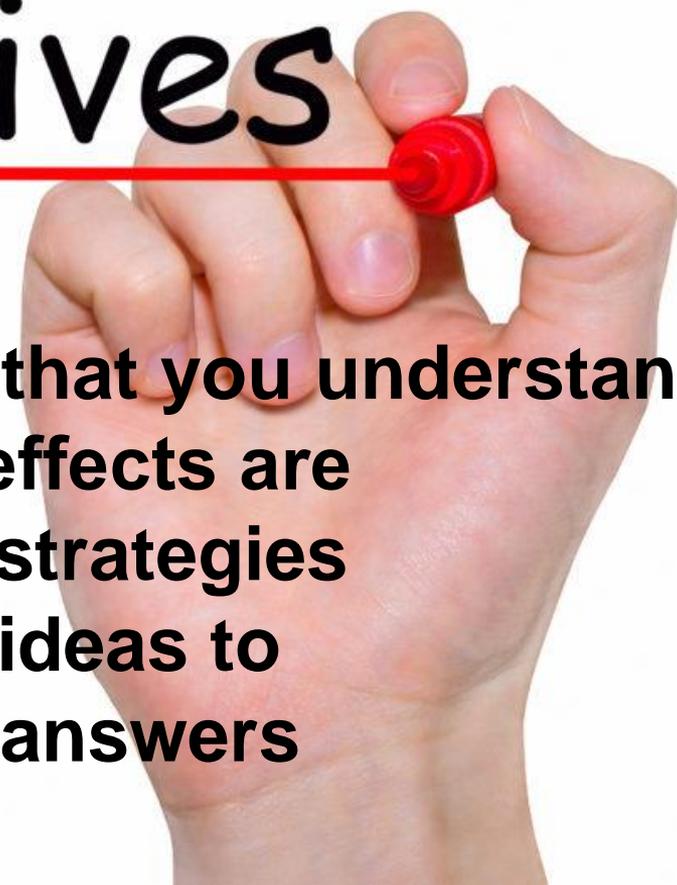




No.2.

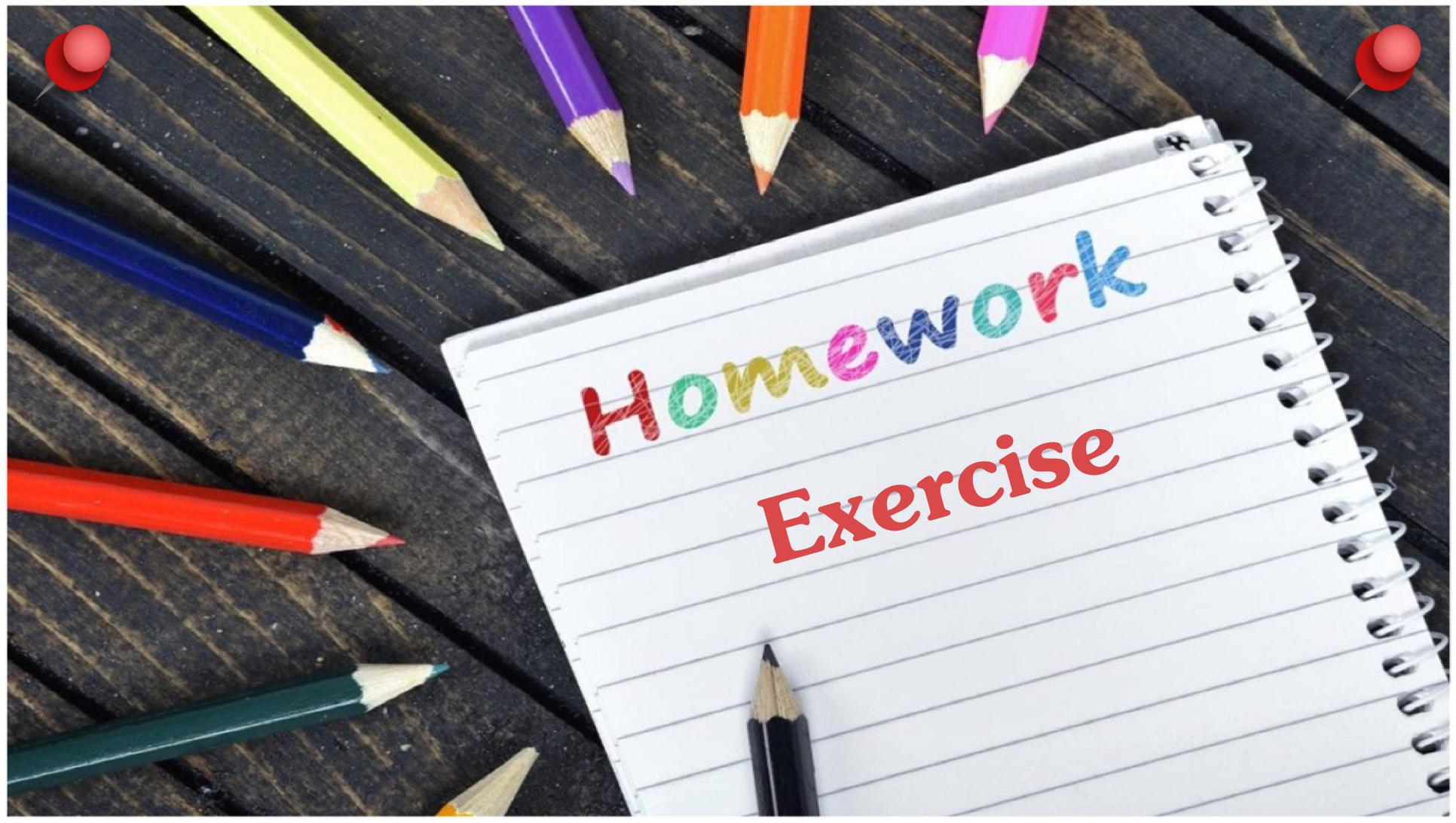
Using reading  
skills: understand  
how writers  
achieve effects

# Objectives



- ❖ To make sure that you understand what writers' effects are
- ❖ To revise key strategies
- ❖ To give some ideas to improve your answers



A top-down view of a spiral-bound notebook with white lined pages. The notebook is open to a page with the words 'Homework' and 'Exercise' written on it. 'Homework' is written in a colorful, multi-colored font where each letter is a different color. 'Exercise' is written in a bold, red, sans-serif font. The notebook is surrounded by several sharpened colored pencils in various colors (yellow, purple, orange, pink, blue, red, green, black) scattered on a dark, textured wooden surface. Two red pushpins are visible in the top corners of the image.

# Homework

## Exercise

## Sample questions and answers

Re-read the following lines from the main passage. Pick out three words or phrases that the writer uses to show ***that the man was distressed about the damage done to his car.*** How do they reveal his feelings?



## Paragraph

‘I can not believe it!’ James bellowed, his face red with rage. Sweat beaded his forehead as he stared in disbelief at the scratch marks which ran along the full length of his beautiful Rolls Royce. ‘My beautiful, beautiful baby ... ruined,’ His voice trailed off in despair.

ROLLS-ROYCE  
MOTOR CARS



▶ *Student's answer:*

I can tell the man is angry when the writer uses the words 'bellowed', 'red with rage' and 'trailed off in despair'. 'Bellowed' is a very powerful word meaning a loud cry, which would suggest he is very angry. Red is a colour which I associate with danger. People go red when they are furious. Finally when he trails off I imagine someone so upset they can not speak anymore.

## Examiner's comments:

This is a fairly good answer. The answer is clearly focused on the task. The candidate picks out one single word and two phrases which show anger. The candidate attempts to explain how the examples create an impression of anger by referring to the precise meanings of the words, simple associations that (s)he has made with the words and how they create an impression of the emotion in her/his mind. The final example would have been more effective if punctuation had been referred to.

A corkboard background with a green sticky note and a red pushpin. The green sticky note is the central focus, with the text 'Key ideas' written on it. A red pushpin is pinned to the bottom left corner of the green note. There are also some white paper scraps and a yellow sticky note partially visible.

Key ideas





***After reading a passage you need to work out what effect the writer has created. Here is a checklist of possibilities:***

- An experience has been described.
- An atmosphere has been created.
- A statement of fact has been made.
- An opinion/ emotion has been conveyed.
- A reaction has been provoked.

***Next you need to work out what impression has been made on your mind or senses. Here is a checklist of possibilities:***

- You can see the scene that has been described.
- You can hear the sounds that have been described.
- You can almost smell or taste something that was described.
- You can almost physically or emotionally feel something described.

➤ ***Finally you need to understand what caused this effect on you. Here is a checklist of possible causes:***

- The specific meaning of a word.
- The associations created by a word.
- The rhythm and pace of words and sentence structures.
- The positioning of words, phrases, sentences and lines on the page.

A corkboard background with a green sticky note and a red pushpin. The green sticky note is the central focus, with the text "How to improve your answers" written on it in a black, handwritten-style font. A red pushpin is pinned to the bottom-left corner of the green note. There are also some white, torn-paper-like shapes on the board, one in the top-left and one in the bottom-right. In the bottom-right corner of the entire image, there are two small black arrows pointing outwards.

How to  
improve your  
answers

1. Read the question carefully

It is very important that you read it slowly and carefully so that you don't miss anything.

Remember that you are looking for three things.

- Does the question tell you what effect you are looking for?
- Does the question tell you where to look for the effect?
- Does the question tell you how the effect is created?

2. Be as precise as possible when identifying effects

Being precise shows the examiner that you have carefully considered the words of the passage and have reached a conclusion about their effect. You may need to built your vocabulary so that you can make specific statements.

3. Quote  
selectively from  
the passage



You will only ever be quoting single words or brief phrases. If you are copying out more than this then you are not showing that you can accurately judge exactly how an effect is being created. You are simply showing where the effect might be.

4. Explain how the writer creates the effect



Once you have identified the effect that has been produced and where proof of it can be found, you must next explain how the proof shows the effect that you have claimed is there. At IGCSE level there are three major types of proof expected.

a) Use the precise meaning of a word to explain how it creates the effect

b) Use the 'strength' of a word to explain how it creates the effect

c) Use the associations of a word to explain how it creates the effect

5. Look out for more than one effect



Be aware that there may be more than one effect in the same piece of writing. A good writer is always trying to do as much as possible in as few words as possible, and so will choose words and phrases that do lots of things at the same time.

## One word may:

- create a very specific meaning

- create a very specific level of intensity of strength

- create an atmosphere

- create a visual picture

- stimulate emotions

- stimulate your sense



**Practice**



## Question

2 Re-read the descriptions of:

- (a) the dormitory in paragraph 5, beginning 'Her dormitory was actually rather unpleasant ...';
- (b) Mrs Wilkie in paragraph 8, beginning 'Later that evening, Sacha suddenly became aware ...'.

Select words and phrases from these descriptions, and explain how the writer has created effects by using this language.



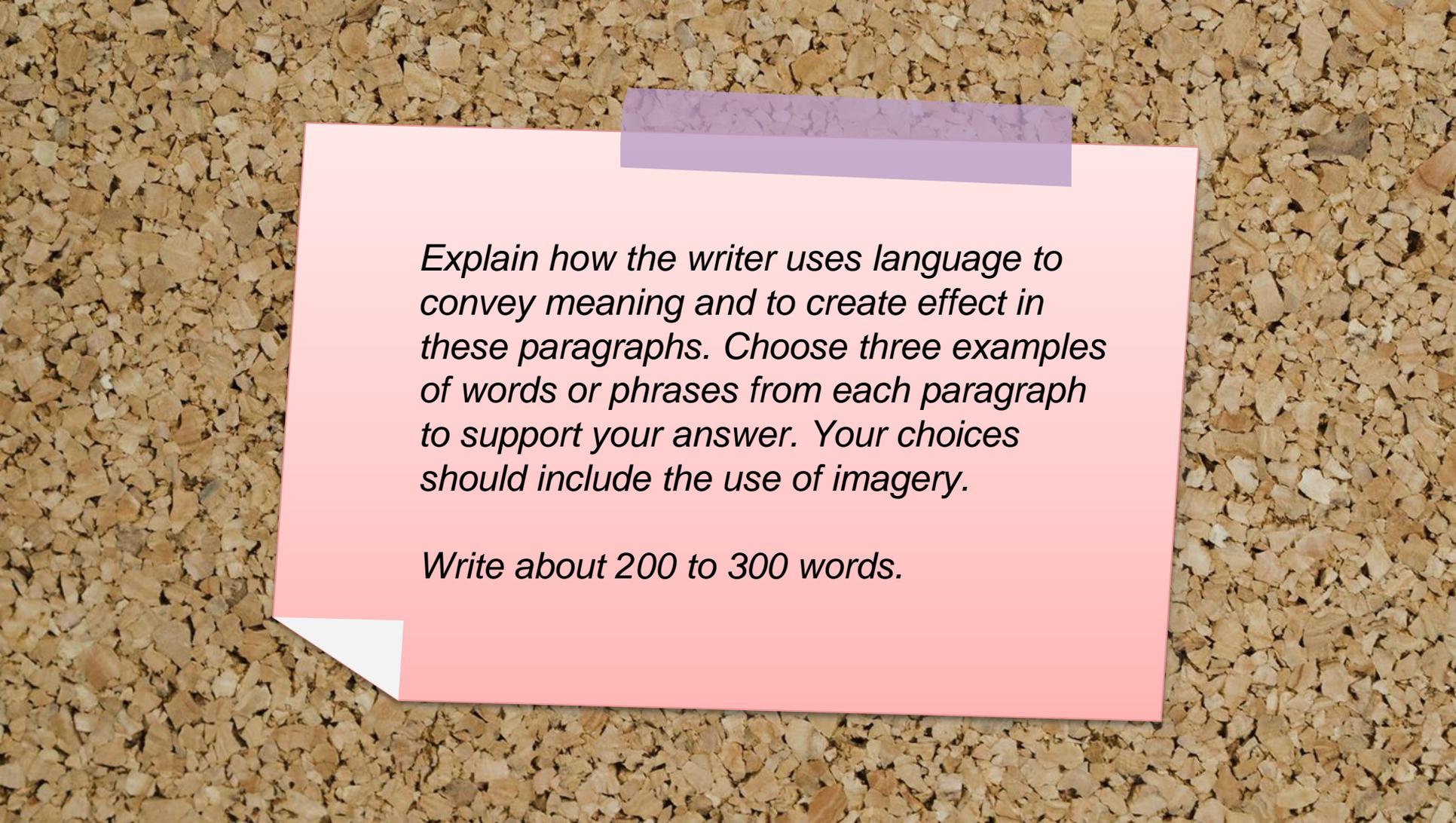
## Paragraph 5.

Her dormitory was actually rather unpleasant. The bunks with thin, worn mattresses were crammed together. There was no shade on the light bulb which flickered spasmodically. Although everyone was meant to take turns doing basic cleaning and emptying bins, this rarely happened. The window frame seemed welded shut, its surface encrusted with years of dead flies. The surface of the sink in the corner looked like a relief map, with river-like cracks meandering from tap to plug hole and mini-mountain ranges moulded from toothpaste.



## Paragraph 8

Later that evening, Sacha suddenly became aware that her parents had appeared in the courtyard. Her initial shock was replaced in quick succession by shame, guilt and annoyance. Mrs Wilkie hurled her luggage to the floor, and with eyes blazing drew back her shoulders in readiness for battle. In a thunderous voice she demanded to know, 'Who's in charge? Why is there no-one at reception?' Her mother's laser eye soon pin-pointed Sacha, who was trying to shrink back into the shadows, and she launched herself across the space to demand, 'What on earth are you doing in a place like this? I thought you were staying somewhere decent!' She wheeled around and commanded, 'You young people should be in bed! It's late.'



*Explain how the writer uses language to convey meaning and to create effect in these paragraphs. Choose three examples of words or phrases from each paragraph to support your answer. Your choices should include the use of imagery.*

*Write about 200 to 300 words.*

(a) *Dormitory Overview: the general effect is of disgust - accumulated dirt indicating years of neglect*

**crammed:** packed to overflowing, like objects, with no space or privacy.

**flickered spasmodically:** weak, fluctuating light, as if it can't make the effort and is about to give up completely

**welded shut** (image): as if they were deliberately sealed and guests are prisoners

**encrusted** (image): thick hardened layers of dead flies coating the surface, suggesting permanence

## Answers:

**a relief map** (image): greenish, brownish lumps of different shapes and sizes, suggesting lack of cleaning over many months

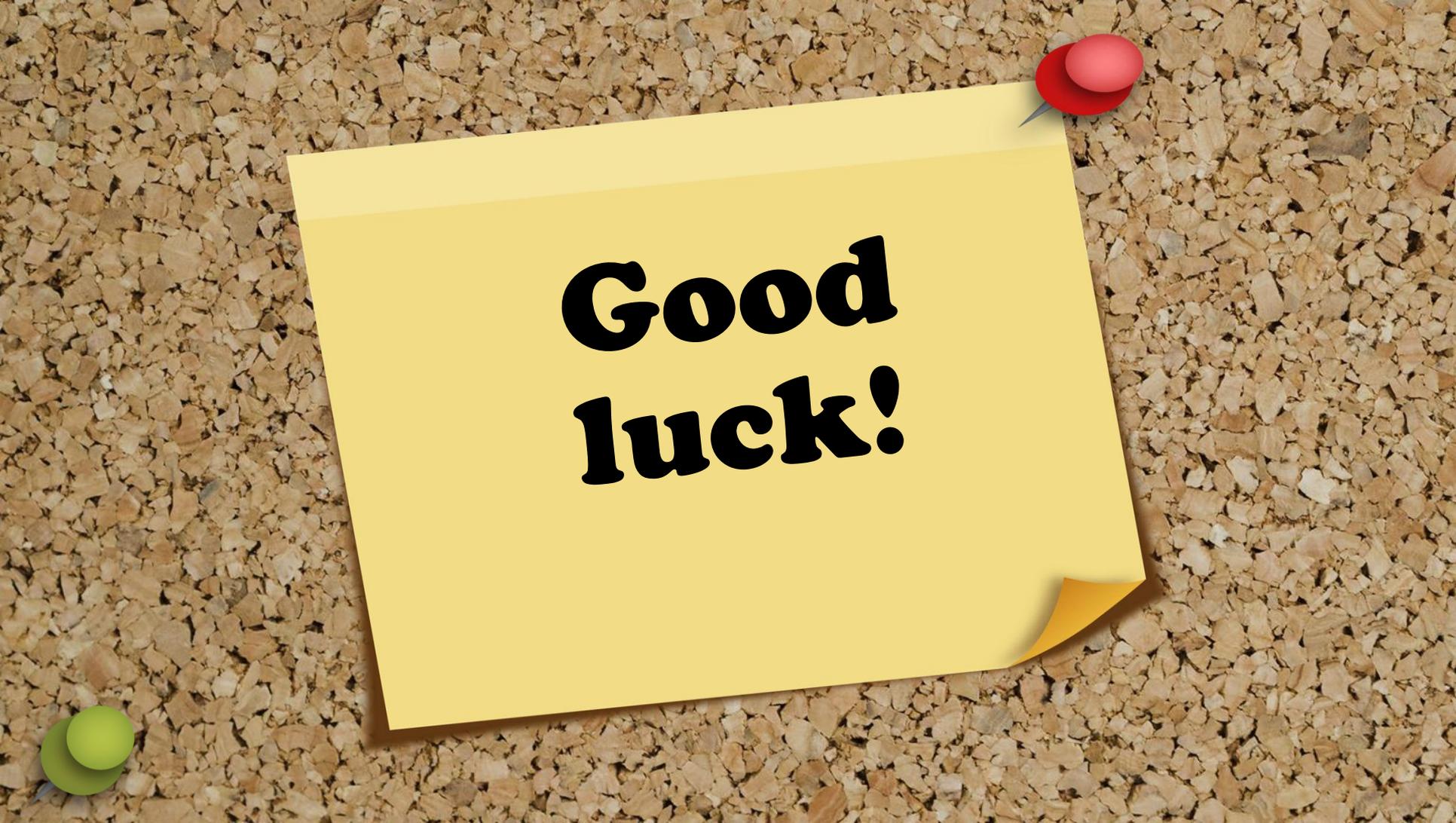
**river-like cracks meandering** (image): twisting lines and loops; adds to age and neglect and lack of hygiene

**mini-mountain ranges** (image): series of painted blobs of hardened toothpaste; link to relief map and overall effect of surfaces not being smooth and clean

**moulded** (image): artistic word, continues metaphor of creation and shapes; possible pun and irony.

- (b) Mrs Wilkie Overview: the general effect is of a vigorous, belligerent, imperious commander of a military campaign
- 
- 
- **hurled**: thrown with great force, conveying lack of subtlety and gentleness of character
- **blazing**: (image): strong emotion makes her eyes look fiery and dangerous
- **in readiness for battle** (image): she is looking for a fight and willing to take on any opposition
- **thunderous** (image): deep, reverberating voice suggesting divinity and masculinity; threatens punishment to follow
- **laser eye soon pin-pointed** (image): intense narrow focused beam, indicative of power and damage, robotic, superhuman
-

- (b) **Mrs Wilkie Overview:** the general effect is of a vigorous, belligerent, imperious commander of a military campaign
- **launched** (image): violent verb of a missile being fired to seek its target
- **wheeled** (image): military term to describe a turnabout to head off or take by surprise an enemy on the battlefield, machine-like
- **demand/demanded:** expects needs to be met
- **commanded:** giving orders like an army officer, and expecting to be obeyed.
-



**Good  
luck!**