

A-Level Business: Evaluation

Which sentence earns which mark. AQA 7132, AQA 7138 and Edexcel 9BS0.

Written for AQA 7132 and Edexcel 9BS0. If your Year 12 started in September 2026 or later they sit AQA 7138, first A-level exams 2028, where the top tariff is 15 marks rather than 25 and the question forms change. There is a full 7138 section in this pack. The skill itself is the same on all three specifications.

The editable Word version is included in this download. Every lesson, all three annotated model answers, the mid band rewrite and every table are ordinary Word text. Change the business, swap a question, cut a task, or adapt the annotations to your own mark scheme. A PowerPoint version of the four lessons is in the same download.

Start here

Which specification this pack is for

AQA 7132 and Edexcel 9BS0, and the two long model answers are written to the real question forms of those two specifications. AQA has a new specification, 7138, for teaching from September 2026 with first A-level exams in 2028. A class that started Year 12 in September 2026 or later sits 7138, where the top tariff on any question is 15 marks rather than 25, where To what extent and Justify your view are not command words at all, and where Evaluate becomes a two option question ending in a recommendation. There is a full section on 7138 later in this pack giving the command words, the tariffs, the paper structure and what changes in the teaching. What an evaluative sentence has to do is the same on all three specifications, which is why the annotated models transfer.

What this pack is

The evaluation skill, taught properly. Four complete lessons with timings and full answers, three model answers in which every single sentence is marked with what it earns and why, a mid band answer improved in front of the class, a checklist of what actually earns evaluation marks, and the fourteen errors that cost students the most. It is written to be taught as it stands.

The thing that makes it different

Most model answers are handed out whole and students are told they are good. That teaches very little, because the student cannot see which part did the work. In this pack every model answer is broken into numbered sentences, and each sentence carries a tag saying what it earns, plus a line saying why. Students can see which sentences earn nothing, which one carries the calculation, and which single sentence lifts the whole answer into the top band.

It is editable

Three formats. The PDF is for printing. The Word file contains every lesson, every model answer, every annotation and all answers as ordinary editable text, so you can change the business, cut a task, or rewrite a question for your own class. The PowerPoint contains the slides for all four lessons. Nothing is an image and nothing is locked.

Who it is for

Teachers of A-Level Business on AQA 7132, AQA 7138 or Edexcel 9BS0, teaching Year 12 or Year 13. The two long model answers are written to the question forms of AQA 7132 and Edexcel 9BS0, and they use the same business, so students carry the context across and spend their attention on the skill rather than on a new case. Model answer 2 is also the closest thing in this pack to a 7138 Evaluate, because AQA and Pearson now both ask for a recommendation between two named options.

The diagnosis, in one paragraph

Students lose evaluation marks for a small number of repeatable reasons. They write balance instead of judgement, so the answer has two sides and no decision. They decide, but from nothing, so the judgement floats free of the evidence. They evaluate the theory rather than the business. They save the judgement for a final paragraph that runs out of time. Every one of those is a habit, and habits are teachable in four lessons.

Where the exam claims come from

Every claim in this pack about a question form, a tariff, an objective split or a level descriptor was taken from the board's own published specification or mark scheme, and the documents are listed by name in the sources table at the back. The AQA 25 mark form, its objective split and its level descriptors come from the AQA 7131 and 7132 specification and the June 2023 Paper 1 mark scheme. The Edexcel 20 mark form and its level descriptors come from the June 2024 9BS0 question papers and mark schemes. The 7138 command words, tariffs and paper structure come from the AQA 7137 and 7138 specification, version 1.1 of November 2025, and the 7138 sample assessment material. Specifications are reissued, so check the version number against the one on your board's site before you teach it. Verity Coffee is a constructed business, so every figure is internally consistent and any calculation in the models can be checked with a calculator.

The method, in five steps

Step	What it means and why it earns
1. Decide before you write.	Read the question, then write your answer to it in one sentence at the top of the page. If you cannot, you are not ready to write. Students who decide at the end run out of time and staple a conclusion onto an answer that argued the other way.
2. Pick the criterion.	Better or worse is meaningless on its own. Better or worse for what this business is trying to do right now is a judgement. Name the criterion in the first paragraph: protecting cash, defending a market position, lifting margin, surviving the next twelve months.
3. Build the strongest version of the case you are going to reject.	An answer that only argues one way is not evaluation, it is advocacy. Put the other side at its strongest, using the business's own figures, then show why it does not hold here. Rejecting a strong argument earns more than beating a weak one.
4. Weigh with a number.	Evaluation without evidence is opinion. The sentence that turns a judgement into a mark almost always contains a figure from the case, a comparison, or a magnitude. Six years is a long payback carries weight. This might not work does not.
5. Attach the condition.	End by naming what would change your mind. It takes one sentence, most students never write it, and it is one of the cheapest ways to lift an answer.

The four assessment objectives

	Name	What it is	The test
AO1	Knowledge	A term used correctly, a concept named, a formula stated.	Necessary, and cheap. It is the floor of an answer, never the ceiling. A whole paragraph of AO1 earns very little.
AO2	Application	The point is tied to this business, using its figures, its market or its situation.	The test is simple. If the sentence would be equally true of a different company, it is not application.
AO3	Analysis	A consequence followed through. Because this, therefore that, which means this for the business.	One developed chain beats three assertions. Analysis is where most of the middle of an answer lives.
AO4	Evaluation	A judgement, a weighing of one thing against another, a condition, or a supported decision.	This is the objective students avoid, and the one that separates grades. It is a way of writing, not a final paragraph.

What actually earns the evaluation mark

Check	What good looks like	What it catches
Does the answer decide?	A decision stated clearly, not a summary of both sides.	It depends, both have advantages, and in conclusion it is important to consider all factors are the three phrases that mark an answer as undecided.
Is the decision supported?	At least one figure, comparison or piece of case evidence sits behind the judgement.	A judgement with nothing behind it reads as a guess, however confident the wording.
Is there a criterion?	The answer says better for what, not just better.	Without a criterion there is nothing to weigh against, so the weighing cannot happen.
Is the other side taken seriously?	The rejected argument appears at its strongest before it is rejected.	Knocking down a weak version of the opposing case is the most common way to lose evaluation marks while appearing to evaluate.
Is the judgement about this business?	The reasoning uses this firm's position, not businesses in general.	If the paragraph would survive being pasted into an answer about a different company, it is not evaluative about this one.
Is there a condition?	The answer names what would change the decision.	One sentence. It shows the judgement is reasoned rather than picked.
Is evaluation spread through the answer?	Judgement appears in more than the final paragraph.	Evaluation saved for the end is evaluation that runs out of time. The strongest answers weigh as they go.
Is anything being said that earns nothing?	Sentences that restate the question or announce what the answer will do.	In this essay I will discuss costs a mark and buys nothing. Cut it and start with the decision.

The tag key

Tag	Objective	What it means
K	Knowledge, AO1	A term used correctly or a concept named. Necessary, cheap, and never enough on its own.
AP	Application, AO2	Tied to this business using its figures or its situation. If it would be true of another company, it is not application.
AN	Analysis, AO3	A consequence followed through. Because this, therefore that, which means this here.
EV	Evaluation, AO4	A judgement, a weighing, a condition, or a supported decision.
0	Earns nothing	Restating the question, announcing what the essay will do, or a sentence true of any business anywhere.

Verity Coffee

Verity Coffee is a UK coffee shop chain with 120 sites, mostly on high streets and in retail parks. It sells coffee, cold drinks and a small food range. Over the last two years revenue has grown but profitability has not kept pace, and the board has asked for options.

	Year ended 2025	Year ended 2024
Revenue	£96.0m	£88.0m
Operating profit	£4.8m	£7.92m
Operating profit margin	5.0 per cent	9.0 per cent
Number of sites	120	118
Average revenue per site	£0.80m	£0.75m

Option one, close the 20 weakest sites

	Figure
Combined revenue of the 20 weakest sites	£9.6m
Average revenue of those 20 sites	£0.48m

Combined operating loss of those 20 sites	£0.6m
Estimated cost of closing a site, average	£180,000
Unexpired leases on those sites	Between 2 and 9 years

Option two, a coffee subscription

	Figure
Proposed subscription price	£15 per month, unlimited filter coffee
Filter coffee selling price	£3.20
Filter coffee cost to make	£0.35
Average food item price	£4.10
Gross margin on food	65 per cent
Average visits per month, current customer	6
Average visits per month during the subscription trial	11

Verity Coffee is constructed. Every figure is internally consistent, so any calculation quoted in the model answers can be checked with a calculator and it will agree.

Question 1, 25 marks

A coffee shop chain has seen its operating profit margin fall sharply while its revenue has continued to grow. To what extent is closing the weakest outlets likely to be the best response to a falling operating profit margin?

AQA 7132, Paper 1, Section C or Section D. Read the presentation carefully, because it is part of the question. AQA sets the 25 mark essay as a choice of one from two and gives no case material and no data with it: a line or two of generic scenario, then the question. The evidence has to come from the student. Verity Coffee is the business this class has studied together, and the model answers use it exactly as a student is expected to use a business of their own. The objective split on a 25 mark essay is AO1 5, AO2 4, AO3 6 and AO4 10, so ten of the twenty five marks are for judgement.

Question 2, 20 marks

Verity Coffee's board wants to restore the operating profit margin. It is considering either closing its 20 weakest sites or launching the proposed coffee subscription. Evaluate these two options and recommend which one Verity Coffee should choose in order to restore its operating profit margin.

Edexcel 9BS0. This is the form every 20 mark question takes: two named options in the stem, then evaluate both and recommend one. All six 20 mark questions across Papers 1, 2 and 3 in June 2024 were written this way. A single proposition question, of the evaluate the impact of one thing kind, is not what the board sets at this tariff, and an answer that does not choose between the two options cannot reach the top level, which asks for a conclusion that proposes a solution or a recommendation. Unlike Question 1, this one comes with the case material and the data.

Model answer 1, annotated

#	The sentence	Tag	What it earns and why
1	Verity Coffee's operating margin has fallen from 9.0 per cent to 5.0 per cent in a single year, so the pressure to act is real rather than imagined.	K + AP	Two figures from the business the student has studied, used to establish that the problem is genuine. Remember that AQA gives no data with this question, so every number here is one the student brought. Opening with evidence rather than with a definition is worth copying.
2	Closing the 20 weakest sites would remove a combined operating loss of £0.6 million, which on its own would lift group operating profit from £4.8 million to £5.4 million.	AP + AN	The figure is applied and then followed through to its effect on the group. This is the case for closure stated properly, not vaguely.
3	Because revenue would fall by £9.6 million at the same time, margin would rise from 5.0 per cent to about 6.3 per cent, so the ratio improves even though	AP + AN	A second step in the same chain, and a genuine insight. Most students stop after the profit effect and miss that the margin improves partly because the denominator shrinks.

	the business gets smaller.		
4	That is the case for closure at its strongest, and all of it rests on the £0.6 million being a saving that recurs every year.	AP + EV	Sets up the counter argument and names the assumption holding it up, in one sentence. Signposting on its own earns nothing, which is why this sentence carries a condition as well.
5	It fails on the cost of getting out, which is why Verity should not close them.	EV	The decision, in sentence 5. Deciding early costs nothing and it organises everything that follows. Short sentences carry evaluation perfectly well.
6	At an average of £180,000 per site the closures cost £3.6 million, which is six times the annual loss being removed.	AP + AN	The calculation is done, and then converted into a comparison. The comparison is what makes it evaluative rather than arithmetical.
7	So the payback on closing these sites is six years, and that is before any lease that cannot be exited early.	K + AN + EV	The single strongest sentence in the answer. It turns two figures into a number a board would act on, and then flags a risk that makes it worse.
8	A business whose margin has fallen by more than 40 per cent in one year is unlikely to have six years of patience.	EV	Weighing against a criterion, which here is the time the business actually has. This is what better or worse for what looks like in practice.
9	Weak revenue is not the same thing as weak contribution, and revenue is all that is reported site by site.	K + EV	Challenges the quality of the evidence rather than adding another point. Interrogating the evidence you are relying on, instead of piling on one more argument, is the kind of move that separates answers at the top.
10	The 20 sites average £0.48 million of revenue against a chain average of £0.80 million, which makes them weak, but weak is not the same as loss making at the margin.	AP + EV	A precise distinction, drawn from the figures. Recognising that a category in the question may be the wrong category is a high level move.
11	If most of their cost base is fixed rent that continues after closure, shutting them removes the revenue and keeps the cost.	K + AN	A conditional consequence. Conditional reasoning belongs in the body of the answer, not only in the conclusion.
12	Verity's real problem is margin, and margin has fallen across the whole estate rather than in 20 places.	EV	Reframing the question. This is the point at which the answer stops accepting the premise it was handed, which is where the top band starts.
13	Revenue grew about 9 per cent while operating profit fell by nearly 40 per cent, which points to cost inflation or discounting across all 120 sites rather than to 20 bad locations.	AP + AN	Two calculations supporting the reframe. Notice the judgement in sentence 12 came first and the evidence follows immediately. Either order works, but they must be adjacent.
14	Closing 20 sites would therefore treat the symptom that is easiest to see rather than the one doing the damage.	EV	The judgement stated in a form a decision maker would recognise. No new evidence, and none needed, because sentence 13 supplied it.
15	On balance the answer stands: Verity should not close the 20 sites now.	EV	Restating a decision made in sentence 5 would earn little on its own. What earns here is the word now, which converts a permanent verdict into one about timing, and timing is what sentences 17 and 18 then resolve.
16	It should first establish how much of each site's cost base actually disappears on closure, because that single number decides whether the £3.6 million buys anything at all.	EV	A next step that is proportionate to the risk. To what extent asks how far, not only whether, and naming what the business should do next is how an answer shows it has gone past a yes or a no.
17	If a material share of the cost is unavoidable lease commitment, closure destroys value and the answer is a firm no.	EV	The condition, first branch. This is the sentence most students never write.
18	If the leases are short and genuinely exitable, the six year payback becomes perhaps two, and closure becomes the right call as part of a wider attack on cost across the whole estate.	EV	The condition, second branch. Naming both branches shows the judgement was reasoned rather than picked, and it costs two sentences.

Eighteen sentences. Four carry knowledge, seven carry application, six carry analysis, twelve carry evaluation, and none earn nothing. The answer decides in sentence 5, before a third of it has been written, and then spends the rest earning the right to that decision. That distribution is the point of the page. Ask students to run the same count on their own last essay.

Model answer 2, annotated

#	The sentence	Tag	What it earns and why
1	Verity should launch the subscription rather than close the 20 weakest sites, because only one of these two options can be undone.	EV	The recommendation, in sentence 1, and it names both options. A 20 mark Edexcel question is answered by choosing between the two, not by describing them, and choosing this early organises everything that follows.
2	The criterion is the one the board set, the operating profit margin, which has fallen from 9.0 to 5.0 per cent, and behind it the cash available to buy that recovery.	K + AP + EV	Better or worse for what, answered in sentence 2. Naming the criterion is what makes the later weighing possible, and it earns its place here because the two options fail against different parts of it.
3	Closure is the option that looks decisive: removing the £0.6 million combined operating loss lifts group operating profit from £4.8 million to £5.4 million, and margin from 5.0 to about 6.3 per cent once the £9.6 million of revenue goes with it.	K + AP + AN	Option one built at its strongest, with the arithmetic done rather than described. The option being rejected has to appear at full strength before it is rejected, and this is where most of the analysis marks on this answer sit.
4	Getting there costs £3.6 million at £180,000 a site, which is a six year payback on the loss it removes.	AP + AN + EV	The calculation converted into a comparison. Six years is the number a board would actually argue about, and turning £3.6 million and £0.6 million into it is the most valuable single move on the page.
5	Six years is the wrong length of time for a business whose margin fell by more than 40 per cent in a single year, and the leases on those sites run for up to nine.	AP + EV	Magnitude weighed against the time the business actually has. This is the sentence that disposes of option one, and it does it with two figures rather than with an opinion.
6	The subscription looks worse on first inspection, because a customer visiting six times a month at £3.20 a cup pays £19.20, and a £15 subscription hands £4.20 of that straight back.	K + AP + AN	Cannibalisation, quantified in the same sentence that names it. This is the AO1 term option two is built on, and most answers never use it.
7	That is the wrong worry: at £0.35 a cup even 11 visits cost Verity £3.85, so the coffee itself only sinks the scheme at about 43 visits a month, which nobody reaches.	K + AN + EV	A calculated boundary, £15 divided by £0.35, used to rule an argument out. Working out where an option would actually fail, and showing it is nowhere near, is a strong evaluative move and almost nobody does it.
8	The real cost is the revenue given up: coffee contribution per customer falls from £17.10 a month to £11.15, so every subscriber starts £5.95 a month behind.	K + AP + AN	Contribution rather than revenue, which is the right measure for this decision, and the chain is finished rather than left at its first step.
9	Food is where that £5.95 has to come back, and at £4.10 with a 65 per cent margin each item contributes about £2.67, so the scheme needs roughly 2.2 extra food purchases per subscriber per month just to stand still.	K + AP + AN	The decisive calculation of the answer. It turns a vague hope about attachment into a number that can be tested, which is what a mark scheme means by using quantitative information to support a judgement.
10	That is demanding, because it asks five extra visits to produce two extra food sales, and the first subscribers will be the heaviest users, so the early trial figures flatter the scheme.	AN + EV	The case against the recommended option, put at its strongest and against the answer's own evidence. Interrogating the data you are relying on is a top band habit, and it is more convincing here because it costs the writer something.
11	It still wins, because £5.95 a month is £71.40 a year, and it would take just over 50,000 subscribers losing that for a	AP + AN + EV	The comparison that settles the question. Two options can only be ranked once they are on the same scale, and this sentence puts both of them into pounds. Stop here in class

	full year to destroy the £3.6 million that closure spends on day one.		and let them check it.
12	The two options also differ in kind: a subscription can be repriced or withdrawn next quarter, while a site closed with seven years of lease left cannot be reopened.	AP + EV	Ranking on reversibility rather than on size. Bringing in a criterion the question did not hand you, and showing that it separates the two options, is what lifts an answer above a competent comparison.
13	Neither option treats the cause, since revenue grew about 9 per cent while operating profit fell nearly 40 per cent across all 120 sites, so whichever is chosen has to sit inside a cost programme rather than instead of one.	AP + EV	The reframe, done without dodging the question. Notice that the answer still recommends one of the two options. An answer that concludes that neither option is the real issue has not answered the question that was set.
14	The recommendation is therefore the subscription, launched as a priced trial with one number reported monthly, food items per visit, and withdrawn if it has not reached 2.2 by the end of the second quarter.	EV	The recommendation restated as something a board could minute, with the condition and the measure inside it. The top level of an Edexcel 20 marker asks for a conclusion that proposes a solution or a recommendation, and this is what that looks like.

Fourteen sentences. Six carry knowledge, ten carry application, eight carry analysis, ten carry evaluation, and none earn nothing. The answer recommends in sentence 1 and never stops comparing. Ask the class to count how many sentences do work on both options rather than on one at a time: that is the difference between a recommendation and two short essays stapled together. Sentence 11 is the one to stop on, because it is where the two options are finally put on the same scale.

What the answer did not do. It did not take the two options in turn and pick one at the end, which is the shape most students write and the shape that holds an answer in the middle levels. It did not argue that a coffee subscription is a good idea in general; it argued that it is the better of two poor options for this business at this moment, which is all the question asks. It did not duck the choice by concluding that the real answer is a cost programme, even though sentence 13 says exactly that about the cause. It did not use a single evaluative sentence without a figure beside it. And it did not claim a mark or a level for itself, because no answer written outside a live series can.

Model answer 3, the short one

#	The sentence	Tag	What it earns and why
1	Verity should not close the 20 sites yet.	EV	The decision, in the first line and in eight words. Nothing is lost by deciding early and a great deal is gained, and the word yet carries the timing argument that sentences 5 and 6 resolve.
2	Closing them removes a £0.6 million loss but costs £3.6 million, which is a six year payback for a business whose margin has fallen by more than 40 per cent in a year.	K + AP + AN + EV	One sentence carrying four objectives at once, which is what efficient writing under time pressure produces.
3	The weak sites are also the wrong target: revenue grew 9 per cent while operating profit fell nearly 40 per cent, which is an estate wide cost problem, not twenty bad locations.	AP + AN + EV	The reframe, evidenced, in a single sentence rather than the paragraph the long version uses.
4	Closure would improve margin to about 6.3 per cent on paper, so the number would look better while the cause went untreated.	AP + AN + EV	Concedes the strongest counter argument and disposes of it in the same sentence.
5	The figure that decides this is how much site cost actually disappears on closure, because unavoidable lease commitment would mean losing the revenue and keeping the cost.	K + AN + EV	The condition, expressed as the number to go and find.
6	If the leases are short, closure becomes	EV	Second branch of the condition.

	defensible as part of a wider cost programme rather than instead of one.		
7	On the evidence available the answer is no, and the first action is a cost base review across all 120 sites.	EV	Restates the decision and converts it into an action.

Seven sentences. Two carry knowledge, three carry application, four carry analysis, seven carry evaluation, and none earn nothing. Show this one last, and be straight with the class about what it does and does not prove. Every sentence in it works and nothing in it is padding, which is the point. It does not reach the band the long version reaches, and it is not meant to. AQA's top level wants a depth and range of knowledge and a balanced range of the issues in the question; Edexcel's wants accurate and thorough knowledge with the arguments fully developed. Seven sentences cannot carry that range, so this answer sits below Model 1 however good each individual line is. What it does prove is the true half of the length argument: padding earns nothing, and a student who writes twice as much without adding an issue or developing an argument further has gained nothing at all. Length is worth spending. It is only worth spending on another issue or on finishing a chain, never on more words about a point already made.

A mid band answer, annotated

#	The sentence	Tag	What it earns and why
1	There are many advantages and disadvantages to Verity Coffee closing its 20 weakest sites.	0	Restates the question. Earns nothing and costs a line. Cut it and start with the decision.
2	One advantage is that closing the sites would reduce costs, because the sites are making a loss.	K	True, and the term is used correctly, but there is no figure and no consequence. Nothing here is specific to Verity, so it fails the application test. The figure is £0.6 million, and using it would earn AP and AN as well.
3	This means the business would be more profitable and could invest the money elsewhere.	AN	A consequence, but a generic one. Invest the money elsewhere is true of any closure by any firm.
4	However, a disadvantage is that closing sites could damage the brand and upset customers.	K	Asserted, not developed and not tied to Verity. Nothing in the evidence suggests brand damage, so this is imported from a textbook.
5	Employees would also lose their jobs, which would affect motivation of remaining staff.	K + AN	A real chain, but again it would fit any business. No Verity evidence anywhere in it.
6	Closing sites is a big decision and the business would need to think carefully about it.	0	Filler. It advances nothing and it signals to the examiner that the writer has no view.
7	In conclusion, it depends on the situation of the business and what its objectives are.	0	The classic ending. It looks like evaluation and earns nothing, because no decision is made and no criterion is named.

The same answer, fixed

Sentence	What to do	What it becomes
Sentence 1	Delete it and open with the decision.	Verity should not close the 20 sites now.
Sentence 2	Add the figure.	Closing them would remove a combined operating loss of £0.6 million.
Sentence 3	Replace the generic consequence with the one that matters.	But at £180,000 a site the closures cost £3.6 million, a six year payback on that £0.6 million.
Sentence 4	Cut the imported disadvantage and use one the case supports.	The larger doubt is whether these are the right sites at all.
Sentence 5	Keep the chain but tie it to Verity.	Revenue grew 9 per cent while operating profit fell nearly 40 per cent, so the problem is across all 120 sites.
Sentence 6	Delete it.	
Sentence 7	Replace it depends with the condition.	The answer is no unless the leases turn out to be short and genuinely exitable, in which case closure becomes part of a wider cost programme.

Seven sentences in, six out. One is deleted outright, one is replaced by the decision, three gain a figure, and the ending becomes a condition. Nothing was added in length, and every sentence that survived now does something a mark scheme rewards, where three of the original seven did nothing at all. Do this live on the board rather than handing out the improved version, because the deletions are the part students find hardest to believe. Do not put a mark or a level on either version in front of the class: the point is what each sentence does, and only a live series can settle what it is worth.

Lesson 1. What evaluation actually is

Objectives

1. Distinguish the four assessment objectives in a piece of writing.
2. Explain why balance is not the same as judgement.
3. Tag a short answer sentence by sentence and total the objectives.

Do Now

#	Question	Answer
1	What does AO4 stand for?	Evaluation. Judgement, weighing, conditions and supported decisions.
2	Give one phrase that looks like evaluation and earns nothing.	It depends. Both have advantages. In conclusion it is important to consider all factors.
3	What is the difference between analysis and evaluation?	Analysis follows a consequence through. Evaluation weighs it against something and decides.

Sequence

5 min. Do Now, three questions above.

10 min. The four objectives. One sentence each, then leave the table on the board for the whole unit.

10 min. Read the mid band answer without the annotation. Ask the class to mark it out of 25. Collect three numbers and write them up.

15 min. Reveal the annotation. Three of the seven sentences earn nothing. Work through why, slowly, especially the ending.

15 min. Students tag the mid band answer themselves using the key, then total by objective.

5 min. Close on the count. Three sentences of knowledge, two chains of analysis and no judgement at all is the shape of a mid band answer, and it is the shape most of them write.

You will need

The four objectives.

Tag key.

Mid band answer, one per student.

Teacher note

Do not show a strong model in this lesson. The lesson works because students first judge a weak answer generously and then see why they were wrong. Showing them excellence first removes that.

Lesson 2. Reading the annotation

Objectives

1. Identify which sentence in a strong answer carries the decisive judgement.
2. Explain why a sentence earns application rather than knowledge.
3. Write three evaluative sentences using shapes taken from the model.

Do Now

#	Question	Answer
1	What must a sentence contain to earn application?	Something specific to this business, its figures or its situation.
2	Why does a judgement need a number?	Without evidence it reads as a guess. The figure is what turns an opinion into a mark.
3	Where should the decision appear in an answer?	Early. An answer that decides at the end usually runs out of time and argues the other way first.

Sequence

5 min. Do Now.

18 min. The annotated model. Read it in order with the annotation covered, then reveal it a sentence at a time. Stop properly on sentence 7 and sentence 12.

8 min. Ask which single sentence, if deleted, would cost the most. Take votes. The answer is arguable, which is the point.

12 min. Model 2, same skill, other board, different question style. Read sentences 1 to 8 only and ask where the answer reaches a position.

12 min. Students write three evaluative sentences about Verity using three different shapes.

5 min. Read four aloud. Test each one against a single question: could this sentence appear in an answer about a different company?

You will need

Annotated model 1.

Annotated model 2.

The twelve shapes.

Case and figures.

Teacher note

The temptation is to move fast because the annotation is already written. Do not. The value is in stopping on individual sentences and asking why that tag and not the one next to it.

Lesson 3. Improving a mid band answer, live

Objectives

1. Identify the sentences in a mid band answer that earn nothing.

2. Rewrite a generic point so that it uses evidence from the case.

3. Replace a summary ending with a condition.

Do Now

#	Question	Answer
1	Name two things that make a sentence earn nothing.	Restating the question, or being true of any business anywhere.
2	What is wrong with ending on it depends?	No decision and no criterion, so nothing is being weighed.
3	What does a condition sentence do?	Names what would change the decision, which shows the judgement was reasoned.

Sequence

5 min. Do Now.

18 min. Rewrite the mid band answer on the board with the class, one sentence at a time, using the fixes. Delete a sentence in front of them and let the discomfort happen.

7 min. Now show the short model. Seven sentences, every one of them doing work, no padding anywhere. Say plainly that it does not reach the band the eighteen sentence version reaches, because the top level on both boards wants range and arguments developed in full. The point they need is the true one: extra words earn nothing on their own.

15 min. Students take their own most recent essay and tag it sentence by sentence, then count by objective.

12 min. Each student rewrites four sentences of their own work: delete one, add a figure to two, replace the ending with a condition.

3 min. Close. The count before and the count after, on the board, from two volunteers.

You will need

Mid band answer.

The fixes.

The short model.

Students' own marked essays.

Teacher note

Deleting sentences in front of a class is the part they remember, because every student believes that more writing is safer. Show them that padding is not, then show them the short model while the point is still fresh. Be careful not to overclaim: length does still matter at the top of both mark schemes. The difference is that it has to be spent on another issue or on finishing a chain of reasoning, never on more words about a point already made.

Lesson 4. Timed practice and tagged peer marking

Objectives

1. Plan and write a timed evaluative answer using the five step method.

2. Tag a peer's answer objective by objective.

3. Give one specific improvement rather than a general comment.

Do Now

#	Question	Answer
1	State the five steps of the method from memory.	Decide first. Pick the criterion. Build the strongest opposing case. Weigh with a number. Attach the condition.
2	How early should the decision appear?	In the first few sentences.
3	What is the last sentence of a strong answer?	The condition, or the action that follows from the decision.

Sequence

5 min. Do Now, books closed.

5 min. Plan only, using the frame. Students write their one sentence answer and name their criterion.

30 min. Timed writing. Silence.

12 min. Swap. Tag the answer sentence by sentence with the key, total by objective, and write one specific improvement.

8 min. Two answers read out, tags compared. Ask which had the higher evaluation count and whether it was the better answer, because sometimes it is not.

You will need

Timed question.

Tag key.

Peer marking sheet.

Teacher note

If the evaluation count across the class is still under three sentences per answer, do not move on to new content. Re-run Lesson 3 with a different essay. The skill does not transfer from one exposure.

The twelve shapes an evaluative sentence takes

Type	The shape	What it does
Weighing	The stronger objection is not X, it is Y, because...	Ranks two arguments instead of listing them.
Weighing	This matters more in Verity's position than it would normally, because...	Makes the weight specific to the business.
Magnitude	A payback of six years is long relative to...	Turns a number into a judgement by comparing it to something.
Magnitude	This is a small effect next to the £X the business is losing on...	Puts a point in proportion, which is evaluation, not analysis.
Criterion	If the objective is protecting cash rather than lifting margin, then...	Names the criterion, which is what better or worse is measured against.
Concession	The case for X is strongest when..., and that condition does not hold here because...	Rejects a strong version of the counter argument.
Reframe	The question assumes the problem is X, but the evidence points to Y.	Challenges the premise, which is a top band move when the evidence supports it.
Evidence quality	The trial figures overstate this, because...	Interrogates the data rather than accepting it.
Condition	This decision changes entirely if...	One of the most reliable moves available, and one of the least used.
Condition	The number that settles this is..., and the business does not yet have it.	Names what would resolve the uncertainty.
Timing	This is the right action but the wrong moment, because...	Separates the decision from its timing, which most answers never do.

Decision	On the evidence available the answer is no, and the first step is...	Decides and converts the decision into an action.
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These are not sentence starters to memorise and sprinkle. They are the twelve shapes an evaluative sentence takes. Give students the list, then ask them to find each shape across the three annotated models. Almost all of them appear, and the one or two that do not are worth discussing: what would it take to use them on this case?

Timed practice

Verity Coffee wants to restore its operating profit margin. It is considering either raising prices by 6 per cent across the range or widening the food range in order to grow food sales per visit. Evaluate these two options and recommend which one Verity Coffee should choose in order to restore its operating profit margin. (20 marks)

	Write it here
My answer in one sentence	
The criterion I am judging against	
The strongest argument against me	
The figure I will weigh with	
What would change my mind	

Edexcel 9BS0 form, and the same form AQA now uses for a 15 mark Evaluate: two named options in the stem, then evaluate both and recommend one. Thirty minutes of writing. Use the figures. A strong answer will notice that 6 per cent on £96.0 million of revenue is worth about £5.8 million if volume holds, which is more than the whole of the current operating profit, and will then ask what happens to volume when the competing coffee is fifty metres away. It has to size the food route as well: at about £2.67 of contribution an item, matching that £5.8 million needs roughly 2.2 million extra food items a year, which is about 350 a week in every one of the 120 sites. The best answers rank the two options on how quickly each can be reversed if it goes wrong, and they refuse to end on both have merits. An answer that does not recommend one of the two has not answered the question, whichever board is marking it.

Tagged peer marking

	Answer
Total sentences	
Sentences tagged EV	
Sentences tagged 0	
Decision made by sentence number	
Criterion named? Which one?	
Condition present? Quote it.	
One specific improvement, naming a sentence number	

Specific means naming a sentence. Add a figure to sentence 4 is feedback. Add more evaluation is not, and it is what students write when they have not read the answer properly.

The fourteen errors that cost the most

Error	What it looks like	The fix
Balance mistaken for judgement	Two sides presented, no decision made.	Require a decision in the first five sentences, before any argument.
Judgement with no evidence	A confident conclusion with nothing behind it.	Every judgement sentence must sit next to a figure, a comparison or a piece of case evidence.
Evaluating the theory	Weighing the usefulness of a model instead of the decision facing the firm.	Ask: is this sentence about the business or about the textbook?
Generic points	A paragraph that would fit any company.	The paste test. Would it survive being pasted into an answer about a different firm?
Evaluation saved for the end	One evaluative paragraph after four descriptive ones.	Weigh as you go. The final paragraph should confirm the decision, not introduce it.

Beating a weak opponent	The counter argument is stated feebly so it is easy to reject.	Write the other side at its strongest first, then reject it.
No criterion	Better and worse used without saying better for what.	Name the objective in the opening paragraph and measure against it.
Numbers described, not used	A figure quoted and then left alone.	Every figure must be followed by a therefore.
Restating the question	The opening line repeats the question in different words.	Delete it. Open with the decision.
Announcing the essay	In this essay I will discuss the advantages and disadvantages.	Delete it. It costs a line and earns nothing.
Length as strategy	Writing more in the hope that judgement appears by accident.	Show the short model. Every sentence in it works, and it still sits below the long one because it covers fewer issues. Words are not the thing being marked.
Hedging the decision	It could be argued either way depending on circumstances.	A decision with a condition attached is not a hedge. A decision avoided is.
Ignoring timing	Treating a decision as permanent when the question is about now.	Add now or yet to the decision sentence and see whether it changes.
Missing the condition	The answer decides and stops.	One sentence: what would change my mind. It is the cheapest mark available.

Weak and strong, the same point

What students write	What earns
Closing stores would reduce costs.	Closing the 20 sites removes £0.6 million of losses but costs £3.6 million to execute.
This could damage the brand.	Verity has no evidence of brand strength in the case, so brand damage is asserted rather than argued.
The business should consider its objectives.	If the objective is cash preservation, a £3.6 million outflow to save £0.6 million a year fails on its own terms.
Margin would improve.	Margin rises from 5.0 to about 6.3 per cent, partly because revenue falls, which flatters the ratio.
Subscriptions could increase loyalty.	Subscribers visited 11 times a month against 6, so the loyalty effect is measurable rather than assumed.
There are risks with this strategy.	The risk is specific: 2.2 extra food purchases per subscriber per month are needed simply to stand still.
It depends on the economy.	A price rise of 6 per cent is worth about £5.8 million if volume holds, so the decision rests largely on the price elasticity of demand for coffee on a high street.
In conclusion, both options have merit.	On the evidence available the answer is no, and the first step is a cost base review across all 120 sites.
Employees may be demotivated.	Closing 20 of 120 sites tells the staff in the other 100 that the estate is shrinking, at the same moment the business needs them to sell more food per visit.
This is a difficult decision for managers.	The decision is difficult only because one number is missing, which is how much site cost actually disappears on closure.

Ten things to do in every evaluative answer

#	Do this
1	Decide in the first five sentences. An answer that decides at the end usually argued the other way first and then ran out of time.
2	Say better for what. Better and worse mean nothing until you name what the business is trying to do.
3	Put the other side at its strongest before you reject it. Beating a weak argument earns almost nothing.
4	Every judgement needs a number, a comparison or a piece of evidence sitting next to it.
5	Use the figures you are given. A figure quoted and then abandoned earns less than a figure followed by a therefore.
6	Weigh as you go. Evaluation is a way of writing sentences, not a paragraph at the end.
7	Cut the opening line that restates the question, and cut the line that announces what your essay will do. Both earn nothing.

8	Short sentences carry judgement perfectly well. Some of the strongest lines in a top band answer are under twenty words.
9	Padding earns nothing. More words about a point you have already made add no marks, so spend the length on another issue or on finishing an argument, which is what the top band actually asks for.
10	Finish with the condition. What would change your mind, in one sentence. Most students never write it, and it is the cheapest mark available.

AQA 7138, for a Year 12 starting September 2026 or later

AQA 7138 is taught from September 2026, with first AS exams in 2027 and first A-level exams in 2028. It is a different qualification from 7132, not a light revision of it, and several of the changes bear directly on how evaluation is taught. Everything below is taken from the AQA 7137 and 7138 specification, version 1.1 of November 2025, and from AQA 7138 sample assessment material.

The command words, and what each one is worth

Command word	What it asks for	Marks	Note
Define	Knowledge and understanding only. AO1.	2	AS assessment only.
Explain	Knowledge and understanding of a business term or concept, in the context of the case study material provided. AO1 and AO2.	4	AS assessment only.
Analyse	Analyse an issue in the context of the case study material provided. AO1, AO2 and AO3.	6	The chain of reasoning question. No judgement required.
Assess	Weigh the arguments for and against one action or issue and decide which argument is stronger. A judgement is required. All four objectives.	9	This is the nearest thing to the old single proposition question, and it is worth 9 marks, not 25.
Evaluate	Two options, either identified by the student or set out in the question, evaluated with a recommendation as to which the business should choose. All four objectives.	15	The top tariff anywhere on the specification. Objective split AO1 3, AO2 3, AO3 4, AO4 5.

What changes in the teaching

The change	What it means for this pack
The top tariff is 15, not 25.	Each A-level paper is two hours and 90 marks, and consists of two case studies with five compulsory questions worth 45 marks in total after each one. There is no essay section and no choice of question. The same evaluative moves have to arrive in far fewer sentences, which makes the short model in this pack the most useful page for a 7138 class.
To what extent and Justify your view are not command words.	Neither appears in the 7138 command word table. If your question bank is built on them, those are 7132 questions being set to a 7138 cohort. Assess is now the command word that asks whether one action is right for a business, and Evaluate is the one that asks for a choice between two.
AQA's Evaluate becomes a two option question with a recommendation.	In AQA's own sample assessment material a 15 mark Evaluate lists two options as bullets and then asks the student to assess both and make a recommendation. That is the same shape as an Edexcel 20 marker, so Model answer 2 in this pack is the closest model here to a 7138 Evaluate. The top level wants a recommendation that is built on the arguments and that has genuinely weighed both options, not one option described and the other mentioned.
Everything sits on case material.	Both papers at AS and all three at A-level are built from case studies, so the 7132 essay in which the student supplies the business disappears. Application is to the case in front of them, every time, which makes the application test on the objectives page harder to fail and harder to fake.
Quantitative questions are timetabled.	Papers 1 and 2 each carry two quantitative questions at 9 or 15 marks, and Paper 3 carries one. Weighing with a number stops being good practice and becomes part of what is being marked.

The five step method, the tag key, the twelve shapes, the fourteen errors and all four lessons work unchanged on 7138. What changes is the question at the end of them.

Where every exam claim in this pack came from

This pack makes specific claims about question forms, tariffs, objective splits and what the top level of each mark scheme requires. Every one of them was taken from the published exam board document named beside it. Nothing here comes from a revision site or from another teaching resource. Specifications are reissued, so check the version number against the one currently published by your board.

What it settles	The document it came from
The AQA 25 mark essay is a choice of one from two, with no case material and no data	AQA, AS and A-level Business (7131, 7132) specification, version 2.0. Section 2, Assessments. Also the 7132/1 Paper 1 specimen question paper, Sections C and D.
The AQA 25 mark objective split (AO1 5, AO2 4, AO3 6, AO4 10) and what the top level requires	AQA, A-level Business 7132/1 Paper 1 mark scheme, June 2023. The level grid printed with each 25 mark question.
Every Edexcel 20 mark question sets two named options and asks for a recommendation	Pearson, A level Business 9BS0 question papers 01, 02 and 03, June 2024. Six 20 mark questions across the three papers, all of the same form.
What the top level of an Edexcel 20 mark answer requires, including a conclusion that recommends	Pearson, A level Business 9BS0/01 mark scheme, summer 2024. The Level 4 descriptor, 15 to 20 marks.
AQA 7138 command words, tariffs, paper structure and first teaching date	AQA, AS and A-level Business (7137, 7138) specification, version 1.1, November 2025. Sections 2.2 and 4.4.
The form and objective split of a 7138 15 mark Evaluate question	AQA, A-level Business 7138/1 Paper 1 mark scheme, sample assessment material.

Before Lesson 1

#	Do this	Why
1	Print the mid band answer for every student, and nothing else yet.	Lesson 1 depends on students marking a weak answer generously before they see the annotation.
2	Do not hand out a strong model in Lesson 1.	The sequence only works if the weak answer comes first.
3	Read Model 1 before you teach Lesson 2.	You will stop in the right places if you already know which sentence carries the answer.
4	Check level descriptors against your current mark scheme.	This pack teaches what a sentence must do. Your board decides how it is banded.

The editable Word version is included in this download. Change anything you like. It is your classroom.

New packs land in the free teacher group before they go anywhere else.

Author: Sakari Laajoki, TBS Education Ltd Oy (company number 3614159-3)

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