

A1

What we learn about Justo is that he is a very strong character and he could throw an ox across a river. According to the text, he is not that good looking, he owns his farm. He is portrayed as a proud man who likes to show off in front of a crowd. He was very confident in that respect. He is calm under pressure and he is a showman. He won most events showing his strength is legendary.

Very thin response. Uneven. Limited coverage.

Some inferences but mostly unsupported

wanders outside lines

2-4

3

A1

Justo is a very strong man who inherited his family farm. He is a very reputable man because he attends feasts where the winner wins a lamb. Justo is poor as he would rather lose a toe than damage his boots –‘this is my only pair of boots and I can’t afford to damage them’. Justo doesn’t drink a lot as he was ‘less impressive the wine-drinking contest’. This implicit message shows that Justo was wise to not drink, so he would excel in other events. Justo enjoys showing off. ‘It was false drama for the benefit of the audience’. This tells us that Justo liked to play to the crowd and have their attention. Justo is also a humble man. When people were talking about him, he told them an underexaggerated version of the story. This shows he is humble and honest. Justo has nine toes. He was very good at every event except drinking.

some selection of appropriate material

some valid inference / limited

uneven but just 5-7

5

A1

We learn that Justo has a very good reputation in the village of Lumo. This suggests he is popular and well-known because of the way he acts.

He is also described as strong because he competes in strength events. 'Most often she'd heard he was the one to watch during the strength events on feast days'. *evidence*

However, we gather as readers that Justo doesn't think he is as strong as he actually is. 'One friend claimed that he had carried an ox into town across his shoulder and celebrated the feat by throwing the beast across the river. "Yes" said Justo when asked about the story, "but it was only a small ox and downhill most of the way into town. And the wind was with me when I threw it".' This suggests that Justo could be a modest person and this is shown in these lines. *long quotation*  
*literal but ok*

He also seems quite confident in himself too. 'After all these competitions I still have nine toes, he said proudly wiggling the four remaining toes on one of his bare feet'. This implies he is proud and faithful and so believes he can win. *?*  
He is also described as 'unmatched' in the farmer's walk which none of the other contestants were anywhere near as good as Justo. Also little children look up to him as a role model.

*some appropriate selection*

*valid inferences (not always well supported)*

*limited in range/depth*

*slightly uneven*

*5-7*

*possibly 6?*

*5*

A1

We learn through Maria that Justo was 'a defender of causes and a wit' but that he was perhaps 'too eager' to create his own mythology. We also learn that he was very strong and 'the one to watch' during feast days. A friend of Maria even claimed that he had the strength to carry 'an ox into town across his shoulder.' We learn that Justo was a humble man by making excuses that it was only a 'small ox' and he carried it downhill most of the way. We learn that Justo was a 'joker'. While competing in the wood-chopping contest 'he joked with the crowd'. We learn that Justo was also rather careless and, quite frankly, quite stupid as he puts himself in danger while chopping the wood barefoot. Justo was also a skilled performer as he 'tore into the pine' with ease before any other competitor. In addition, we learn that Justo is rather full of himself. He shows off to the little ones watching him so that they 'would praise him to future generations.'

some "spots" but mostly inference with evidence

good range

misses the "showman"

8-10

8

A1

In these lines we learn that Justo is a well-known man with a 'reputation' that has spread beyond his village. He is known as 'a defender of causes' and we learn he is 'a wit'. He may also be slightly big-headed as some say he is 'too eager to create his own mythology'. We learn that he is strong as Maria has been told he is the one to watch in the strength events. He also appears to be modest as when asked about throwing the ox he makes excuses for his achievement, saying the ox was small, it was downhill and the wind helped the throw. We learn he is a large man, in fact 'the largest' man in the competition. He is a crowd pleaser as he jokes with the audience. He takes his boots off to do a dangerous axe-wielding event which suggests he is daring, although Maria sees it as 'foolhardy'. We learn that he isn't much of a drinker as he was 'less impressive' in the wine-drinking contest but he is superior in the event that tests endurance and strength as he was 'unmatched'. We learn he is a show-off as he pretends that he is struggling with the weights but then lifts them easily.

9

a good selection / quite thorough  
detail and inference (though not always)  
some insight / assurance  
misses his poverty and banter with children  
very good answer 8-10  
a case for 10?

A1

In these lines I learn that Justo is a kind man as he is 'a defender of causes', which suggests he has principles and good morals. I also learn that he has great strength as he apparently 'carried an ox into town' and proceeded to 'throw the beast across the river'. However, he doesn't brag and instead admits that 'it was only a small ox' which suggests his modest nature. I get the impression that Justo is a likeable man as he 'joked with the crowd' which conveys his easy-going nature. In these lines we learn that Justo only has nine toes as he lost one in one of the competitions, though he is extremely proud that he still has nine toes 'after all these years of competitions.'

I learn that Justo is a humble but poor young man as he only has one pair of boots and he 'can't afford to damage them.' We learn that Justo is not as fond of wine as some of the others as he was 'less impressive' in the 'wine-drinking event.' However, he is 'unmatched' in the farmer's walk contest which suggests his impressive strength and endurance.

In these lines I get the impression that Justo is a performer and a crowd pleaser who likes to be the centre of attention as he used 'false drama for the benefit of the audience', pretending to strain with the weights. He also enjoys teasing as he pretends to the boy that the weights make his arms 'grow in length'.

detail and inference

10

good range

insight

misses very little

A2

Maria herself finds the need to go to the finish line the way the writer does this she uses coincidence to meet the two characters. She happens to find something amusing and Justo just glances at her on the way past. She thinks he is arrogant. When she presents him with a prize and kiss him on the cheek, you get a sense of that she's attracted to him now. Then it states she skirts around to get another chance to see him. She asks for a dance but they end up talking. She does want to see him but her sisters are against it. They discuss Justo for a while longer.

not  
very clear!

sequence?

story

3

A few surface details. Focus on question slips.

Simple comments (not always clear)

Limited development.

Tries "how" at one point but not clear.

2-4

A2

During these lines Maria thinks Justo is 'the most arrogant' due to him walking away from her. However, Maria feels the need to visit friends near the finishing line just so she could get closer to him.

sequence?

Maria also feels the need to 'skirt the gathering' so that he would have to pass her again. I believe Maria feels attracted to him and wants to pursue these emotions.

Towards the end of this section, Maria thinks and feels that Justo is 'not the most handsome man', even though he was 'frighteningly powerful'.

When arguing with her sisters, Maria feels the need to argue her case when they are putting down Justo. She thinks he has 'character' and then doesn't feel the need to fight back in her sisters' never-ending conversation so on the journey home, she remained in 'silence'.

some valid comments but uneasy sequence  
quite a lot is missed here

no attempt to address "how"

just 5-7

5



A2

The writer shows us that Maria is attracted to Justo by including a rhetorical question 'who could have imagined...' Maria feels that she wants Justo's attention as she goes to the finishing line to see him, under the guise of wanting to visit her friends. She laughs her 'most feminine laugh' which she thinks will attract Justo. Maria thinks Justo is very arrogant when he looks at her and moves on. The writer shows Maria's persistence when she hands him the lamb and continues to follow him through the crowd. Maria thinks that Justo is 'not the most handsome man'. She also thinks he is strong. Maria feels she must defend Justo against her sister's criticisms. She feels dejected when her sisters continue to criticise Justo.

not quite got it

weak

no evidence for this

some valid thoughts/feelings (not closely tracked)

uses text (uneven)

not really got writer's method

some gaps (fair?)

5-7

5

A2

Maria is instantly attracted to Justo causing her to find an excuse to go 'near the finishing line' to meet him. She wants to impress him and does so by trying to capture his attention, 'unleashed her most feminine laugh'.

The author uses rhetorical questions to demonstrate how Maria is unsure of how Justo views her, 'to turn in her direction?' She is impressed by Justo and, despite thinking him to be 'arrogant', she acts in a flirtatious manner to try and make the attraction mutual.

Maria is eager to learn more about Justo to develop her attraction and the author uses short sentences to show how everything appears to be happening very quickly, 'they sat and talked'. To Maria, Justo is a figure of strength, causing her to be almost in awe of him, 'frighteningly powerful'.

As they talk Maria sees a different side to Justo rather than his arrogance as he was 'without confidence when they were alone'.

The author demonstrates that Maria has fallen for him by having her stand up for him when her family question his appearance. She insists he has 'character' and she stays silent as her sisters discuss his 'many inadequacies' on their way home.

7/8

selects appropriate material / mostly good on thoughts  
some insight and feelings

8

tries to explore "how" but mixed success

use of text not always elegant

just 8 ?

A2

I believe that Maria likes Justo which the writer shows through the use of a rhetorical question ‘..her most feminine laugh which caused Justo to turn in her direction?’ This suggests that Maria is trying to get his attention by ‘unleashing’ her most feminine laugh in an attempt to distract him. The use of the superlative ‘most desirable laugh’ conveys her attempt to make herself look desirable to him. *Trying to get at "how"*

However, Maria then believes he’s ‘the most arrogant man in Guernica’ after he ignores her and just ‘glanced at her and walked on’. The use of ‘glanced’ suggests that he has no interest in Maria and justifies her annoyance.

I believe that Maria is attracted to Justo as she ‘quickly arranged to present the prize’. The use of ‘quickly’ conveys her fear that other girls may be advancing on Justo. It also suggests her eagerness to reward him with the lamb and the ‘ceremonial kiss.’ *evidence?*

Maria seems extremely eager to dance with Justo, despite his dirty overalls, which implies the deep fondness she has for him. However, her fear of

? rejection is obvious as she states ‘if you’re not too worn out from all the chopping and lifting’. *misread* The writer suggests her excited thoughts as she ‘skirted’ the gathering so that he would have to pass her again.

Maria is extremely protective over Justo as she defends him from her sisters. ‘He has character’, she argued. In addition, she returned home in silence as her sisters debated Justo’s ‘many inadequacies’ which suggests how upset she was with her family.

*appropriate selection*

*uneven but mostly good on thoughts and feelings  
tracks the text*

*tries to explore language/authorial method (mixed success)*

A2

Dave Boling shows that Maria feels attracted to Justo in these lines. He implies that Maria thinks that he is an attractive person and would like to get to know him. Boling uses a slightly humorous tone to show Maria's thoughts and feelings when he states that 'it so happened' that at the end of Justo's walk, Maria 'discovered the need' to visit her friends at the finish line. The writer continues this with sarcasm as he says 'who could have imagined' that just as Justo walked past Maria 'unleashed her most feminine laugh'. This indicates that Maria feels the need to grab Justo's attention and wants to start a conversation. It seems that Maria feels drawn to Justo and she wants to attract him with her looks as she smiles her 'broadest smile.' However, Boling shows a change in her feelings towards Justo as he tells us that she thought he must be the 'most arrogant man in Guernica'. It is apparent that Maria thinks Justo is not friendly and is big-headed. This also suggests she feels offended and disappointed. However, Boling shows us that Maria is not ready to give up on Justo yet and still wants to get to know him. This is shown when she 'moves in' for the 'kiss on the cheek' which implies she feels romantically attracted to him. Furthermore, she tries to get his attention by standing where he must pass her again. Maria is desperate to attract his attention and becomes more forward when she asks him to dance. Maria agrees with her sisters that he is 'not the most handsome man' which suggests she feels he has an attractive personality or she cannot explain why she was attracted to him. She thinks he is 'frighteningly powerful' but she feels there is more to Justo's boasting as he was 'without confidence' when they were talking alone. Boling then implies that Maria is not influenced by her sisters as she argues that he has 'character'.

Detailed, methodical and perceptive.

Does not miss much (the farm?)

Addresses authorial method (sees ironic tone)

A brilliant response.

332 words

8-10

10

A3

? Other people arrive at Maria's residence which makes me think she is fairly popular among the men of the town. Justo arrives wearing his work clothes ✓ and greets Maria's family kindly which makes me feel he is a very kind man. I feel that Justo is being very generous ✓ when he offers to help the family. I think Maria's sisters are being hypocritical when they think he is appealing because they only really like him now he's done their repairs. perhaps I think that Justo's method of proposal was fairly extravagant as he was disqualified from the race just to propose ✓ to Maria. I don't think the engagement was shocking, as it was fairly obvious to see it coming ✓. I think that Justo would be a good husband to Maria and will keep the family happy. why?

Limited outline of story  
simple personal response  
not detailed or well-supported

4

A3

In these lines Justo meets Maria's parents and sisters. He offers to help with the house which Maria's mother appreciates. Then it skips to a month later ✓ when Justo proposes to Maria at a fair similar to when he met her. *summary* Justo obviously likes to please people. When he asks Maria's mother if he can help she is clearly shocked but very happy ✓ that he is helpful. This shows us that Justo and Maria's family would get along well. This is also shown when they have a meal. ✓ Everyone is relaxed and it seems that Justo 'was already part of the family.' ✓ I find this surprising but it obviously shows that Justo and Maria suit each other very well. ✓

When Justo and Maria visit a fair a month later, Justo is in the middle of the farmer's walk when he retrieves ✓ a gold ring from his pocket and proposes to Maria. This is significant as Maria and Justo met at a fair ✓ very similar to this one. *no reaction?*

Although he is disqualified for going off the path, he completes the walk and goes further than the winner 'just to show ✓ he could'. This shows us that he is determined to prove he can do things.

*simple outline of events but clear  
limited personal response*

*just 5 ?*

5

A3

In these lines Maria and her family arrive home to find Justo 'empty handed' but in 'his work clothes.' After greeting Maria's family he offers to complete any jobs that need to be done which would have been appreciated due to the father's injuries. Maria's mother is shocked by this and replies 'to help?' He then lists his talent and accepts 'the list' of jobs to do from the mother with a simple nod. During the afternoon Justo starts to fit in with the family. We are then told that the sisters' view of Justo changes for the better once he has completed the tasks. ✓ response ?

The extract then fast forwards to a month later when another fair is taking place. When Justo is taking part in the weights competition, he retrieves a gold ring from his trousers. He asks Maria to marry him and she accepts with joy. However, Justo gets disqualified for going off the path and the extract closes with Justo apologising for 'not adding another lamb to their flock'.

In this section, my opinion of Justo changes. I believe him to be a kind gentleman when offering his help to the family. I also believe he is a genuine person as he was in no rush to complete the jobs and instead carried on after an afternoon's work.

When Justo proposed to Maria I immediately thought it was too soon as they had only been together a month but I realised that it must have been love at first sight so I was happy with that thought.

some uneasy moments but a basic understanding of the story

some personal response

5

5-7

5/6

A3

Justo arrived at Maria's home 'empty-handed' while others presented gifts. To make amends, he asked 'What can I do to help?' Judging by this act of kindness, I feel that Justo is a humble man but could be trying to impress the Onati family.

Justo helps out by doing the manual, heavy work with Maria. It was as if he was already 'part of the family' with this kind gesture, and even won over Maria's sisters as they now 'didn't have to repair the roof'. It seems here that the Onati family are very welcoming and that Justo is a very likeable character who wins over many with his positive attitude.

A month later at the next fair Justo asked Maria to marry him and without hesitation she agreed. Justo is disqualified from the competition but does not care; the thing of most importance to him now is Maria, not the competition as he rejoined 'his future bride'. This is more evidence to me that Justo is a humble, loving and kind man whose love for Maria is greater than the competition which he used to find so important.

8

Clear understanding of the narrative.

Personal response is valid and well-considered.

Reacts to the characters.



A3

Justo visits Maria's family in a manner which is not the stereotypical way in which a man tries to impress a future bride, 'wearing his work clothes'. Instead of trying to focus primarily on Maria, Justo wants to make a good impression on her family, 'What can I do to help?' This made me change my opinion of him and believe him to be a generous and rather thoughtful person. I feel that he was welcomed by the family because they saw these qualities in him, 'already part of the family.'

At the next fair, Maria was at the front row which shows how they have grown close and shows how keen she is to see him win the competition. However, Justo decides to propose to Maria which leaves me feeling happy for the couple. It also surprised me because it is an unusual time to propose to your wife.

The proposal is done in a flamboyant manner, which is true to his character, holding the weights in one hand and a gold ring in the other, leaving Maria 'stunned'. This shows me that he is still himself and hasn't changed his confident personality when trying to win Maria's heart.

Even after Maria agrees, Justo went back to the competition which creates a sense of admiration in my eyes as even after this he is still determined to win the competition. This also makes me feel proud as he doesn't want to let people down.

Justo is disqualified but still carries on just to prove he could have done it, which again shows his power.

He is humorous when he apologised for not winning the lamb and this makes me even more pleased for them as he is clearly happy to be making jokes. He has real devotion to their future together.

detailed, clear understanding of text  
use of quotation not always elegant

thoughtful personal response

8-10

9

clearly engaged with the characters.

A3

At the beginning of these lines the writer shows Justo contrasts to how Maria is usually treated by men. Justo 'wears his work clothes', showing his lack of care for his appearance. Perhaps this shows he only has one set of clothes. He gives Maria's mother a 'vigorous handshake' which shows he is not used to meeting girls' parents but he is polite, asking if he can help.

As the passage progresses, Justo shows that he is prepared to do the 'hardest' chores. He tells Maria to put her work clothes on. The atmosphere is relaxed as they eat and the sisters are relieved of fixing the roof because of Justo. It is mentioned again that Justo is 'not handsome' but now the sisters have changed their mind and are of the opinion that 'looks are not everything'.

A month later at the fair Justo suddenly proposes to Maria, showing her a gold ring. Their romance is revealed when she accepts and they kiss. Justo is not concerned that he is disqualified but he apologises for not adding another lamb to their flock.

To begin with, I find it humorous that Justo appears in his work clothes and this is reinforced when he 'instantly wins over' Maria's mother by offering to help. I felt that Justo was polite and thoughtful to offer to help and it was better than presents. It was also humorous to see the sisters change their minds about 'ugly' Justo and it was good to see that he was accepted into the family. I was surprised when he proposed as it was only after a month but it was a relief when Maria accepted him and they kissed. I was upset that he was disqualified and did not win the lamb but when Justo did not seem to mind, I think it finished the passage on a happy note. Maria obviously meant more to him than winning the competition.

detailed/clear understanding of the narrative  
personal response is thoughtful and well-considered

8-10

10

I usually wake around 9.30 am to the smell of burnt bacon but for some reason there was no smell. Well apart from the mouldy tile on the ceiling which looked as though it had a living creature inside of it. Something felt different, today felt different.

intriguing

As I sat up on the hospital bed I hung my legs off the side to search for my slippers that old Maggie had made me, accept all I could feel was an unheated tile on my soft, delicate toes. My slippers had gone. But where? At that moment I realised that I could hear something, something unusual. Silence. I had the hospital room which allowed me to see into the reception corridor. Usually at this of day the corridor was full of family members questioning why their cousin, daughter or son was in this place. Nobody wanted to be in this place. Not even the sane. So many times I wished I could escape or just run, and run, and keep on running, but somehow it never worked. I moved along to the lounge. This was my favoite place because it was so peaceful. No one would dare venture out of their rooms to even come in here, Well, apart from me of course.

Something was different about the lounge. Something had changed. The walls were a discoloured yellow now like an old photograph that had been left out in the sun for too long. This room normally gave me a sense of security and safety, But today all this room gave me was a sense of danger and emptiness. I thought maybe if I went to the phsycologists room, he could give me some answers. His mustard coloured door with the sign saying 'Knock if sane' was no longer. All that stood before me was an old rusty doorway with an empty room. I felt unsafe. Number 2 of the rules to recovery stated you had to feel safe. I needed to go somewhere safe. Was it the fact I was no longer in control? Or the fact that I had no idea what was happening.

As I looked around to help me gain my familiar state of mind, I saw a shadow. I've seen many shadows, but this one was different, this one was leading me somewhere. Maybe it was an answer to my wish. Should I stay and hope that everyone comes back? Or do I leave and take my chance at freedom. Would this one decision of mine risk everyone elses lives? Yes.

After all the shadows always told me 'sometimes you have to be careful what you wish for'.

442 words

9/10 + 8

17

The narrative voice is convincingly sustained.

Organised and sequenced. Intriguing, although there are unanswered questions.

Mostly clear and controlled. Some errors.

## A New Beginning

The car door flew open as miniscule droplets of rain thudded against the cold concrete pavement in their thousands, before being coxed away by the gutters, into the black abyss of drainage networks below the surface. word ?

The car was a bedraggled Vauxhall, parked outside the local HSBC bank in Hereford, England. Out of the car stepped the driver. The unlucky bank worker who had the honours of getting up at six in the morning in foul weather, to open up the bank for yet another mundane, monotonous day of counting coins, stamping cheque books and pushing a pen around.

As he shut the door, he brought his briefcase to his head, shielding his hair as if it were sacred. He also brought his coffee, concealed in a polystyrene cup, close to his chest, clutching it like a child. In one swift movement, he turned on his heels and darted towards the glass doors of the bank.

The man was thirty six year old Tom Morris. He got the job in the bank at the age of twenty three. He dropped out of university the year before that, and intended for his job to only be temporary, whilst he searched his options to make something of his life. However, thirteen years later, he was still there but still craving that new beginning. He was average height, lean with dark hair combed over, a five o'clock shadow and wide brown eyes. His facial features were sharp and defined, rather the opposite to his lazy and too laidback personality.

As Tom finished opening up, his gaze fluttered across the dreary landscape outside dully and dreary, a multitude of different shades of blacks and greys. However, as his gaze drifted across the outset, his eye caught sight of something that startled him slightly. A magpie perched high on a lampost. 'What's a bird doing out in this weather,' he wondered as he saluted the infamous bird before reciting the old superstition in his head. 'One for sorrow...' It was half an hour before the buzzer sounded, indicating a customer had entered. As he looked up, following the silky trickle of steam from his coffee, what he saw froze him to the bone.

Two black silhouettes slid quickly through the door. The first man bolted the door, whilst the second man marched straight towards the cashier booths. Straight towards Tom. Tom's body shook violently with fear, as his trembling searched for the silent alarm under the desk he was sat at.

The first man was brandishing a semi-automatic pistol. The man in black raised the gun to the now hysterical Tom Morris. The man pressed the gun to his head. Tom felt the cold steel against his forehead. Thoughts flashed through his mind, one of which was his lack of achievement in life, he was going to die as a nobody, at least this would be a new beginning?

Suddenly his mind flashed back to reality as his fumbling hand came into contact with the silent alarm under the desk. His arms felt to weak to push it, he gathered all of his remaining strength and pressed hard. It was done. The police were alerted and would be no more than fourty five seconds. But

unfortunately for Tom, he didn't have fourty five seconds. The masked invader ✓  
shouted at Tom in a foreign tongue before pulling the trigger, sending a  
shockwave through Tom's body for a millisecond. Then nothing. Tom's corpse  
hung limp in his chair, a stream of blood trickling from his pale, cold forehead.

The narrative seems rather an uncomfortable fit to the title  
but an effort is made to force it !

On its own terms, it has shape and detail.

Holds the reader's interest. Some good vocabulary.

Clear and fluent with a sprinkling of technical errors.

Generally in control.

10 + 10

20

Mum, why do we have to move again? This was the third new school I had attended in five years and being the new girl was a difficult process for me. The feelings of loneliness and isolation overwhelmed me and the fear and trepidation haunted me. *good vocabulary*

As I walked to school that first day everything felt alien to me and once again I was the stranger, the one to be stared at, the one to be judged. In stark contrast to my previous schools, the buildings were harsh, disheveled and in severe need of reconstruction. All so different from the lovely stone walls, manicured gardens and pristine corridors I had become accustomed to. Even the smell as I entered was unappealing and the bell, denoting the first lesson, was intimidating and menacing. As I navigated my way to the first lesson, the only available seat was next to a sinister looking girl covered in makeup and facial piercings.

I introduced myself in a shaky voice, feeling quite threatened by her strange appearance. She simply snarled at me then laughed with complete contempt. I could feel my face turning a bright shade of pink.

'I'm Channay. What on earth are you wearing? You look like a nun!' she replied. I could hear stifled laughter around the room, but I was rescued when the teacher entered the classroom. For the next hour I was lost in a logical world of equations and algebra.

At the end of the lesson, Channay said accusingly, 'You won't make any friends if you continue to show off like that. This was the last thing I needed, I merely wanted to be liked. It was quite obvious that Channay was the most popular girl in the class and I immediately decided that I was going to be her friend. For the rest of the day, Channay introduced me to all the cool kids and made me feel so good about myself. The feeling of being accepted was immense. It was at that point that Channay dropped the bombshell.'

'If you want to be in our group, you have to complete a challenge.'  
My heart sank.

'Yes, of course. What do you want me to do?'

'Tomorrow we are going into town and you have to steal a ring from a boutique.' I had never before done anything like this and the feeling of apprehension overwhelmed me as the fateful deed came closer. I had to complete the challenge or I would be an outsider and I would never be accepted. This was my only chance.

Channay and her friends peered into the window of the boutique and I quickly grabbed a silver ring and innocently put in my bag. I felt invincible as the rush of adrenaline hit me. I slowly walked out of the shop but the alarm went off and a security guard viciously grabbed my arm.

The feeling of pride was transformed into shame and humiliation.

'I'm sorry,' I cried with tears bursting from my eyes.

'Don't apologise to me,' the security guard replied. 'The police will deal with this.' Suddenly I could hear the sirens coming closer and closer and the gravity of the situation became apparent. *"A new beginning"* *13+12*

*Coherent / has pace and detail. Good vocabulary used appropriately.  
Fluent and generally well-controlled. A few spelling mistakes.*

## A New Beginning

'BEEP, BEEP, BEEP' resonates in my ears as I observe a mountain range of ECG line-peaks. As I stare into Chloe's eyes as labour progresses, I see feelings of pain and anguish, but as I look deeper I see feelings of expectancy and joy for what is to come. ✓

With an owl-like glance, I rotate my head from side to side to take in a panoramic view of the hospital room. Mum, dad, brother and sister and in-laws try to make conversation as if to mask their nerves for the performance occurring before their eyes. Doctors and nurses frequently check their watches, look to the ECG monitor and give each other routine nods. The brushing of their shoulders produces a buzz-like sound throughout the room. As observations slot through my mind like a 1920s picture-board movie, I feel Chloe tighten her grip of my right hand which sparks a flashback to where it all began.

A summer evening, post university exams, our first 'date'. As we strolled shoulder-to-shoulder past six-foot high grass, she nudged closer and grasped my hand. This action was a sign that possibly our friendship was deeper than just training partners, to which my spirits were lifted. As I reminised on that summer evening, I remembered us watching the boats float by. As the sound of their horns echoed in my mind, they seemed to heighten in pitch and then I found myself before the resounding ECG beeps again.

Within seconds, Chloe began to produce a circulation-stopping clench on my hand, which was followed by an ear-deafening scream. Like meerkats lifting their heads, everyone in the room seemed to sharpen their attention to the 'main event'. As Chloe's breaths became deeper, so the instructions from the nurse became louder. Towels now began to arrive through the doors via smiling nurses. The incubation box was plugged into electrical mains and its lights were glowing in the corner of the room next to the 'gallery' window. At this point, my knowledge seemed inadequate but my physical support and presence a privilege. I mumbled words of encouragement as I knew I could empathise with the birth Chloe was enduring. As emotions flew through my mind, and I tried to process them, my body began to feel more and more fatigued. Yet I knew the soon arrival would produce an energy that I could not imagine' ?

'One last squeeze, you're about there,' bellowed the nurse.

And so the expectant mother, Chloe, squeezed. 'Swoosh'. Our baby girl entered the world. Her name? Faith. To symbolise that she was only made possible by our trust in each other. This was a new chapter for us. But more so, a new life, a new beginning.

451 words

14 + 14

Ambitious and sophisticated. Clever structure.  
Fluent expression. Tense shift?