Welcome to GCSE English. In preparation for your first lesson, please read the passage below and attempt to answer the questions which follow (using Point-Evidence-Explain).

Please can you ensure that answers are handwritten and ready for submission on your first GCSE English lesson at WQE.

**In this lesson, your teacher will ask to see evidence of the Speaking and Listening grade you achieved last year. Please ensure you have a copy of this with you.**

**Introduction**

**The Task**

*Read carefully the passage below. Then answer the question which follows it.*

*The extract is taken from* The Grapes of Wrath *by John Steinbeck. The novel was published in 1939 and opens by focusing on the lives of farmers in Oklahoma during a period of difficult weather conditions – dust storms which ruined their crops.*

The wind grew stronger, whisked under stones, carried up straws and old leaves and even little clods, marking its course as it sailed across the fields. The air and the sky darkened and through them the sun shone redly, and there was a raw sting in the air. During a night the wind raced faster over the land, dug cunningly among the rootlets of the corn, and the corn fought the wind with its weakened leaves until the roots were freed by the prying wind and then each stalk settled wearily sideways toward the earth and pointed the direction of the wind.

The dawn came, but no day. In the gray sky a red sun appeared, a dim red circle that gave a little light, like dusk; and as that day advanced, the dusk slipped back toward darkness, and the wind cried and whimpered over the fallen corn.

Men and women huddled in their houses, and they tied handkerchiefs over their noses when they went out, and wore goggles to protect their eyes.

When the night came again it was black night, for the stars could not pierce the dust to get down, and the window lights could not even spread beyond their own yards now the dust was evenly mixed with the air, an emulsion of dust and air. Houses were shut tight, and cloth wedged around doors and windows, but the dust came in so thinly that it could not be seen in the air, and it settled like pollen on the chairs and tables, on the dishes. The people brushed it from their shoulders. Little lines of dust lay at the door sills.

In the middle of that night the wind passed on and left the land quiet. The dust-filled air muffled sound more completely than fog does. The people, lying in their beds heard the wind stop. They awakened when the rushing wind was gone. They lay quietly and listened deep into the stillness. Then the roosters crowed, and their voices were muffled, and the people stirred restlessly in their beds and wanted the morning they knew it would take a long time for the dust to settle out of the air. In the morning the dust hung like fog, and the sun was as red as ripe new blood. All day the dust sifted down from the sky, and the next day it sifted down. An even blanket covered the earth it settled on the corn, piled up on the tops of the fence posts, piled up on the wires; it settled on roofs, blanketed the weeds and trees.

The people came out of their houses and smelled the hot stinging air and covered their noses from it. And the children came out of the houses, but they did not run or shout as they would have done after a rain. Men stood by their fences and looked at the ruined corn, drying fast now, only a little green showing through the film of dust. The men were silent and they did not move often. And the women came out of the houses to stand beside their men—to feel whether this time the men would break. The women studied the men's faces secretly, for the corn could go, as long as something else remained. The children stood nearby, drawing figures in the dust with bare toes, and the children sent exploring senses out to see whether men and women would break.

**How does the writer present the dust as threatening?**

You should write about:

* how the dust is a threat to the farmers;
* the writer’s use of language to portray the dust as threatening;
* the effects on the reader.

*You must refer to the text to support your answer.*

