Northanger Abbey **Indicative Content**

1. **How does Austen generate a tense atmosphere?**
   
   Responses could include, but are not restricted to, the following:
   
   - Catherine being unable to trust appearances: the cabinet having ‘very much the effect of gold’ is symbolic of this. Also, her overactive imagination is looking for the extraordinary.
   
   - Catherine’s physiognomy reflects a tense atmosphere: ‘heart beat quick… a cheek flushed by hope… trembled from head to foot’.
   
   - Pathetic fallacy: ‘A violent gust of wind, rising with sudden fury, added fresh horror to the moment.’ The elements also seem to be against her with the creeping dark.
   
   - Change in mood: Catherine goes from curious to hiding under the covers!

   *Answers should reference text and attempt to explain the effect of language and authorial techniques. Additional credit for use of subject terminology.*

2. **How is Catherine shown to be rational and sensible?**
   
   Responses could include, but are not restricted to, the following:
   
   - The movement in the curtains is disregarded as ‘nothing but the violence of the wind’ and she steps forward, unafraid of spectral imaginings.
   
   - She inspects the room almost forensically: ‘the possibility of false linings to the drawers did not escape her’.
   
   - Her fancies are not expected to become reality: ‘she scorned the causeless fears of an idle fancy’.
   
   - She has the sense to retreat into bed when ‘human nature could support no more’.

   *Answers should make a range of points supported by evidence from the text.*

3. **How, on the other hand, is she shown to be impulsive and superstitious?**
   
   Responses could include, but are not restricted to, the following:
   
   - Her mind is full of conjecture: ‘her quick eyes directly fell on a roll of paper pushed back into the further part of the cavity, apparently for concealment’.
   
   - She is heavily affected by ‘half a glance’ which ‘sufficed to ascertain written characters’.
   
   - She is made ‘motionless with horror’ by her extinguishing of the light.
   
   - In her frenzied state, she is affrighted by the unexceptional sound of ‘receding footsteps and the closing of a distant door’.

   *Answers should make a range of points supported by evidence from the text.*
4. Why do you think that Austen has placed the sections beginning “She should take her time...” and “never from the first...” in quote marks?

**Responses could include, but are not restricted to, the following:**

- The ostentatious use of inverted commas might show that Catherine fancies herself as a protagonist in a Gothic novel, and these are the moments of heightened drama when the narrator in her head takes over.
- It is like an internal dialogue between her rational conscious and impulsive unconscious.
- Austen is drawing attention to the Gothicness of these moments, as if they were something taken from a novel and not Catherine’s reality.

*Students should give a personal response, supported by an explanation.*

5. What do you think it is that Catherine hopes to find?

**Responses could include, but are not restricted to, the following:**

- Something that confirms her suspicions about General Tilney.
- Information that will bring her closer to Henry and maybe precipitate his return.
- Secrets to match what she’s read in Gothic fiction.

*Students should give a personal response, supported by an explanation.*