A Level English Language and Literature

EXEMPLAR RESPONSES

A Level Paper 1, Section A Voices in 20th- and 21st-Century Texts

Contents

About this exemplar pack

This pack has been produced to support English Language and Literature teachers delivering the new GCE English Language and Literature specification (first assessment summer 2017).

The pack contains exemplar student responses to GCE A level English Language and Literature Paper 1 Section A. It shows real student responses to the questions taken from the sample assessment materials. In some cases, the original student responses have been adapted by the marker to provide clearer exemplification of the mark scheme.

The A Level Paper 1 comparison question assesses AO1, AO2, AO3 and AO4.

Students must:		% in GCE
AO1	Apply concepts and methods from integrated linguistic and literary study as appropriate, using associated terminology and coherent written expression	25
AO2	Analyse ways in which meanings are shaped in texts	25
AO3	Demonstrate understanding of the significance and influence of the contexts in which texts are produced and received	25
AO4	Explore connections across texts, informed by linguistic and literary concepts and methods	13
AO5	Demonstrate expertise and creativity in the use of English to communicate in different ways *Note: this Assessment Objective must be targeted with at least one of AO2, AO3, or AO4, either in the same task or in two or more linked tasks.*	12
	Total	**100%**

Following each question you will find the mark scheme for the band that the student has achieved, with accompanying examiner comments on how the marks have been awarded, and any ways in which the response might have been improved. For the extracts, please see the respective sample assessment materials.

Question

Read Text A on pages 3–4 and Text B on pages 5–6 of the source booklet before answering Question 1 in the space provided.

1 Compare the ways in which the speaker and writer create a sense of voice as they describe their experiences. In your answer you must consider linguistic and literary features, drawing upon your knowledge of genre conventions and context.

(25)

Mark scheme

		AO1 = bullet point 1	AO2 = bullet point 2	AO3 = bullet point 3	AO4 = bullet point 4
		Please refer to the specific marking guidance on page 2 when applying this marking grid.			
Level	**Mark**	**Descriptor (AO1, AO2, AO3, AO4)**			
	0	No rewardable material			
Level 1	1–5	**Descriptive** • Knowledge of concepts and methods is largely unassimilated. Recalls limited range of terminology and makes frequent errors and technical lapses. • Uses a narrative or descriptive approach or paraphrases. Shows little understanding of the writer's/speaker's crafting of the text. • Limited reference to contextual factors. Has limited awareness of significance and influence of how texts are produced and received. • Approaches texts as separate entities.			
Level 2	6–10	**General understanding** • Recalls concepts and methods of analysis that show general understanding. Organises and expresses ideas with some clarity, though has lapses in use of terminology. • Gives surface reading of texts. Applies some general understanding of writer's/speaker's techniques. • Describes general contextual factors. Makes general links between the significance and influence of how texts are produced and received. • Gives obvious similarities and/or differences. Makes general links between the texts.			
Level 3	11–15	**Clear relevant application** • Applies relevant concepts and methods of analysis to texts with clear examples. Ideas are structured logically and expressed with few lapses in clarity and transitioning. Clear use of terminology. • Shows clear understanding of how meaning is shaped by linguistic and literary features. Able to support this with clear examples. • Explains clear significance and influence of contextual factors. Makes relevant links to how texts are produced and received. • Identifies relevant connections between texts. Develops an integrated connective approach.			
Level 4	16–20	**Discriminating controlled application** • Applies controlled discussion of concepts and methods supported with use of discriminating examples. Controls the structure of response with effective transitions, carefully-chosen language and use of terminology. • Analyses the effects of linguistic and literary features and of the writer's craft. Shows awareness of nuances and subtleties. • Provides discriminating awareness of links between the text and contextual factors. Consistently makes inferences about how texts are produced and received. • Analyses connections across texts. Carefully selects and embeds examples to produce controlled analysis.			
Level 5	21–25	**Critical evaluative application** • Presents critical application of concepts and methods with sustained examples. Uses sophisticated structure and expression with appropriate register and style, including use of appropriate terminology. • Exhibits critical evaluation of writer's/speaker's linguistic and literary choices. Evaluates their effects on shaping meaning. • Critically examines context by looking at subtleties and nuances. Examines multi-layered nature of texts and how they are produced and received. • Evaluates connections across texts. Exhibits a sophisticated connective approach with exemplification.			

Exemplar responses

Candidate A

Writers use a variety of linguistic and literary features in order to create a sense of voice within their work. Text A is an edited extract from the closing sections of a speech by Nelson Mandela in a South African court in 1964. In this text, Mandela focuses on punctuation and uses first person narrative to create a sense of voice. Similarly, text B, an extract from Mom & Me & Mom by Maya Angelou, also uses first person narrative. She creates a sense of voice as she focuses on narrative structure to describe her experiences.

In text A, Nelson Mandela relies heavily on punctuation in his speech to create a clear and confident sense of voice. The continuous use of ellipsis throughout suggests an intentional omission of a word or sentence without altering its meaning to create a pause in speech or writing. "…White supremacy implies black inferiority…" the ellipsis on either side of the statement creates a short pause, long enough for the audience to take in the importance of what is being said but not so long that they think he has finished. It allows the words to sink in and be heard whilst still preparing for more. This creates a strong sense of voice, with confidence and knowledge which would be important for a figure of importance and leadership as Mandela was.

Text B is clearly describing the experiences of Maya Angelou and her relationship with her mother. Angelou creates a sense of voice through use of narrative structure. Her extract is set out with a clear abstract, orientation, complicating action and resolution. As she walks us through the troubles she faced as a single parent and how her mother stepped in to help we realise the large affect her mother has had on her life. The resolution being "I decided the time had come to stop my dangerous habits". This shows how her mother influenced her to make a change in her life for the better and the creation of a sense of voice through her description of personal experience makes the text relatable for the reader or listener.

The use of first person narrative in text A creates a sense of voice as it allows the reader or audience to see the opinions, thoughts and feelings of only the narrator as though it were a conversation between two people. It makes it more personal as Mandela speaks of his dedication to the topic, "I have dedicated my life to this struggle of the African people." The use of the pronoun 'I' creates a personal sense of voice which makes it more relatable to the reader or audience.

Text B similarly uses first person narrative as Maya Angelou is speaking directly about herself and her relationship with her mother, portraying exactly what she is thinking to the reader or audience. "By the time I was twenty-two, I was living in San Francisco." Once again, the pronoun 'I' makes it specific to the writer or speaker's experiences. The reader or audience feels as though they are being told a more personal story about the writer's life and it creates more a conversational tone making the sense of voice stronger throughout the text.

In conclusion, the speakers and writers of both texts use similar features to create a sense of voice within their writing or speeches. The use of first person narrative is very important in a conversational tone being created between speaker and audience or writer and reader. However Mandela choses to focus on punctuation in creating his sense of voice, whereas Angelou keeps to the guidelines of story writing with using narrative structure but still manages to create the sense of voice through her tone and description of person experience.

4

Examiner comment

The response covers very little ground and often reverts to generalised and repetitious comment. Some assertions are weak. The candidate offers some comment of context and attempts points of comparison but overall reads and interprets at a relatively superficial level. It lacks the technical terminology to fully explore spoken language features and does not contrast the contexts of the speaker and writer. Makes a potentially good point about the purpose of ellipsis in Text A but refers to 'punctuation' as if this is a written text. Some valid points about the purpose of the speech and the likely effect on the audience but the discussion is undeveloped. Overall, it exhibits the 'general understanding' of a Level 2 response, but the lack of detail or development anchors the response at the bottom of the level.

Band 2 – 6 marks

Level 2	6–10	**General understanding**
		• Recalls concepts and methods of analysis that show general understanding. Organises and expresses ideas with some clarity, though has lapses in use of terminology.
		• Gives surface reading of texts. Applies some general understanding of writer's/speaker's techniques.
		• Describes general contextual factors. Makes general links between the significance and influence of how texts are produced and received.
		• Gives obvious similarities and/or differences. Makes general links between the texts.

Candidate B

Text A is a speech made by Nelson Mandela in a court and Text B is an extract from a book. Some obvious differences, which will affect how they create a sense of voice, is that one is heard and one is read. Furthermore, Text A's audience is not optional however Text B's is as people would have the choice to read the book.

Text A implies a stronger voice because it uses literary devices such as similes, for example 'as a separate breed', furthermore the collective noun 'breed' dehumanizes the black race and has connotations of dogs. Also, Text A uses phrases such as 'we fall in love like white people', the inclusive pronoun 'we' creates a sense of Mandela speaking for a community which should elicit an emotive response from the audience as they can create a rapport with Mandela. In addition, the verb phrase 'fall in love' has connotations of normality so will be relatable to most people thus creating a clear voice, as it brings black people up to the same social status as white people, which would have been unheard of in South Africa at that time. Text B differs in the way that it focuses on Angelou's personal experience, which is demonstrated by the personal pronoun 'I', which creates a sense of a voice as it is as though the readers are being spoken to. However, they are both similar in that they try and relate to the audience by talking about their family members, for example the syndetic list of '...smoking, drinking and cursing' as black people were considered beneath white people but these 'normal' attributes make them like the whites. In Text B the post modifying adjective 'grandmotherly' is used. This creates a sense of voice as it sets an informal register as well as a clear focus on domestic life, e.g. the first paragraph references her son, her jobs, their home and cooking. This differs from the formal tone of Text A, which is shown through the use of more abstract lexis, e.g. the abstract noun 'supremacy'. The difference in register could be due to the different audiences. Mandela was representing the whole black community so would appear formal and is in front of people in court so would therefore use low frequency lexis. Mandela also creates a voice by repeating the noun phrase 'like white people do' to emphasise to the court that white people are the same as black people and

5

to highlight what he is fighting for. He uses emotive lexis such as the abstract noun 'cure' which implies that the Apartheid has created something similar to a disease. This positions Mandela as a healer; he assumes the voice of a doctor. He further emphasises his role with the intensifier 'only', which highlights his importance as a leader of change. The importance of the speaker or writer is similar in Text B with Angelou's repeated use of the personal pronouns 'My' and 'I'.

Text B uses imagery to create a sense of voice. For example, the noun phrases 'her makeup was perfect' and 'good jewellery', which is essential for the audience to be able to visualize her relationship with her mother. Furthermore, the author is a poet so the nature of her lexis is poetic, e.g. 'Gothic, heavily carved furniture, 'a tall mound of glistening rice', which helps the reader to visualise the scene. Mandela does not need to use such devices as the audience are seeing and living these experiences every day. Nelson Mandela finishes his speech with the clause 'it is an ideal I am prepared to die for' which creates a voice as it highlights his passion for his cause and the lengths he is willing to go to.

In conclusion, Texts A and B differ in that they are presented to different audiences and the different natures of the authors. Text A's is fighting for a cause that was an increasing problem, in front of a court which definitely were not in his favour, but Text B is retelling of her experiences to an optional audience with a very poetic style.

Examiner comment

There is some understanding of the contrasts between the public and private nature of the original audiences for the two texts. Although the commentary on the Angelou text is less substantial than that on the Mandela speech, the candidate does comment on the effect of the imagery in Text B and makes an interesting point about the writer's background as a poet. There is awareness of the very different contexts and purposes of the two texts.

Band 2 – 10 marks

Level 2	6–10	**General understanding**
		• Recalls concepts and methods of analysis that show general understanding. Organises and expresses ideas with some clarity, though has lapses in use of terminology.
		• Gives surface reading of texts. Applies some general understanding of writer's/speaker's techniques.
		• Describes general contextual factors. Makes general links between the significance and influence of how texts are produced and received.
		• Gives obvious similarities and/or differences. Makes general links between the texts.

Candidate C

Contextually, both texts are very contrasting. Whilst text A was compiled for a political purpose -namely validating the actions of the African National Congress and prompting some sort of social and political change during Apartheid - text B was created simply to recount events from throughout the author's life. In the same way, whilst the audience of text A was the members of the South African court in which Mandela's trial took place, the audience of text B is simply readers who want to discover more about Maya Angelou's life. Finally, the format of each text is greatly different, with one being a live speech and the other a printed publication.

The voice created in text A is incredibly dominated by racial issues. Even in the opening sentence, the idea of opposition between the white minority and black majority is

suggested with the phrase 'Whites tend to regard Africans as a separate breed'. This opposition seems all the more severe due to 'Africans' being repeated a great deal throughout the extract of the speech, suggesting unity between the sufferers of Apartheid. Mandela is shown to try to inflict positive changes in racial behaviour by using typical conventions of persuasive writing, including list of three when he talks about African children having 'no schools… no money… no parents'. He also tries to inflict fear in his audience to convince them that Apartheid should not be the way forward for South Africa, in saying that there will be 'a breakdown in moral standards' and 'growing violence'.

The voice created in text B, whilst lightly touching on racial issues (for example, the subtle reference 'even some whites liked and respected her'), mainly focuses on familiar relationships and food. In terms of relationships, Angelou uses emotive language to describe her landlady, with the adjectives 'kind' and in particular 'grandmotherly' showing the author's gratitude towards Mrs Jefferson. Angelou also uses humour - a typical convention of autobiographies - to further show her love for Mrs Jefferson, writing about her 'disastrous culinary exploits' in particular. Contrasting to this joyous, warm relationship is the one Angelou describes between her and her mother; the sentence 'I only went… once a month and at an agreed-upon time' implies some sort of strain between them, although 'I looked forward eagerly to our standing appointment' in the next paragraph does suggest that she would like to improve this. Angelou describes her mother as an almost untouchable, goddess-like person with phrases like 'pretty little woman' and 'perfect makeup', as well as linking wisdom to her. In terms of food, Angelou creates the impression that food with her mother was almost ritualistic, with an emphasis on religion as her mother 'blessed the food… put her left hand on the platter and her right on the bowl'. She also uses intense vocabulary to depict how important the food of previous days was for her, especially in the sentence 'each grain of red rice is emblazoned on the surface of my tongue forever'.

Examiner comment

A succinct opening paragraph establishes the contrasts in purpose and context. There is clear awareness of genre conventions and examples of techniques are accurate and exemplified appropriately. Some evidence of a more penetrating analysis in the recognition of implicature in the Angelou text. The response needs to be more detailed and developed to hit the higher levels. It sits towards the bottom of the level due to the last of detail.

Band 3 – 13 marks

Level 3	11–15	**Clear relevant application** • Applies relevant concepts and methods of analysis to texts with clear examples. Ideas are structured logically and expressed with few lapses in clarity and transitioning. Clear use of terminology. • Shows clear understanding of how meaning is shaped by linguistic and literary features. Able to support this with clear examples. • Explains clear significance and influence of contextual factors. Makes relevant links to how texts are produced and received. • Identifies relevant connections between texts. Develops an integrated connective approach.

Candidate D

The ways in which Mandela (Text A) and Angelou (Text B) convey their experiences differ first and foremost because of the nature of their experiences. For example, Mandela describes the suffering and injustice faced by the non-white population in South Africa to a court. Hence, Mandela uses persuasive devices such as references to the quantity of people affected by segregation (the adjectivals "national" and "Thousands of Africans") in order to justify the basic human rights which "we want". On the other hand, Maya Angelou describes a specific turning point in her personal life (highlighted by the capitalisation of "Vivian's Red Rice Day") and hence the sense of voice in Text B is reflective. For instance, Angelou associates food (a powerful trigger for memory) with the love and wisdom of her mother and she states "even some whites" respected her mother, which suggests that the piece was written in the 21st century rather than the 20th century suggesting she is reflecting. It also shows how both texts consider race: whereas Text A's discussion is overtly about race, often placing white and black in contrasting pairs, Angelou makes only this short, implied reference to unequal race relations.

The nature and tone of the voice also differs due to Mandela and Angelou's positions within the context of their experiences. For instance, Mandela creates a rational and confident voice by outlining how his proposals are the "only" solutions and cures and acknowledging the white man's "fear of democracy." The use of the adverb 'only' gives Mandela a commanding voice. It emphasises that *he* has the answers for a fairer state. By doing so, Mandela asserts his position as leader of the ANC and speaker for the masses. He also voices the strength of his desire to see the status of Africans improve through the declarative that he is "prepared to die" for the cause. Such a phrase may be considered hyperbolic, but the contextual knowledge that he served 27 years imprisonment for political activism and the respectful 'My Lord' gives this a powerful truthfulness. In contrast, Angelou shows her youth and presents a more informal tone. In Text B, she uses the conversational "I and my son" rather than grammatically correct 'my son and I', for instance, which makes the voice more relatable and hence the experience she describes more intimate. In addition, Angelou's uses almost childlike adjectives such as the "glistening red rice" and the childlike parenthetical comment "(my favourite food in the entire world)," in order to portray the significance of the day in her eyes. It also highlights her role, her voice, as a daughter as well as a mother. Likewise, she uses stream of consciousness in Text B "suppose she is right," which again shows the voice is reflective and in contrast to Mandela, relatively young and inexperienced.

The literary device of repetition is also used to great degree in Text A and Text B in order to portray themes and ideals associated with the conveyed experience. Mandela, the speaker in text A, laments upon the word no, using a three-part list, "no schools, no money, no parents", to illustrate to the court how much Africans are denied. Mandela pairs this with the word "dark" symbolising the emptiness and injustice which they face on a day to day basis due to segregation. In contrast, Angelou uses repetition to portray the nostalgic connection between food, fullness and her mother's love. For instance, she states "Two large portions of rice…I could eat two more helpings." By doing so, Angelou expresses the significance of the rice in her experience.

The speaker and the writer also structure the description of their experiences in contrasting ways. For instance, ellipses in Text A mark where the speaker pauses after each idea, "pass laws keep husband and wife apart and lead to the breakdown of family life …" By doing so, the audience considers the theme of suffering and injustice. Mandela also adds weight to his argument by contrasting "our own suffering" and "our own

8

experiences" with the hope of a better future. On the other hand, Angelou maintains her more light-hearted, reflective voice with her use of ellipses, "so…we left the house," abruptly cuts off from the memory of the rice and "…'suppose she was right?'" to illustrate how she did not expect to be praised by her mother. Angelou's piece is arranged in short sentences and irregular paragraphs which creates the idea that the voice is remembering in short sharp bursts of memory.

Examiner comment

The candidate makes good distinctions between the types of voice created. Makes relevant connections between the texts and contrasts differences in emphasis, for example, the extent to which each text focuses on the issue of race. Identifies effective rhetorical techniques in the Mandela text. Levels of formality are explored in relation to the contexts of the texts. The response is well organised and coherent with effective grammatical transitions and smoothly embedded quotations.

Band 4 – 16 marks

Level 4	16–20	**Discriminating controlled application**
		• Applies controlled discussion of concepts and methods supported with use of discriminating examples. Controls the structure of response with effective transitions, carefully-chosen language and use of terminology.
		• Analyses the effects of linguistic and literary features and of the writer's craft. Shows awareness of nuances and subtleties.
		• Provides discriminating awareness of links between the text and contextual factors. Consistently makes inferences about how texts are produced and received.
		• Analyses connections across texts. Carefully selects and embeds examples to produce controlled analysis.