**English Language Paper 1 Practice Paper #4**

**1) Read again the first part of the source, from lines 1 to 7.**

**List four things about the characters from this part of the source [4 marks]**

Possible answers:

1. The Doctor and M. Hautet carried the unconscious woman into the house.
2. The commissary shakes his head at what has happened.
3. He says the shock was too much for her.
4. The commisary says we can do nothing now.
5. He asks M. Poirot if he wishes to see the crime scene.
6. Poirot responses that he will if it pleases M. Bex.
7. Poirot looked up at the staircase and shook his head.

Other answers are acceptable as long as they are statements of fact and are about the characters. Remember that this question is marking you on information retrieval (AO1), identifying key information needed to answer the question.

2) **How does the writer use language here to describe the conversation about the murder?**

**You could include the writer's choice of:**

* **words and phrases**
* **Language features and techniques**
* **Sentence forms**

**[8 marks]**

Possible answers:

* There seems to be some tension developing between Poirot and the commissary. Poirot seems to question the commissary's ideas about the crime scene, "as though not fully accepting the explanation," we are told by the narrator. The commissary seems to prevent obstacles to Poirot's solutions ("But all the windows on the ground floor are barred with iron shutters").
* However, Poirot always has an answer to the commissary, and he uses a rhetorical question to try and shake off the authority of the commissary's facts: "That is the window of the bedroom we have just come from, is it not?" Poirot could have simply said there is a window without iron shutters on the first floor, but his use of the rhetorical question questions the authority and legitimacy of the commissary. Essentially, there is a bit of a power struggle going on between the two.
* Poirot continues this tactic of questioning the commissary's ideas by using hyperbole to suggest, "it would be the easiest thing in the world to mount." The commissary admits that Poirot might be right, "Possibly", but still continues to question his ideas.

**3) You now need to think about the whole of the source.**

**This text is from the middle of a novel.**

**How has the writer structured the text to interest you as a reader?**

**You could write about:**

* **what the writer focuses your attention on at the beginning of the source**
* **how and why the writer changes this focus as the source develops**
* **any other structural features that interest you**

**[8 marks]**

Possible answers:

* The chapter initially links to M. Renauld's discovery of her husband’s body from the previous chapter, and despite evoking pity from M. Bex, the characters are keen to investigate the scene of the crime straight away.
* The chapter is told from the perspective of another character, not Poirot, and so as readers we're able to witness the conversations between Poirot and those that challenge him, useful for a story that belongs in the crime genre.
* The extract shows Poirot making suggestions about the scene of the crime, only for the commissary to question them, and for Poirot to do the same to his statements of fact. This continual back-and-forth gives a sense of struggle or a battle for power over the other, perhaps even a sense of rivalry. The narrator seems to favour Poirot but does reluctantly agree with the commissary at times: "I saw the justice of his words."
* The focus of the extract shifts from one element of the crime scene to the next, from the staircase to the windows, to the tree and finally the flowerbed. It is as if we as readers are following Poirot's eyes as he analyses the crime scene, but we are waiting for his ideas and answers.
* There is clearly a great deal of tension between the characters by the end of the extract, with Poirot being very blunt with the commissary: "I do not agree with you. I have a little idea that these footprints are the most important things we have seen yet." This makes the narrator tell us he was astonished by Poirot's curtness. However, M. Bex. is reluctant to ask why or to challenge Poirot why, but Poirot ends the extract 'cheerfully', apparently with an idea in his head that we as readers are desperate to find out what it is.

**4) Focus this part of your answer on the second part of the source, from line 27 to the end.**

**A reader said, 'Poirot already has an idea of how the murder was committed, but is toying with the other characters.'**

**To what extent do you agree?**

**In your response, you could:**

* **consider the reasons why Poirot does not reveal his theories straight away.**
* **evaluate how the writer creates a sense of tension within the extract**
* **support your response with references to the text**

**[20 marks]**

Possible answers:

* In the second half of the extract, Poirot seems quieter than he was previously. We learn more about his actions through the narrator than his words. When the commissary suggests that there are no footprints, we are told: "
* Poirot went close to the bed and studied it attentively." Additionally: "Poirot nodded, as though convinced, and we turned away", so it seems like Poirot has reluctantly accepted what the commissary has said. However, "he suddenly darted off and began examining the other flower-bed." It is as if Poirot sees this investigation as a kind of game between himself and the commissary, refusing to accept ideas that go against his own and toying with the characters as he seems to have made one decision and then suddenly does something else.
* It feels like the commissary believes he has the upper-hand when we are told, "The commissary joined him-- and smiled." He then explains to Poirot that those footprints belong to the gardener's boots so are not relevant and are nowhere near the tree needed to gain entry to the first floor window. We are told Poirot is 'evidently crestfallen' (note the adverb 'evidently' implying that he only LOOKS disappointed, not that he actually is).
* Just like he did with the flower-beds, Poirot then suddenly comes to life and rebukes the commissary for his words, "Not the least in the world", using the antithesis of "the most important things we have seen yet" to completely contradict him. However, he does not tell us why and nor does M. Bex ask him so, as if angry that Poirot should speak to him in such a manner.
* Poirot ends the extract 'cheerfully', which implies that he knows something about the footprints we don't and neither do the other characters, and we won't learn what this is until 'later'. It's a clever way on Agatha Christie's part of keeping us invested in the story.
* So it feels like throughout this part of the extract that Poirot is already formulating theories in his head, that he is reluctant to reveal what those theories are until he has enough evidence to rebuke any challenges to his ideas, but he masterfully waits for the right moments and uses the right words to counter any arguments put forward in contradiction to his own.
* In a similar fashion to Sherlock Holmes, and pretty stereotypical of the crime fiction genre, Poirot seems one step ahead of everyone else and only reveals certain nuggets of information when he needs or wants to.