

Moderators' Report

Principal Moderator Feedback

Summer 2025

Pearson Edexcel Advanced Subsidiary
A-Level English Language
Non-examination assessment: Crafting
Language (9EN0/04)

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General Comments

Thank you to all centres for their submissions for the 2025 series of 9EN0 04 NEA/coursework. The quality of work for the majority of submissions was of an excellent standard and demonstrates real passion, commitment and hard work by all parties involved. This report will highlight areas of best practice and suggestions for centres and candidates to enable future cohorts to fulfil their potential.

Task setting and assessment – Original Writing

The vast majority of centres clearly allow and encourage candidates the freedom to explore different genres of writing linked to their own interests and areas of expertise. Centres that had supported candidates to carry out effective research into their chosen genres through a broad range of style models gave these students the skills to create ‘real’ and convincing examples of the various genres studied, especially in terms of presenting pieces targeting specific demographics.

While most centres are encouraging students to be more specific with their contexts, it is worth reinforcing the message that broad age categories or imprecise functions can lead to a lack of clarity when producing texts. For example, the function of ‘journalism’ is not particularly useful for candidates when trying to examine and justify their linguistic choices.

The same goes for candidates’ research using style models. Candidates should be looking at style models that reflect their chosen genre so that they can effectively emulate the conventions or deliberately subvert them as appropriate. Clear links to these style models in the production of their pieces will lead to a more convincing and effective analysis of their pieces in their commentaries.

Candidates and centres are reminded that the two coursework pieces must be clearly differentiated by audience and/or function – not genre. Some candidates had such a broad genre that analysing their methods of linguistic differentiation became less nuanced and perceptive, hindering their ability to fully showcase their skills. For example, candidates who had listed their chosen genre as ‘personal writing’ but then produced a memoir and an editorial were not actually meeting the rubric requirements.

Despite frequent advice, there is still evidence of some issues with task setting. Candidates are still trying to ‘script the unscriptable,’ e.g. producing podcast transcripts, complete with annotations of micropauses, or segments of speeches that centre around audience participation that cannot be predicted. It is vital that centres steer candidates away from these types of tasks to ensure that their students are able to fully meet the requirements of the rubric.

Candidates and centres are also reminded that the mark scheme for the pieces explicitly states that candidates **must** demonstrate carefully crafted individual voices. Candidates must ensure that these different voices have been created. Some candidates had stated that they had written for different publications but had written with almost identical voices and styles.

It is also imperative that centres focus on the line in the mark scheme that focuses on technical accuracy. To achieve Level 4 or above, candidates must produce work that is “precisely edited and controlled.” There were a number of pieces that were marked highly despite having significant issues with phrasing, punctuation and spelling. It is vital that candidates are carefully proof-reading their pieces to check for both sense and accuracy, and that centres are marking accordingly if this precision is not present.

Moderators highlighted some exceptional examples of narrative fiction, dramatic monologues, and feature articles, as well as carefully crafted blogs and pieces of travel writing. Where candidates were drawing from either well researched style models and/or their own experiences and interests, they were often able to produce more successful examples.

This year, crime was a popular topic for both fiction and non-fiction pieces, with some candidates producing narratives with effective plot twists or magazine articles focusing on either real or imaginary crime cases. Where students fully understood these genres, there were some highly engaging examples, emulating the features and conventions of their chosen forms. However, centres are reminded to encourage candidates to avoid attempting to create over-written personas or pretending that well-documented crime cases were ‘new’ or ‘unknown’.

Narrative fiction remains a popular choice, with many candidates able to demonstrate significant skill in terms of effective pacing and use of dialogue or narrative perspective for effect. However, candidates must have a clearly differentiated audience for their pieces. Some candidates were saying that their first piece was for teenagers and their second piece for young adults, when these are basically the same audience.

There is also still evidence of candidates expending a great deal of effort to produce non-typographical graphology in their pieces, e.g. columns for articles. As this would not be the responsibility of the writer, there is no need for candidates to do this and certainly no need for them to comment about it in their commentaries.

Centres are encouraged to use the resources available from Pearson Online, which includes training material and exemplar scripts. Centres are encouraged to review these resources as some newer and more appropriate resources have been created since the start of this specification.

Where centres are new or have no second moderator, it is useful to see how centres have standardised their assessments using the material provided.

Centres are also encouraged to access and review their moderator reports, especially as some centres are still demonstrating the same issues year after year.

Commentaries (AO1, AO2, AO3 and AO4)

The majority of candidates were able to effectively discuss their own writing, using a first-person perspective to showcase their personal decision-making processes. The most effective commentaries focused very clearly on the most salient features of their writing and explored these against the assessment objectives. This was significantly more effective for candidates who had clearly researched their genre and were able to make clear links between their choices and their style models.

While covering a broad range of linguistic frameworks is vital for a successful commentary, candidates are encouraged to focus on a judicious selection of linguistic methods to examine

their work. Some candidates seemed to be using a checklist of frameworks that were not always the most useful when discussing their own work.

The best commentaries had the specification requirements firmly in mind that students should:

- discuss the findings of their initial research into their chosen genre and firmly link this research to their own decisions.
- be explicit about how they have successfully emulated conventions and language in order to meet the needs of the audience and function
- evaluate their own language choices made to achieve specific effects appropriate to the chosen function and target audience
 - consider the redrafting process and justify their choices during this process.

The tight word-limit of the commentary does mean that candidates should try and focus the majority of their analysis on their own work rather than completing a stylistic analysis of their style models. To make the most of their word count, candidates are encouraged to cluster points together to explain how they have produced their pieces.

There are two main approaches being taken by candidates in terms of producing their commentaries. The first method is to produce two separate commentaries for each piece, either presented as two 500-word documents or a single document written consecutively. For some candidates, this did offer the opportunity to ensure a balanced discussion about their pieces, although in some cases this did narrow down the range of frameworks covered and left candidates making repetitive points about their pieces.

The second approach is a more integrated and comparative discussion about their writing, which allowed candidates to identify how they had adapted key conventions of genre to suit the differentiated audience/function of the pieces. Where this was done well, this often allowed candidates to offer a more evaluative analysis of their own pieces, in light of their chosen contexts.

Most candidates were able to achieve some effective discussion addressing AO2, with some demonstrating clear research into their chosen genre and how this influenced their creative process. For some centres, it was apparent that candidates had been able to manipulate some of the ideas that they had been taught elsewhere in the course, however it is essential that candidates are making sensible choices over what they include as, in some cases, there were irrelevant or overly generalised uses of concepts taught elsewhere. For example, many candidates tried to look at ideas about power when discussing their persuasive or argumentative texts, but some candidates were simply offering a broad brushstrokes discussion, e.g. labelling every single example of “you” used as an example of synthetic personalisation.

Candidates are also encouraged to think about the internal and external factors which have affected the production of their pieces. Considering how they want the pieces to be received and perceived often produced some effective analyses of language.

Assessment, annotation and administration

This was the third year of electronic submission of NEA via the Learner Work Transfer (LWT) portal and the vast majority of centres had uploaded their students’ work, including the highest

and lowest marked folders, by the deadline (15th May). Where centres had not been able to meet the deadline, the inclusion of a covering letter explaining why materials were delayed was helpful, as were letters regarding the moderating process for centres with a single moderator.

The entry of marks on the Pearson website was also excellent with very few centres having to be chased for marks or advised about incorrect entries.

In terms of uploading work, some centres uploaded multiple files for each candidate which is unhelpful for the moderation process. Centres are advised that the work for each candidate should be uploaded as a single document which incorporates the signed authentication sheet, both pieces of original writing, commentaries and bibliography. Centres are also urged to ensure that they check the scanned documents carefully before submitting, as some candidates had pages missing where single-sided scans were used of double-sided documents. Furthermore, centres are reminded that style models should not be submitted with the portfolio – these can often be confusing and distracting when moderating – highlighting the style models used via the candidates' bibliography is far more useful.

It is a good idea to check through the guidance provided for uploading work before uploading to ensure requirements are being met, especially in terms of how candidates' folders should be labelled and formatted e.g. headers with names and candidate numbers on the work and folders being saved with centre number and candidate numbers, e.g. 12345_6789_Smith_B.

Moderators were generally very pleased with the quality of annotation and internal standardisation seen, with most centres having a clear and sensible process for marking and moderating candidates' work. The very best practice in this area saw detailed summative comments either on the work itself or on a separate assessment sheet, in which the assessors clarified how and why marks had been allocated by referencing (though not copying verbatim) the relevant aspects of the marking criteria. These comments were supported by helpful marginal annotations of the pieces themselves, allowing moderators to see the thought processes behind the marks given.

As mentioned before, the use of the current standardisation folders as points for comparison when deciding marks is an example of really good practice and ensures that centres have considered the demands of the mark scheme effectively. Moderators stated that where marks were changed during internal standardisation, it was helpful to see explicit reasons in the annotations for these adjustments, rather than simply crossing out one mark and writing the new mark.

Although there is more than one way of meeting minimum requirements for annotation, it would benefit both teachers and their students to adopt the best practice that has been repeatedly shared. Very few centres now use the separate marking sheet where they state a page and paragraph number with a comment next to it: this must be more awkward to complete for teachers than writing the comment on the work itself at the appropriate place and is certainly tricky for a moderator having to cross reference the comments with the work by scrolling through the work on screen. It is recommended that this approach is avoided, along with the also rare practice of offering only summative comments with little or no annotation in the body of the work or vice versa.

Though rare, some centres are still awarding a separate mark for each piece of writing and then trying to 'split the difference' to reach a final mark. Previous reports have cautioned against this approach, and centres should be reminded that this is not seen as an accurate way of arriving at a final mark. Assessment should reflect a holistic overview of the candidate's work. If there is an

imbalance across the pieces, this should be addressed using the bullet points within the mark scheme.

The completion and submission of Authorisation Sheets was very good, and any errors were actioned promptly by the centres concerned. However, there are still a number of centres who are not using the new cover sheets that include comments about AI use. Centres are reminded that entries should be submitted using the new coversheet, and it would be beneficial moving forwards to include information about in-house procedures for checking AI use, e.g. the AI checker that the centre has used.

Overall, moderators were very pleased with the work sampled this series and have enjoyed reading candidate work. My thanks go to all those involved with ensuring this was a successful moderation series.