

AS and A Level English Language



EXEMPLAR RESPONSES

A level Paper 1, Section A - Individual Variation

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About this exemplar pack

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

The pack contains exemplar student responses to GCE A level English Language Paper 1, Section A – Individual Variation. It shows real student responses to the question taken from the sample assessment materials, which are presented with the students' own grammar and spelling.

The Individual Variation question addresses 4 Assessment Objectives: AO1, AO2, AO3 and AO4.

Students must:	
AO1	Apply appropriate methods of language analysis, using associated terminology and coherent written expression
AO2	Demonstrate critical understanding of concepts and issues relevant to language use
AO3	Analyse and evaluate how contextual factors and language features are associated with the construction of meaning
AO4	Explore connections across texts, informed by linguistic concepts and methods
AO5	Demonstrate expertise and creativity in the use of English to communicate in different ways <i>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.</i>

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.

Question for A level Paper 1, Section A

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

- 1** Analyse and compare the ways that **both** writers use language to convey personal and social identity.

You should refer to any relevant language frameworks and levels, as well as social, cultural and other contextual factors.

For Texts A and B, please see pages 23-24 of the [Sample Assessment Materials](#).

Mark scheme for A level Paper 1, Section A

		AO1 = bullet point 1	AO2 = bullet point 2	AO3 = bullet point 3	AO4 = bullet point 4
Level	Mark	Descriptor (AO1, AO2, AO3, AO4)			
	0	No rewardable material			
Level 1	1–6	<p>Descriptive</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowledge of methods is largely unassimilated. Recalls limited range of terminology and makes frequent errors and technical lapses. • Knowledge of concepts and issues is limited. Uses a descriptive approach or paraphrases with little evidence of applying understanding to the data. • Lists contextual factors and language features. Makes limited links between these and the construction of meaning in the data. • Makes no connections between the data. 			
Level 2	7–12	<p>General understanding</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recalls methods of analysis that show general understanding. Organises and expresses ideas with some clarity, though has lapses in use of terminology. • Summarises basic concepts and issues. Applies some of this understanding when discussing data. • Describes construction of meaning in the data. Uses examples of contextual factors or language features to support this. • Gives obvious similarities and differences. Makes links between the data and applies basic theories and concepts. 			
Level 3	13–18	<p>Clear relevant application</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applies relevant methods of analysis to data with clear examples. Ideas are structured logically and expressed with few lapses in clarity and transitioning. Clear use of terminology. • Clear understanding and application of relevant concepts and issues to data. • Explains construction of meaning in data by making relevant links to contextual factors and language features. • Identifies relevant connections across data. Mostly supported by clear application of theories, concepts and methods. 			
Level 4	19–24	<p>Discriminating controlled application</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applies controlled discussion of methods supported with use of discriminating examples. Controls the structure of response with effective transitions, carefully chosen language and use of terminology. • Discriminating selection and application of a range of concept and issues to the data. • Makes inferences about the construction of meaning in data by examining relevant links to contextual factors and language features. • Analyses connections across data. Carefully selects and embeds use of theories, concepts and methods to draw conclusions about the data. 			
Level 5	25–30	<p>Critical and evaluative</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presents critical application of language analysis with sustained examples. Uses sophisticated structure and expression with appropriate register and style, including use of appropriate terminology. • Evaluative application of a wide range of concepts and issues to the data. • Critically examines relevant links to contextual factors and language features. Evaluates construction of meaning in data. • Evaluates connections across data. Critically applies theories, concepts and methods to data. 			

EXEMPLAR A

Text A is an electronic form of written language consisting of an internet blog. The audience is quite wide, and for people interested in books. Similarly with text B, which is also not a constricted audience. In relation to grammar, the blogger uses personal pronouns, for example 'I' to engage the audience and to inform the readers about herself. There is an interesting attempted use of abbreviation to try and interact with her target audience, the abbreviation 'CV' shows a colloquial difference in her writing style as she tries to socially engage with her readers. In comparison, text B does not show this type of non-standard English, but rather contractions like 'I'm' and 'don't' which are used more often in spoken language, yet this text is written. However, acknowledging that the text B is an autobiography has made an influence on the way the written text was written as autobiographies generally show an informal writing style.

The sentence structure in text B varies between compound and complex sentences, for example '...Nanny used when she took me walking and I can remember...' the connective conjunctive here deciphers the sentence to be a compound sentence. By using this sentence structure, it presents the idea that he may have been quite high on the social ladder. Contrastly, in text A, the sentence structure consists of many simple sentences. For example 'if that makes sense'. Using this helps to engage with the audience by focusing on a more simple grammar style. This could also be presenting her personality, referring to the idea that she may not have been as highly educated as the writer in text B may have, thus presenting social identity.

Lexis in text A is from the semantic field of blogging, this being that the words used tend to describe her and her lifestyle. Similarly, text B does this, but in a more formal manner, for example using the word 'chortled' rather than the more SE 'laugh', this also displays the social identity of the writers, as the formality depicts a higher social class.

Exemplar A: Marker's Comments

This student comments on some language features such as pronouns to engage and contractions to emulate speech but it is a limited and undeveloped response. The terminology used is mostly accurate but the student makes misguided comments linking the use of simple sentences to not being 'highly educated' and complex sentence representing 'high social standing'. The student identifies the semantic field of the blog links to the writer's lifestyle and could have developed this further by using examples from the text along with discussions of her cultural and personal identity.

Overall comments are general with limited exploration of concepts and issues making it a level 2 response.

Mark: 12/30, level 2

Level 2	7–12	General understanding <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Recalls methods of analysis that show general understanding. Organises and expresses ideas with some clarity, though has lapses in use of terminology.• Summarises basic concepts and issues. Applies some of this understanding when discussing data.• Describes construction of meaning in the data. Uses examples of contextual factors or language features to support this.• Gives obvious similarities and differences. Makes links between the data and applies basic theories and concepts.
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EXEMPLAR B

Text A is a blog online, meaning it is pragmatically thought to be more informal than a book, "Ciretta" being just an ordinary woman. Text B is an autobiography of the Radio broadcaster "John Peel" which is meant to entertain readers, as is the blog. John Peel being 'famous' to a certain generation suggests he would not have to portray his social identity as the readers already know who he is. Ciretta on the other hand, is not known by the masses suggesting why she may have too present information to the reader, to inform them of her social identity; "I'm half Italian."

Humour is used by both writers in text A & B to present personal identity. Ciretta talks about her relationship with food throughout her blog, as if it were her lover. "Connection that cannot easily be replaced." This tells us that Ciretta personally likes food but in a way that would ease the reader and lead them to carry on reading, even re-visit her blog another time. Ciretta also uses humour when telling us her favourite things (personal identity), when saying one of them is "surprisingly food". This may yet again establish a relationship with the reader informing them of her personal identity.

John Peel uses humour when talking about his birth, "born at the age of four...in a black forest", before going on to say when he was really born. This humour suggests although being born in a very serious time period, he doesn't want his book to be taken in this way. John Peel also, when talking about events in his personal life, uses humour when referring to "Chibuku" club in Liverpool as a board game. This may represent the target audience of his book as they wouldn't know of a club but they are certain to be familiar with Enid Blytons "Faraway tree".

Text A, being an online blog allows a lot of information to be presented in one place. As shown by all the separate articles up the side of the texts explaining more about Ciretta's personal identity. Most of this, yet again, relating to food. Being a blog it contains what you would pragmatically expect, the dates and times of previous posts "fresh from the cocoon" as well as links to other articles such as "10 popular misconceptions about the modern woman". This cannot be done in a book, meaning Cirettas blog shows a lot of personal information on her identity which is much easier to access than a book.

Text B starts of with John Peel almost having a conversation with the reader, as if he is reciting his life to someone sitting in the room with him. He uses personal pronouns in the opening paragraph to give the feel that the reader knows him whilst talking about his family (personal identity), letting us know he has a grandson as well as a daughter, but it feels like we already know this from the way it is so casual, less like a book, but more like a spoken piece.

Another similarity used by both writers is the use of rhetorics. Ciretta uses Rhetorical language with 'why bother with it?' This involves the reader in the piece but also informs them of Ciretta's opinion on "change". John Peel uses rhetoric when talking of his early childhood, "Do I really remember....?". This makes the piece of writing more informal and interesting at the same time as

providing information that no reader, however big of a fan of John Peel will know.

The semantic field of a caterpillar used in Cirettas blog when describing herself creates a great aura of informality about the piece but it would have to be interesting, unlike John Peel who is 'famous', nobody has a reason to want to know about her identity unless it is an interesting read.

Exemplar B: Marker's Comments

The student recognises the contrast in identities demonstrating the need for text A's ordinary member of public to present more information about herself, 'I'm half Italian' as opposed to Text B's famous author. They also effectively compare similarities in both texts evidencing the use of humour, explaining differences in mode and identify use of rhetorical questions to be conversational and engage the audience.

Despite strong comments on interesting features the range of language levels discussed is limited. However, the student relates their analysis to identity focusing on the requirements of the question making their response focused and relevant.

Mark: 17/30, level 3

Level 3	13–18	Clear relevant application <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Applies relevant methods of analysis to data with clear examples. Ideas are structured logically and expressed with few lapses in clarity and transitioning. Clear use of terminology.• Clear understanding and application of relevant concepts and issues to data.• Explains construction of meaning in data by making relevant links to contextual factors and language features.• Identifies relevant connections across data. Mostly supported by clear application of theories, concepts and methods.
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EXEMPLAR C

Within Texts A and B we see both writers convey part of their personal and social identity. Text A takes the form of a personal blog and Text B an autobiography, and so naturally convey an aspect of the writer's personal life. Both are aimed at people who are interested in their lives, in the case of Text A perhaps other bloggers, and in terms of Text B, perhaps his fans, and both have the purpose to entertain and inform.

When a reader looks at Text A, the light-hearted satirical tone of the blog is set by the graphological features, for example the edited image from the well-known childrens book 'The hungry caterpillar'. This also introduces the reader to a conceptual metaphor, which the writer upholds throughout, as a means of making herself relatable to her readers. This is reinforced through the witty title 'The very Hungry Ciretta-pillar', which incorporates the writers name, and immediately points to the reader that the writer is perhaps interested in food, thus conveying part of her personal and to an extent social identity. This is reinforced through the first two declaritive sentences 'My name is Ciretta and I am usually eating something. Having Italian in my blood means I have an emotional connection with food...' The declaritive sentence moods reinforce the light-hearted tone, further emphasised through the writer's use of hyperbolic and emotive language, suggesting that she has an 'emotional connection with food'. The writer also plays on societies stereotypes as a means of explanation, blaming this on her Italian heritage, as Italian's are often portrayed as having a love for food. The conceptual metaphor is used throughout to convey the writers opinions of herself, explicitly seen in the titles 'posts fresh from the cocoon' and questioning how many more people have to visit her blog 'before I complete my metamorphosis and become a beautiful butterfly?' This suggests that the writer feels she does not meet societies conventions of being 'beautiful'. This is suggested through referring to herself in both the first and third person, using both the personal pronoun 'I' and 'Ciretta'.

Approaching the text in terms of language and gender, the text offers much support for Trudhill's theory that 'women have more awareness of social status'. Supported by the writers use of imperative sentences 'Also please don't refer to this About Me section as some kind of indication of my quality of writing. Ever.', showing the writers concern about other people's opinion, which is particularly highlighted through the short sentence 'Ever.', which creates a sense of desperation.

Contrastingly to Text A, Text B does not use graphological features as a means of conveying personal and social identity. However, both writers do convey a sense of confusion between fantasy and reality. Text A does so through her use of a conceptual metaphor, and Text B through his mix of fiction and non-fiction, best highlighted when he states 'I was born, I have always told people, at the age of four in a woodcutter's cottage in the Black Forest, but the disappointing truth is I was born in Heswall Cottage Hospital'. This conveys perhaps the writers desire to be accepted socially, and also perhaps his personal desire to be presented as exciting. This is reinforced within Text B through the writers change from present to past tense presenting to the reader an idea of how his life has changed.

The writer in Text B, similarly to Text A, also uses hyperbolic language in order to convey ideas about his identity in a light-hearted, comical way, stating 'several of these are buried in shallow graves on B roads off the A505. The police have confessed themselves baffled.' This conveys his personal views, in a drastic way, about people questioning 'D'yer ken John Peel then?!' This again mixes the genres of fiction and non-fiction, presenting his views in an interesting way for his readers.

Exemplar C: Marker's Comments

This student delivers a solid analysis commenting on mode, function and audience in both texts. They support their points with examples using terminology accurately and consistently when commenting on features such as declaratives, metaphors, hyperbolic and tense. They understand Texts A's identity revolves around a love of food, reinforcing Italian stereotypes and links the blog's title to the children's book identifying how the writer embodies traits of the character. They gain further marks by supporting language use with theories on gender which is criteria of the higher bands. The student begins to analyse the persona in text B making relevant comments but it is underdeveloped with a sense of being unfinished. This student would have achieved higher marks if they had a more detailed analysis of Text B. Although they explore connections across both texts the answer is unbalanced with a focus on Text A.

Mark: 20/30, level 4

Level 4	19–24	Discriminating controlled application <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Applies controlled discussion of methods supported with use of discriminating examples. Controls the structure of response with effective transitions, carefully chosen language and use of terminology.• Discriminating selection and application of a range of concept and issues to the data.• Makes inferences about the construction of meaning in data by examining relevant links to contextual factors and language features.• Analyses connections across data. Carefully selects and embeds use of theories, concepts and methods to draw conclusions about the data.
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EXEMPLAR D

Text A is that of a blog post written by a woman in her twenties – Ciretta. Similar to text A, text B is also in first person as John Ravenscroft writes about his time as an “infant” from the “smell” to to “even the taste” of the time. Both pieces could be recognised as written to entertain. Text A and B are entertaining pieces being sourced from a blog and a book. This purpose to entertain could be recognised in text B through the narrative style and declarative sentence moods – “I was born...”, also through the use of adjectives to describe and formulate imagery to engage an audience e.g. “brown”. Text A and B are arguably very similar, being conversational and informal in their style evidenced in text A, for example where she writes about “blurting out” facts about moose. The texts audiences could be different with a blog audience stereotypically younger, and presumably the audience of an autobiography of an older man with a “grandson” born “before the outbreak of the Second World War” older.

The differences in the age and gender of the writers will mean there are obvious differences in their personal and social identity – so there could be differences in the way they convey this. One of the most obvious ways that this can be recognised is the way in which they are communicating with the audience. Ciretta uses a blog to reach her audience, this blog page is also able to be “shared” on social networks evidenced through the iconic logos from “facebook”, “Twitter” and “Google +”, for example. This could suggest that the writer is a technocentric, or simply perhaps (stereotypically of her younger age) a confident user of modern technology – which could further be supported through her statement about her “x box” being one of her “favourite things”. This, however, is not stereotypical of her gender – to be interested in gaming, but then again in Ravenscroft’s autobiography he talks of “babysitting” which could be recognised as more of a woman’s role, or topic discussed. The fact that Ravenscroft states “SHEILA” first, however and has it capitalised before stating that they are babysitting may suggest that socially it is expected that the woman has a bigger or more key role in caring for child.

There is evidence of social change in the texts as Ravenscroft compares his dad to the characters from “Enid Blyton’s faraway tree”, to explain how “improbable” his existence really was. The reference to books, however is key to the evidence in social change as in Text A (written about modern days) Ciretta talks of blogging for “pleasure” and playing on her “x box” showing a change in what people have done in their leisure time. Social change can also be seen where Ravenscroft refers to his dad as “father” which could now be seen as archaic.

Both texts have talk of food, whilst Ravenscroft refers to the “strange powdered foods” he ate, Ciretta speaks of “cheeseburgers”. This reference to fast food could represent Ciretta’s fast-paced life – which could also be evidenced through the fact that she is blogging – being an instant service.

Ciretta never talks of her second name, making the text more informal (supporting Fairclough’s informalisation theory), perhaps than Text B, but could also be because of her want to be more anonymous in the age of the

internet where information is accessible by anyone – supported where she states to leave Ciretta as a “mystery”.

The texts show that both writers identify themselves very differently with Ciretta through her “favourite things” and “aspirations” whilst Ravenscroft through his life experiences that have perhaps made him the person he is such as his father “being away”.

The conversational tone of text A could represent a woman’s love of phatic communication – as stated by Jennifer Coates. This could be shown when she mentions her love of food several times with the audience arguably not interested. She also talks of how she “usually blurt[s] out” about moose – again being phatic, perhaps socially significant. The fact that she ‘blurts out’ things could be argued as more of a woman’s trait by Cameron. Ciretta also uses tag questions where she states – “so why bother yourself with it?” for example supporting Fishman’s theory that women use more tags than men; or her lack of worry/carefree attitude. It is also said by Tannen that women talk of more trivial topics than men and this could be supported through multiple features within the texts analysed. Ravenscroft mentions “war”, “aircraft” and “roads”, which not only are more stereotypically male topics but less trivial than her “favourite things” or her “xbox”.

Exemplar D: Marker's Comments

The student produces a detailed linguistic analysis equally balanced across both texts. A range of language levels are addressed with references to the writers personas, discussing how the age difference of authors will influence personal and social identities e.g. second world war and gaming. The student identifies the semantic field of food in both texts linking to difference in lifestyles 'cheeseburgers...fast paced' vs 'babysitting grandson'. The analysis is developed further with confident application of gender theories (although these theories are now outdated) and they are able to relate to the differences in mode to the audience. The age difference of the writers is explored with discussions on social change in the texts identifying cultural references linked to a specific generation- Enid Blyton and Xbox. This is a confident response demonstrating strong understanding and awareness of the construction of meaning in texts.

Mark: 22/30, level 4

Level 4	19–24	<p>Discriminating controlled application</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applies controlled discussion of methods supported with use of discriminating examples. Controls the structure of response with effective transitions, carefully chosen language and use of terminology. • Discriminating selection and application of a range of concept and issues to the data. • Makes inferences about the construction of meaning in data by examining relevant links to contextual factors and language features. • Analyses connections across data. Carefully selects and embeds use of theories, concepts and methods to draw conclusions about the data.
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EXEMPLAR E

Both in texts A and B, the writers use different methods of conveying their personal and social identity such as with comic asides and dynamic verbs to convey different meanings.

In text A, no contraction is used in the verb phrase 'I have an emotional connection'. This conveys that the author is slightly more formal than most people while suggesting a slightly sarcastic, awkward tone considering she doesn't like to talk about herself.

The dynamic verb 'blurt' is used which, personally, suggests to me that she is balancing out the formal nature of the lack of contractions by choosing to use a fairly informal word that suggests lack of care for what she is saying. Again, this adds to the awkward nature of her personality since she cannot think of appropriate things to say during social interactions.

She addresses herself (using the proper noun 'Ciretta') in the third person ('let's leave Ciretta') in order to convey more about how she is a 'mysterious' person and also to shed more light on her personality as she talks about herself in a different perspective.

Sarcasm is used with the adverb 'surprisingly'. This conveys humour with the fact that her love of food is played down by making it appear a shock that she loves it amongst other things.

Her age is conveyed through the fact that she uses the proper noun 'Photoshop' as a verb to describe that she will put her face onto 'The Arbiter'. This is because the verb 'Photoshop' is often used as slang by younger generations. Her age is also conveyed by the mention of a Halo character since it is stereotypically young people who play this game.

Humour is conveyed within parenthesis with 'writer, psychologist or archaeologist' as it appears a shock in contrast with when she mentions the 'worksheets' because it is unusual for a young person to be so set in their career path so early on.

In comparison, the age difference between the two writers is clear when we look at text B. This is because the writer mentions frequently about his 'birth' which was in a few days before the 'outbreak of the second world war'. The writer of text B also uses more formal forms of address 'Mother' 'Father' and lexis which suggest old-fashioned objects such as 'harness' 'air-raid shelter' and 'barrage balloon.' The formality and standard form of the lexis presents the writer as older but creates a contrast with some of the more creative uses of language, which suggests that the writer has a dry sense of humour, and an eccentric persona, for example 'Father was away, eyeball to eyeball with the Germans in North Africa.'

Whereas in text A, the author talks about herself in a lot of description, text B talks more about other people such as where the author uses the complex noun phrase in apposition 'his mother, Alexandra, our daughter'. This packs in

a lot of information in a small amount of words, allowing the reader to learn more about his family and what they are like. We realise his daughter is health conscious about her baby since she feeds him 'tomato, yam and basil', which he dislikes and this might also suggest a class difference between how John Peel was raised, and how his grandson is being brought up 'I am not sure I would either'. This is one of the ways humour is conveyed in text B in the form of comic asides, creating a light-hearted tone.

Text B also uses humour to convey a sense of her identity. She shows herself as being awkward or geeky with lexis related to technology 'xbox' 'photoshop' 'the Arbiter' which helps to give the sense of her being younger than the writer of text B. She is also self-deprecating as a form of humour as even though she is writing a blog, she criticises her own writing 'Also please don't refer to this About Me section as some kind of indication of my quality of writing. Ever.' This shows she does not take herself too seriously. Also, it shows how she is trying to relate to her audience and for them to like her. The use of punctuation and the single 'ever' is similar to opinion columns and magazine articles for younger audiences, which shows how she is influenced by these factors. John Peel's references also add to his presentation as someone who is older and more traditional, for example 'The Blue Fairy Book' and the expectation is that the readers will understand these external references, which suggests that they might be a similar age to him.

Both text A and B show their writers are not taking themselves too seriously and presenting themselves as funny, by using interesting facts or saying unusual things about themselves. For example, Ciretta uses a fact about moose, which emphasises her geeky persona. John Peels also presents himself as unusual, for example 'I was born, I have always told people, at the age of four.'

In both texts, the writer directly addresses the readers. This is due to the form of the texts, being a blog and an autobiography and in order to fulfil their function of being entertaining. Being a published autobiography, text B is a more formal form, although John Peel using direct address to the audience to show he is easy going and friendly 'you'd be surprised'. This contrasts with his joking reference to burying people who have questioned him 'in shallow graves on B roads'. His identity is presented as being friendly and funny but at the same time a person that you would not want to cross. This makes him appear more confident, whereas the writer of text A seems less self confident, firstly with her self-deprecating humour and also with less secure verbs choices 'attempt' and 'blurt.' Although, as she is writing a blog, she cannot be too shy, so possibly this is a way to create a likable persona that her readers will relate to and not appear self obsessed.

Overall, I believe text A conveys a young woman who is slightly awkward and sometimes doesn't know how to interact with people while text B conveys an older man thinking of memories from his past.

Exemplar E: Marker's Comments

This student has produced a comprehensive, well-structured analysis which discusses various aspects of both writer's identity and personality. The student effectively compares the awkward, mysterious self-deprecating writer of text A with Text B's more mature, traditional humorous writer. The response is confidently written, well supported with relevant examples. This scored in the top of level 4 but would have been awarded marks in level 5 if the student had included theories within their analysis.

Mark: 24/30, level 4

Level 4	19–24	Discriminating controlled application <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Applies controlled discussion of methods supported with use of discriminating examples. Controls the structure of response with effective transitions, carefully chosen language and use of terminology.• Discriminating selection and application of a range of concept and issues to the data.• Makes inferences about the construction of meaning in data by examining relevant links to contextual factors and language features.• Analyses connections across data. Carefully selects and embeds use of theories, concepts and methods to draw conclusions about the data.
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