

**GCSE English Language
Paper 1**

This extract is from the beginning of a crime story about a town where a mysterious crime has been committed. The extract tells the story of a detective involved in the solving of the crime of a detective involved in the solving of the crime.

Wednesday morning, 7am, West Hedley Police station. Emails, telephones, mobiles, memos: MEETING BRIEFING ROOM @ 7:15AM ALL MUST ATTEND. The capitals shouted up at the recipients. Amy had missed breakfast that morning, which was the main reason she was now hunting round the fifth floor for a working coffee machine, when her phone beeped announcing her message coming through. She frowned at the capitals and her lip curled at the lack of detail...and then she turned on heel, coffee forgotten, to make her way to the briefing room. There was a crush in the corridor ahead of her, so rather than wait, the detective snuck round the back, and took a short cut on the back staircase.

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All around the room there were little pockets of conversations happening: faces frowning and fingers pointing. There was a hum of displeasure mixed with the scintillating excitement of the mystery. Every officer, detective, inspector, and sergeant who was on shift that day had been called to this briefing. The air crackled with anticipation. The door banged and the governor strode in and stood at his podium, his face scrunching with a grimace as he waited for quiet. The quiet came quickly: a respectful hush fell over the room.

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The governor wasn't a young man, he had spent his early career as a regular beat policeman, and then worked for his degree at night school whilst doing desk work over in internal affairs. He wasn't liked, but then he wasn't disliked; people just took him for what he was: a thorough and ruthless copper. Since he had been in charge the station had undergone several changes- but whatever reshuffles and restructures they had, he had stayed. A rock amongst stormy waves. He didn't promote his friends and he never played favourites; but that was no surprise given that the man had no friends, no confidants, no allies.

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"Last night we had a report come in over the radio that more feet had been spotted washed up on Whitehouse Beach," he paused, waiting for that information to sink in. Like a key had been turned in the ignition, the room fired up; a low rumble of discontent, and then silence fell again as they awaited the next piece of information.

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"So far we have a team of officers taking statements, and the feet are already off with forensics. Everyone is being assigned teams and this is taking priority over any other existing cases," he paused. There were sounds of protest from the corner where Vice were stood. The governor's voice deepened by a semi tone, and he repeated himself, "over all other cases- no matter what they are. This needs to be cleared up, and fast. We've got Jaques Lachance standing trial this month, and I don't want this bugging it up," his voice bordered on snapping. Regaining his composure, he ran his hands through his greying hair, and muttered a thanks before striding out the room.

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The clapping echoed in the briefing room, and Amy visibly bristled. She continued to hand out the paperwork that she'd deliberately arranged to have in her hands during the inevitable clapping just so she could avoid joining in without drawing attention to herself. Detective Amy Forrester slipped out and went to her desk in the work room, sat down and pulled out a pad to take notes. Someone behind her passed her a coffee, and she smiled a thanks before balancing it on her knee. Inwardly she groaned, how would she get rid of this cup of coffee without anyone noticing? She knew it wouldn't be made the right way, and that she wouldn't want to drink it. Could she force it down? Possibly. But that would probably be as awful as being caught chucking it in the bin.

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She sighed, and pulled up her own briefing notes on the last case of disembodied feet washing up on Whitehouse Beach. Jacques Lachance had been the only lead in that case, and it wasn't one anyone wanted to reopen. It had been summer, and the first feet that had appeared had all been in such a state of decomposition that it had taken forensics ages to ascertain time of death, and even then the window was shaky. Lachance's defence relied entirely on that window being so vague. And now- now there are more feet being washed up, and Lachance locked up in Southport prison...how is that possible? Amy banged her hands on the desk and threw the papers back into the box file.

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Something caught her eye: a brown envelope with the sharp edge of photographic paper protruding from the side. With finger and thumb, she pinched the edge and pulled them out. She hadn't looked at these photographs since they finished working the case. They had been taken at the first crime scene. The ground was wet, and that unsightly grey sludge colour that you get when mud mixes with the yellow sand. And there, sat upon the sand, a single foot, still inside a trainer. The trainer was once a Nike Air Max, its large tick pointing skywards in a permanent correction, as if directing us towards the location of its last owner. Possibly male, possible female. The size of the shoe had been equally enigmatic: size 9. A tall woman, or a short man, or a growing boy, or, or, or...

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Amy's mind whirred and spun. The lack of certainty as to the identity made this messy police work. She didn't like the tangled threads of the case, a confusing muddle of possibilities and probabilities and erring on the side of both caution and doubt. She squeezed her eyes shut, and then blinked them open. Her eyes focused again on the photo; searching for the answer and finding only more questions. From her drawer she pulled out a magnifying lens and poured over the background; something in her gut told her that there was something more there. Something didn't look right.

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