Explain, Comment and Analyse:

Assessment Objective:

AO2 Explain, comment on and analyse how writers use language and structure to achieve effects and influence readers, using relevant subject terminology to support their views.

These questions test a reader's ability to:

- comment on the words and phrases used by a writer
- consider the reasons why specific words, phrases and techniques have been selected
- think about how a writer may manipulate our feelings/perspective.

Before answering:

1. Read the question carefully and highlight what you are being asked to explain/ analyse/comment on (see example questions). There will be a SPECIFIC focus rather than a general analysis.
2. Re-read the section of text referred to in the question. For Component 1, you will be given specific lines to look at for AO2. For Component 2, you will usually be asked to look at the whole text. Read the text chronologically and highlight things which the writer has included that will aid you in your response.
3. Where relevant, highlight a RANGE of different techniques, words and phrases which are used by the writer.

When writing your answer:

- only comment on areas that are relevant to the question you have been asked;
- focus on (and highlight) the keywords from the question and keep referring to them;
- be concise with your explanations so you cover a wide range of points;
- do not repeat yourself – if a writer uses a technique try to deal with it and then move on rather than continually mentioning the same thing;
- work through the text chronologically so you do not overlook valuable ideas.

This is usually a higher tariff question so spend an appropriate amount of time on your answer.

Some examples of previous questions which focus on explain, comment and analyse:

Component 1:

How does the writer show the relationship between Jonathan and Frances in these lines? [10]

How does the writer show us the differences between Lucy and Maureen in these lines? [10]

How does the writer show us the character of Emma in these lines? [10]

Component 2:

How does the writer try to show that Nik Wallenda's tightrope walk was astonishing and dramatic? [10]

How does Tom Robbins try to make his account of Iceland's erupting volcano' exciting and dramatic? [10]

These questions are usually accompanied by an instruction such as:

You must refer to the language used in the text to support your answer, using relevant subject terminology where appropriate.

This information is intended to help you so ensure you read it carefully.

TOP TIP:

'How' AO2 questions require you to focus on either a section of text, or the whole text. Where relevant you can comment on a writer's use of language, techniques, structure, text organisation, pictures, tone and sentence construction. Make sure you **do not overlook the words and phrases selected by the writer**. **Many candidates are so focused on the techniques that they forget to comment on what is being said**.

How to answer concisely:

- **Link similar quotations together: "the writer uses... and... to show us..."**
- **Get to the point quickly: "it is easy to... because...the writer suggests..."**
- **Quotes must make sense but keep them brief. Never use ... in a quotation and then miss out the important information.**
- **Work out your sentence before you commit pen to paper and keep it focused when writing.**

Checklist for improving your answer:

- ☑ Have you used evidence to support your answer?
- ☑ Have you responded to the focus of the question?
- ☑ Have you commented on a range of techniques, details and language?
- ☑ Does your answer include a range of points from across the text?