

Moderators' Report/
Principal Moderator Feedback

Summer 2013

GCE English Language and Literature
(6EL04/01)
Presenting the World

Edexcel and BTEC Qualifications

Edexcel and BTEC qualifications come from Pearson, the UK's largest awarding body. We provide a wide range of qualifications including academic, vocational, occupational and specific programmes for employers. For further information visit our qualifications websites at www.edexcel.com or www.btec.co.uk. Alternatively, you can get in touch with us using the details on our contact us page at www.edexcel.com/contactus.

Pearson: helping people progress, everywhere

Pearson aspires to be the world's leading learning company. Our aim is to help everyone progress in their lives through education. We believe in every kind of learning, for all kinds of people, wherever they are in the world. We've been involved in education for over 150 years, and by working across 70 countries, in 100 languages, we have built an international reputation for our commitment to high standards and raising achievement through innovation in education. Find out more about how we can help you and your students at: www.pearson.com/uk

Summer 2013

Publications Code UA035891

All the material in this publication is copyright

© Pearson Education Ltd 2013

Introduction

Unit 4 gives centres the opportunity to choose their own topic and core text in any genre, which may be fiction or non-fiction. As with Unit 2, this is to be supported with research and wide reading. The element of investigation is particularly important for this unit and it is expected that the extent of the research and reading and the choice of topics and tasks will show progression from Unit 2.

This year the folders included some very creative and ambitious work with more students writing successfully in voices clearly influenced not just by their source texts, but also by their often impressive wide reading.

Some centres seemed to feel that they had found a winning formula and had prescribed the same tasks for all students. In some cases this may have been a practical decision to reflect the particular cohort but there was some evidence that very capable students had been restricted by this lack of choice. When centres had allowed students to follow a variety of outcomes and to pursue their own interests, the submissions tended to be more successful. However, the choice of task does need to be carefully monitored and students should be advised to avoid genres which have a limiting effect unless handled very skilfully. This applies especially to diaries which can easily become formulaic. It is also important to aim for diversity or some clear distinction between the genre of the two creative tasks.

Choice of core texts

A good core text is one which offers opportunities for a variety of approaches and ideas. As in previous years, there was a noticeable correlation between the nature of the core text, the extent of the related wide reading and the quality of the tasks and commentaries eg, whereas 'The Kite Runner' inspired an immense variety of themes and tasks, the choice of a Stephen King novel proved to be very limiting. This type of contemporary fiction is appropriate if included in the wide reading portfolio but is unsuitable as a core text.

As yet, very few centres have chosen a non-fiction text as their core text although this is a possibility that centres may wish to consider in the future. An interesting choice of non-fiction core text which stimulated a range of themes and outcomes was 'Reading Lolita in Tehran'. Equally, the theme of 'Love and Conflict' inspired by the core text of 'Much Ado About Nothing' led to a surprising diversity of creative tasks.

Popular texts included: 'The Kite Runner', 'The Handmaid's Tale', 'One Flew Over The Cuckoo's Nest', 'Birdsong' and 'The Bell Jar'.

Choice of Tasks

There were many interesting tasks for both the literary and non-fiction pieces where the evidence of research was pleasing. Some students had carried out genuine first hand research by using family or personal experiences as a starting point, in some cases using interviews as part of their investigation into the topic.

Journalism is naturally a popular choice for the non-fiction task and there were many editorials and feature articles for both print and online newspapers and magazines. Many of these articles were successful in demonstrating secure knowledge of the relevant generic features, although some were simply essays with no clear sense of audience or purpose. Good style models are essential in enabling students to appreciate what they are trying to produce.

More students this year had attempted to write blogs, but it was surprising that few seemed aware of the characteristic features of a blog and produced a first person account which could easily have been a monologue.

It is disappointing that some centres are still allowing students to produce fictionalised accounts for the non-fiction task (eg, war diaries, television interviews, eye witness accounts of historical events) when previous Principal Moderator Reports have emphasised that the specification does require the non-fiction task to be authentic.

When good style models had been studied, students often produced very effective film and theatre reviews aimed at a niche audience.

Commentaries and Bibliographies

There was a tendency to over-reward observational commentaries. The commentary does need probing analysis of literary and linguistic features to achieve marks in the highest band. Some students engaged too much with a description of the reading process rather than an exploration of the shaping of their own texts. However, far more students are now skilfully integrating discussion of the features of their stimulus texts which inspired their own writing with a linked analysis of the characteristic techniques of their own texts. The commentary should be viewed as an opportunity to demonstrate knowledge and skills acquired through the two year study of language and literature but it should be discriminating as opposed to a check list.

Exemplar 1

Our core text, 'The Road', is based on a clear sense of narrative progression, yet it employs innovative techniques such as unpunctuated, fragmented sentences to create a desolate and sinister atmosphere: this helped make me think more creatively about possible responses to the theme of 'Journey'.

My literary piece was inspired by the film 'Adaptation' which recounts the experience of a writer who is commissioned to compose a screenplay but suffers writer's block and turns his struggle into the subject matter of the screenplay itself. Originally presented as a screenplay, I eventually converted 'Lock' into a play script, as the dramatic situation and extended passages of dialogue seemed more appropriate to live rather than recorded performance.

Moderator's Comment:

The student gives a clear explanation of the rationale behind the creative tasks and succinctly identifies inspiration gained from the stimulus material. There is clear evidence of reading and research.

Exemplar 2

'A Thousand Splendid Suns' (Khaled Hosseini) was used as my wider reading and I extracted many of Khaled's concepts inputting them into my own work. I grasped the idea of arranged marriage from this book as Mariam is wed to Rasheed who is a lot older than her and this aided me in parts of my article. Mariam never speaks to her father after the marriage, which is the opposite in 'A father's love' as Ashoka doesn't speak to Rakesh and Rakesh also marries for love not because of an arrangement. Many aspects were employed in my article, as Rasheed believed a man should rule his wife restricting her independence also insisting on her wearing a burkha. Laila's father is keen to keep her educated as that is the child's main role in the family and she is also beaten when she speaks out of turn to Rasheed. All these issues are reflected in my article.

Moderator's Comment:

The student attempts to explain the rationale and makes reference to source material but this is an observational account, lacking any analysis. There is a vague reference to 'Many aspects', without examples. Although it does not interfere with coherence, punctuation is insecure.

This introduction lacks the sharp focus and succinct approach of Exemplar 1.

Exemplar 3

For my non-fiction text, a weblog, the readers are likely to be young and interested in social and political current affairs. Its structure echoes Rageh Omaar's 'Revolution Day', a first person account of being in Baghdad just before the invasion in March 2003 with its switches from the microcosmic to the macrocosmic. The present tense and dynamic present participle ('is heaving') add immediacy and should provide audience-inclusivity for young readers who recognise the description of Saturday night in a city centre. The topographical references ('In this part of town, Frogmoore'), ('to the west or east, with both Downley and Micklefield') achieve authenticity while exploiting language phonologically through consonantal, onomatopoeic ('Cacophonous' and 'shrieks') and alliterative patterning ('foster a festering') and ('savage skull splitting scream') again evokes the typical raucous atmosphere for readers sharing the same frame of reference. Personal involvement ('In my opinion anyway'; 'I fear') confirms my credentials as a reliable reporter while my lexical choices range from the sophisticated ('hedonists', 'acolytes', 'beset') to the colloquial, conversational ('find out what these kids are good at') and the elided ('whose gonna stop us!) characteristic of a weblog which often relies on spoken word features. Other rhetorical devices include antithesis, ('significant success but....an abject failure') as well as elevated lexis ('indigenous population') to achieve a more formal and serious tone.

Moderator's Comment:

This is a sustained analysis of the student's non-fiction task. References to the language of the text are skilfully embedded into the discussion and there is a precise sense of audience and the techniques employed to interest them. Technical terminology is used accurately and with discrimination so that characteristic features of the genre are selected for comment rather than following a feature-spotting approach.

Exemplar 4

In my first piece I explore the naivety of an autistic child, how their simplistic outlook leads them to being deceived. I also explored the idea that a child is lied to regularly, and the way that an autistic child can often see through everyday lies, such as their inability to understand metaphors and idioms in anything more than a literal context.

Firstly, I created a strong sense of voice, inspired by my style model 'The Color Purple'. My narrator is a thirteen year old Afro-American autistic boy living in the Deep South of America in the 1920's, causing him to use lots of dialect in his writing. Although boys were permitted to attend school, the standard of education was usually low, making my narrative voice quite uneducated. Also, autism was not defined officially until 1938, and was not really diagnosed until the late 70's, implying that whilst at school my narrator would merely be seen as 'odd' therefore would not have received much of the teacher's attention.

The religious themes in the text were inspired by the contemporary dance piece 'Revelations' choreographed by Alvin Ailey, who was brought up in Texas, although wasn't born until 1931. He uses religious imagery in his work, clearly showing the strong beliefs and ideas of his community. He also includes a strong sense of unity, taken from his experiences growing up in a black community, all of which I have tried to mirror in my piece.

Dialectic and archaic terms are featured throughout the text, such as 'Momma' and 'he's no better than he should be', giving a clear impression of the time frame and also, given that they are Americanisms, geographical setting.

I use ellipsis and elision to emphasise the narrator's strong accent, for example 'cause' and 'she got somethin'. This stresses the childlike mind set of my protagonist. In addition, I use non-standard grammar, again adding to the young, uneducated narrative voice, for example: 'she hadn't never' and 'she say she got'. I also use quite rapid topic shifts throughout, illustrating the generally short concentration span of an autistic child and crafting a strong sense of voice.

Moderator's Comment:

The succinct introductory paragraph is followed by a clear explanation of the stimulus material and sets the tasks in context. Although the style of the analytical section is somewhat repetitive, appropriate linguistic features are selected for comment and there is a strong sense of purpose.

Exemplar 5

Lexically, in both pieces I use a direct mode of address. Bryson's use of direct address in 'Notes from a Small Island' ('Eventually you acquire a ticket and trek back to your car where your wife greets you with a 'where have you been?') is in the present tense creating a sense of both immediacy and connection with the audience. This is reflected in my travel writing in which I invite the audience to imagine that they are visiting the Thamal market 'where you fend off the onslaught of merchants, who successfully detect that you are tourists, and sell you the same items over and over again.' The adverbial at the end of the clause communicates a viewpoint of negativity. Furthermore, I took inspiration from Bryson's use of informal lexis in my travel piece to help the audience feel a sense of familiarity, when I describe a very unfamiliar place. For my article I took inspiration from Parish's piece 'Down but not definitely Out' in which in the final line she uses a direct address 'I'll leave it up to you' which shows again that she is inviting the audience in, asking them to consider their opinion. This is important because it allows the author to create a relationship with the audience and this relationship makes it easier for an audience to accept the argument the author is presenting.....

Bryson's use of listing when he evokes the culture of England inspired me: 'Streaky bacon, short back and sides, Belisha beacon, serviettes, high tea, ice cream cornet', the asyndetic list suggests to the audience a sense of alienation on the part of the writer. In my travel piece I used listed clauses to create a sense of the cultural variety, when comparing a Human Goddesses life to a British childhood. 'She had grown up with no TV, no Facebook, no friends, no playing stuck in the mud on a blustery Thursday afternoon at school and no fish fingers and chips for tea after'.

Moderator's Comment:

The student demonstrates awareness of the different perspectives offered by the stimulus texts. Although there is more explanation supported by quotation than sustained detailed analysis there is clear understanding of the generic features of this type of travel writing and a genuine interest in communicating with the audience.

Exemplar 6

My travel writing's purpose is to entertain and inform, a detailed account of an external journey on a train and an internal journey of a friendship made. Another purpose is to communicate a sense of alienation of a traveller to a wide audience of those (especially youth, and 'The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy' fans) interested in travel, with a light-hearted tenor and occasional amusement. My main influence was Bill Bryson. I used genre features in his style, eg. self-mockery, hyperbole and imagined scenarios. I also used genre features in Roger Deakin's style. eg. specific observation and moments of poetry which add a detailed sense of place in a thought-provoking way.

In contrast, my discursive article adopts a formal tone appropriate for the desired audience of adult newspaper readers. I aim to inform the reader

about homosexual parenting and provoke empathy towards same-sex parented families, encouraging the reader to question conformity. I use many specific article genre features, eg. a headline, strapline in the form of a rhetorical question, use of facts and statistics and an introductory paragraph. My main influences are the Guardian's Charlie Condou and his regular column 'The Three of Us' (a cheerful account of two men raising children). I was inspired to use a case study after reading 'The kids aren't alright' by John Crace, who uses case studies to present his argument in an intelligent way.

Moderator's Comment:

An effective introduction which immediately establishes audience and purpose with recognition of the influence of the stimulus texts. There is an understanding of characteristic genre features and the student clearly explains the rationale behind the choice of genres for the creative tasks.

Exemplar 7

Like Hemingway I followed linear chronology into a progressively negative narrative. Hemingway's Spartan style and use of declarative sentences gives clarity and a sense of parable as in 'The major did not marry her in the spring, or any other time'. I used this device to emphasise the finality and anti-climax by writing 'They are separate. They will not share the next stage of life together'. Hemingway's characters want the ritual and affirmation of a church wedding and words from this lexical field, such as 'banns' and 'praying' feature. I used richer description and more sensual style and so exaggerated the role of ritual, for example, 'anointed', and 'baptised'. I used vocabulary from the semantic field of spiritual experience to contrast the way Naseem was seduced by the wedding preparations and her self-disgust when she discovered the truth.

In 'The End of Something' there is a detailed description of the setting up of the fishing equipment, as if it is an important ritual. My description of the intricacy of the tattooing, 'applied seven times from top to bottom' echoes this. The absence of colour in Hemingway's stories contributes to the terse style. I use colour in a symbolic and sumptuous way. With 'Even her nails were tainted with earthed crimson', I wanted the image to be doom-laden and foreshadow disaster. The figurative imagery of the flower that 'spread far too high up her arm' is a hyperbolic metaphor, as she becomes consumed by love. The initial description of the disused mill town foreshadows that the relationship is dead and 'everything was gone to hell'.

Moderator's Comment:

This is a skilfully integrated exploration of the style of the stimulus text and the student's own writing. This student shows real understanding of the different interpretations and perspectives offered by the stimulus text. There is a discriminating analysis of literary and linguistic techniques linked to their intended effect.

Exemplar 8

The two narrators differ in their use of rhetorical devices: the journalist, (an ideologist pursuing an argument based on his beliefs and not personal experience) relies on a combination of direct ('How do we know?') and rhetorical ('Aren't we supposed to be a democracy?') interrogatives to encourage readers to engage with his argument whereas the prisoner, (a pragmatist who has abandoned his ideals and beliefs because of his personal experience) juxtaposes, without comment, present and past experiences to describe rather than explain. The deliberate temporal shifts between present inaction and past activity with the Mujahedeen echo Hamid and Ishiguro in 'The Reluctant Fundamentalist' and 'Never Let Me Go', where the protagonists periodically switch time periods. By italicising these analeptic references I aim to emphasise the ironic juxtaposition between the narrator's physical entrapment and the freedom of his mind while also highlighting parallels between historical events in the Middle East, and the dangers of not learning the lessons of history (which paves the way for the prisoner's epiphany later on).

Moderator's Comment:

This is a sustained, probing analysis of the creation of diverse voices in the literary and non-fiction tasks, with integrated evidence of reading and research and reference to the influence of stimulus texts. The student demonstrates awareness of the multi-layered nature of texts and adopts an incisive, analytical approach.

Exemplar 9

'Purpose' is a fictional account of a young woman's life in the early 1930's Spanish Civil War. Intended to entertain, it would appeal to fans of the romantic/historical genre. Similarly, my article combines factual evidence with a perspective, as an argumentative 'controversial' piece about artists' responses to specific events, using Henry Moore and his relationship with war as an example. Therefore, both texts explore the difficulty of finding or maintaining purpose in war, inspired by the core text 'Birdsong' by Sebastian Faulks and the journalist Robert Fisk.

A predominantly detached tone is adopted throughout 'Purpose', the story being in the past tense and told from an omniscient perspective, which reflects the narration of Hemingway's 'For Whom The Bell Tolls' and 'Birdsong'. In a similar way to these novels' protagonists, Maria's voice is presented at points through free indirect speech ('How to go back now?'). This disruption, like that in T.S.Eliot's 'The Waste Land', symbolises how she has internalised her pain. However, like Vera Brittain, Maria's speech included exclamatives ('...all hours!'), creating a dynamic voice. Her initially passionate character is suggested in the opening use of poetic language, including assonance, sibilance and alliteration; 'carved shards' and 'skins slid back beneath' and affectionate terms of address.

In contrast, a consistently distinctive, individual voice is adopted in my article, based on my style model, Robert Fisk. Similar to Fisk ('I found that...'), an anecdotal tone is used, 'In my experience', and idioms, initial

position conjunctions, non-verbal fillers and contractions are employed to suggest his colloquial speech style.

Moderator's Comment:

The student contrasts the diverse approaches adopted for the two creative tasks, integrating comments about the influence and characteristics of the significant style models.

Bibliographies

Bibliographies ranged from the limited and unambitious (listing GCSE, Unit 1 and 3 texts as core texts) to the academic, detailed and well presented documentation of a variety of multi-media sources. The bibliography is a key part of the process and students should be encouraged to recognise the importance of the bibliography in providing evidence of wide reading and research.

Internal Moderation

Internal moderation was, in general, very detailed and careful with clear evidence of discussion between internal moderators. However, in some cases the AO marks for individual pieces were not recorded, just the totals on the cover sheet. Some centres provided only a general comment on the folders with no explanation of the decisions behind the final mark for each piece. This is most important information and is vital for the external moderator to be provided with a clear justification for the marks awarded.

Comments should not address the students and should not mention grades.

Administration

Centres do need to check the cover sheets for candidate numbers, word counts, AO totals and candidate signatures. Some centres were very erratic with no apparent internal quality system.

Word counts do need to be accurate and students should keep a running total on each page with cumulative word counts at the end of the each piece and totals displayed clearly on the cover sheet. It is worth mentioning again (as in previous Principal Moderator Reports) that the word counts are not flexible and if students choose to write more than the official word count, the extra text will not be read, therefore making an excessive word count self-penalising.

It is not unreasonable to expect students at this stage to be capable of appropriate editing.

Advice to Centres

It is good practice to include on the cover sheet details of the topic and core text. Each task should be given a title, except in cases where the absence of a title is a creative decision on the part of the student.

Graphological features should not be included in reports and articles. Although many students do enjoy designing layout features and including photographs and colour, this is not a requirement of the specification and in many cases is counter-productive and distracting.

It is important that students show progression from AS and the choices of core texts and wide reading should not replicate those studied for Unit 2 or GCSE. This unit gives students the opportunity to extend their horizons and to choose new areas of reading and research.

Conclusion

The overall standard was very pleasing, with many more centres allowing students the freedom to explore and to engage with some ambitious research. As ever, moderators commented that the unit is a pleasure and a privilege to mark, with many of the individual pieces of work being worthy of publication.

Grade Boundaries

Grade boundaries for this, and all other papers, can be found on the website on this link:

<http://www.edexcel.com/iwantto/Pages/grade-boundaries.aspx>

Ofqual



Llywodraeth Cynulliad Cymru
Welsh Assembly Government



Pearson Education Limited. Registered company number 872828
with its registered office at Edinburgh Gate, Harlow, Essex CM20 2JE