour and using precise details of the man and setting to establish a sense of atmosphere and clearly leading into a potentially longer narrative
- Narrative voice is mostly controlled, presenting a picture of a strange character whose situation, thoughts and feelings can be inferred from the description (*bedraggled; hunched shoulders; His eyes flickered*)
- Descriptive stylistic features develop details (*dark computers, entangled in moss and ivy*); alliteration (*His rusty tin shoes clacked and clopped*) and figurative language add to the convincing depiction (*vibrations dancing on their tips; His brown hair licked...; the weedy plants appeared to swivel away*).

3 marks

World improvement – example 1

The world would be a better place if...there was no global warming. If there was no global warming, there would be less endangered animals, no risk of flooding because of melting ice caps, no climate change, no thinning ozone layer... the list goes on and on. Who would want to live in a world without polar bears? If we keep on melting the ice caps, the polar bears will become extinct.

Thanks to global warming, there are also flood hazards because melting ice caps means rising sea levels; rising sea levels means flood hazards; flood hazards mean health hazards. To put it shortly, if we don't want our houses flooded, we need to stop global warming.

As for climate change, that's the earth heating up. This causes changes in the weather. And the thinning ozone layer? Well, if we make a hole in the layer like in the Arctic, in the place where the hole was there would be no protection against the sun's rays. And that could lead to serious sunburn.

Overall, global warming is a serious threat to our (and the polar bears) health and the issue should be seen to as soon as possible.

Save the Polar Bears, save yourself.

Sentence structure and punctuation	Text structure and organisation	Composition and effect
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Generally controlled use of varied sentence structures: short sentences and questions for emphasis; complex sentences to expand ideas; effective placing of phrases and clauses to establish topic (<i>As for climate change</i>) and build up relevant detail (<i>the thinning ozone layer</i>) Parallel structures used purposefully to support meaning and add emphasis Mostly accurate verb phrases used to express possibilities (<i>will become; need to stop; could lead</i>) Punctuation mostly secure with some range but occasional missed comma in complex sentences. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Paragraphs used to manage overall argument with some logical links between them; closing exhortation (<i>Save the Polar Bears</i>) refers to the opening; summary is weaker Within paragraphs, deliberate repetition, inclusive pronouns (<i>we, our</i>), adverbials to begin sentences (<i>To put it shortly</i>) and demonstrative pronouns (<i>this, that</i>) aid cohesion, although ideas need further development for a higher mark. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A single theme is developed in a number of ways to engage the reader's attention, eg by making a global issue (<i>endangered animals</i>) of more direct concern (<i>if we don't want our houses flooded</i>) but some circular argument and limited content Consistent viewpoint with clear explanation of the dangers and some passion (<i>Who would want to live in a world without polar bears?</i>) Stylistic features add emphasis and interest: rule of three, rhetorical questions, direct and inclusive address, although some of these might be more appropriate to a speech; vocabulary choices should be more adventurous for the higher level.
3 marks	2 marks	3 marks
Spelling		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Spelling is generally accurate, including that of irregular words (<i>endangered, extinct, protection</i>). 		
2 marks		

World improvement – example 2

The world would be a better place if...

WE HELP SAVE OUR TREES...TODAY!

The world would be a better place if we were to stop cutting down the rainforest. We all know that there are many endangered animals in the world and a lot of them live in the rainforest. We don't really need the wood from a rainforest: we could cut down the trees in our country because if we plant another tree here it will not take as long to grow as a rainforest tree. Did you know it can take thousands of years for a rainforest tree to become as tall as it can? And did you know that trees 'breath' out Oxygen and even better 'breath'in Carbon Dioxide? They literally provide the air we breathe.

Lots of people drink coffee and almost everyone eats chocolate. Both of these come from the rainforest. It might be an idea if we could have cocoa bean and coffee bean farms located away from rainforests. That way we will be able to enjoy our cups of coffee and bars of chocolate even more, without worrying about the rainforest being cut down.

But it's not just trees in the rainforest. Animals, too! Most children and adults alike have a favourite animal. It might be a jaguar, a tiger, a chimpanzee, an orangutan or maybe a frog! Many of these animals are becoming scarce. Orangutans, gorillas and chimpanzees all use the rainforest for their homes, to eat and to have fun. Their homes are being destroyed and cut down. Fortunately, there are people who rescue these animals and nurture them back to health and set them free. They are the lucky ones. Mothers with tiny babies and Fathers with pesky sons and daughters are killed. It doesn't only happen to apes; it happens to all creatures who live there. They are all being pushed into smaller and smaller areas of rainforest. Eventually there will be none left. We will have diminished the rainforest to nothing.

Which is where you come in. Fancy that nice mahogany table that you saw in SCS furniture store? Well, there was an oak version of it as well, one that came from sustainable woods, so get that one. Everyone can help. It is simple little choices like that that will save a tree in the rainforest today!

Sentence structure and punctuation	Text structure and organisation	Composition and effect
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sentences are generally controlled with a variety of structures: complex sentences with embedded clauses (<i>because if we plant another tree here it will...</i>) and deliberately used minor and simple sentences for impact (<i>Animals, too!</i>; <i>They are the lucky ones.</i>) Range of verb forms used to support argument: modals, subjunctive (<i>if we were to stop cutting down</i>); passives (<i>Their homes are being destroyed</i>) Precise punctuation with appropriate range and some deliberate use of quotation marks to emphasise meaning. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The article is clearly focused on purpose with clear links made between paragraphs structurally (<i>But it's not just trees...</i>) and in the argument; conclusion provides effective summary and a deliberate reference to the opening statement Within paragraphs, ideas are well developed and linked by a range of cohesive devices: varied reference (<i>coffee and ...chocolate / Both of these</i>); demonstrative phrases (<i>That way</i>); reference chains (<i>smaller and smaller areas / none / diminished</i>). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ideas are thoroughly explained in the article with a range of supporting reasons from the factual to the emotive, resulting in an article which is convincingly argued and engages the reader's interest; the informal tone assists engagement but allows the spoken voice to dominate in places The author appears knowledgeable (<i>trees 'breath' out Oxygen</i>) and provides a wide perspective (<i>Most children and adults...</i>), maintaining an informed, consistent and occasionally passionate viewpoint Stylistic features are used to support the argument: emotive and precise vocabulary for appeal and impact (<i>literally; nurture them back to health; Fathers with pesky sons and daughters</i>); rhetorical questions; inclusive pronouns; deliberate use of colloquial language (<i>Fancy that nice mahogany table...?</i>).
4 marks	4 marks	5 marks
Spelling		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Spelling is almost always correct, including that of complex, irregular words (oxygen, breathe, mahogany). 		
2 marks		

Level threshold information

This section provides information about interpreting the scores from the Optional level 6 test in writing.

In order to make use of the information in this section, you should administer the tests according to the guidance given in the test administrators' guide. The guide can be downloaded from the NCA tools website at: www.qcda.gov.uk/nca_tools. It is particularly important that you observe the time limits given in the test instructions, and mark questions strictly according to the mark scheme. If not, the information derived from this section cannot be used reliably.

The table below gives an indication of the writing national curriculum level for pupils, based on their score in the test.

Writing test (maximum mark 23)

Score	Outcome
0–13 marks	Level 6 not achieved
14–23 marks	Level 6 achieved

The table below gives an indication of the overall English level for pupils, based on their aggregated score in the reading and writing tests. In order to use this information, the total scores on the reading test and writing test should be added together. Please note that information on interpreting the performance of pupils in the reading test can be found in the mark scheme for the reading test.

English (maximum mark 55)

Score	Outcome
0–26 marks	Level 6 not achieved
27–55 marks	Level 6 achieved

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