

Moderators' Report/  
Principal Moderator Feedback

November 2012

GCSE English Language (5EN03)  
The Spoken Language

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## **General Overview**

All of the candidates entered in this series were taking this module again and therefore coped well with the demands of the assessment criteria. The vast majority of candidates had been well prepared by centres for this component and produced responses that matched the assessment criteria.

On the whole the majority of centres applied the assessment criteria accurately. However, there were a minority of centres where there continued to be evidence of errant marking. A significant factor in this errant marking was the fact that some centres had not internally standardised the judgements of teachers. Internal standardisation remains a vital part of the process which centres need to undertake, even when relatively small cohorts are involved. Attendance at regional standardising meetings by a representative of the English department, preferably the teacher with responsibility for GCSE/KS4, is linked to the internal standardising process. This has always been and remains the reason that Awarding Bodies strongly recommend that time is set aside to ensure robust internal standardising procedures are in place.

## **Speaking and Listening Tasks**

During the moderation visits that have been undertaken by Edexcel, it is clear that centres have, on the whole, applied the assessment criteria accurately when marking the activities observed. In the majority of centres, the Edexcel exemplification DVD has been used to ensure that the assessments of all teachers within a department are standardised. It has also been pleasing to see that the exemplification DVD has been used with candidates as a teaching and learning resource to indicate to candidates the skills required to achieve a particular band.

Centres are reminded that the only tangible 'evidence' available when moderating the speaking and listening activities during the visit to centres are the contemporaneous notes kept by teachers at the point of assessment. Although moderators reported some very good practice in this regard, there was also a concern that in some centres these notes were lacking in detail, and in a tiny majority there were no notes being kept at all. It is vital that centres ensure that the record keeping by teachers evidences the judgements made about candidates.

It is imperative that the teacher responsible for speaking and listening within the department ensures that:

- a robust internal standardising has taken place to guarantee that all teachers are applying accurate standards;

- there is sufficient detail in the notes being kept by teachers to justify the marks awarded.

Centres need to be aware that a feature of future moderation visits will be a check by moderators whether the centre considers they have any candidates who are likely to get significantly higher marks for the speaking and listening tasks compared to the written controlled assessment tasks; where practicable, these candidates should feature in the sample being jointly marked during the visit.

It should also be noted by centres that the updated cover sheet used for this series asked centres to explain any differences in the marks awarded for the speaking and listening controlled assessment tasks and the written controlled assessment tasks. Centres are expected to provide some detail in the explanation for these differences.

### **Spoken Language Study Task**

Most students performed well with this new task. Many students understood how language changed according to context and explained clearly how language worked. Most centres directed their students to use the resources produced by Edexcel; this allowed students to access all of the assessment criteria, and so all of the marks. Where centres chose to produce or provide their own resources, most made suitable choices. However, in some centres the choice of resources occasionally limited students' access to the full range of assessment criteria and consequently the full range of marks. Examples of limited resources included:

- two examples of speech that were so similar that students found it difficult to explain how language is used according to different contexts;
- examples of scripted speech that could not be rewarded: the task must involve spontaneous spoken language, not spoken language that has been edited in order to imitate spontaneous spoken language;
- scripted monologues, that could not be rewarded.

The sources that the students use for their two examples of spoken language should be identified in the response.

Some students relied too heavily on identifying features of spoken language, using a wide range of technical vocabulary, without analysing why these features had been used and what effects they might have achieved. Some students found that the PEE model of analysis was useful and helped avoid feature spotting. A key area for focus when responding to this task is the fourth bullet point in the assessment criteria which asks for an understanding of the ways in which language use and language choices may influence other speakers and listeners.

Higher marks are achieved if students *analyse* their chosen examples rather than just *describe* features of them. Some centres were rather generous in their interpretation of *assured* and *perceptive understanding*, awarding marks in Bands 4 and 5, where moderators felt these responses were showing *clear understanding* – a Band 3 criterion.

While students need to show how language is used in different ways in two different situations, they are not required to make comparisons as this is a requirement of Unit 1. Some students found it useful to scaffold their response by using similarities and differences, but comparison must not become a primary purpose of the responses, as there is not credit for it in the assessment criteria. There was evidence from the responses from some students that they disadvantaged themselves by trying to force comparisons from their material.

Some students hampered their responses with an over-reliance on technical vocabulary, which they did not fully understand and this was often simply regurgitated without explaining how these features affected the language use. This prevented them from describing or analysing the spoken language with clarity.

### **Writing for the Spoken Voice**

Centres were more confident assessing their students' writing for the spoken voice because they were familiar with this type of task. There was a wide range of interesting responses to the tasks set by Edexcel. Many students produced compelling high quality writing that was a pleasure to read.

The most popular response was that of writing a persuasive speech. There were still a significant number of candidates who responded to the task by writing a discursive piece rather than making it explicit that there was a 'listening' audience. Where this was the case, the candidate found it difficult to demonstrate a clear sense of purpose. Teachers should remind their students that although this task can be interpreted quite openly it is *writing for the spoken voice*, and that criteria must be borne in mind throughout the student's preparation. It is helpful for students if they clearly identified the listening audience in their task title or made it clear in their opening remarks.

Where candidates understood the purpose, they were able to produce responses that demonstrated all the skills in the assessment criteria.

The least popular task was the story in which direct speech was a key feature. Students who did tackle this task often produced interesting and lively responses with a strong focus on the writer's purpose and audience. However, a significant

number of students wrote a narrative piece with very little direct speech included. As this writing response is for the spoken voice this type of narrative writing with little direct speech did not fulfil the AO4 (i) criteria.

Most centres interpreted and applied the marking criteria accurately and consistently for AO4 (i) and (ii). Assessment criteria for AO4 (iii) were applied consistently in most cases but some centres were lenient. For high achieving candidates in Bands 4 and 5, some centres tended to award 6 or 7 marks where there was clearly not enough evidence of using punctuation devices with precision and sophistication, and for deliberate effect, whilst in some centres there was a clear reluctance to award 7 marks if only minor errors had occurred. Some centres did not accurately assess marks for spelling, giving marks for 'mostly accurate' spelling when there were frequent errors.

## **Administration**

On the whole, the administration of this Unit was undertaken with diligence. However, a number of issues were identified:

- In addition to the selected sample on Gateway the top and bottom candidates must be included.
- The sources used for the Spoken Language Study should be submitted with the moderation sample.
- In the first instance, moderators are looking to confirm the marking of centres. Annotations and summative comments are helpful in letting the moderator see where the teacher has awarded marks. As the pieces are controlled assessment tasks, the comments on the body of the script should be addressed to the moderator, not the student. These comments should be drawn from the assessment criteria and help the teacher place the response into the appropriate band. It is of very limited help to the moderator if the annotations are only a phrase from the criteria, such as 'language influence', 'language choices' or 'purpose and audience' without a modifier taken from the assessment criteria e.g. 'clear sense' (Band 3) or 'secure sustained' (Band 4).
- Where there is more than one teacher in the centre it is a requirement that internal moderation takes place; clear evidence of this internal moderation should be included in the sample of responses.
- Care should be taken when completing all parts of the cover sheet: centre and candidate details; separate marks and correct mark total; the marks on the cover sheet match the marks on the candidate's work; the total mark matches the one put into Edexcel Gateway
- Moderators appreciate well-organised folders which are easy to navigate. Treasury tags should be used to keep work in order, as individual work which

is either sent as a series of loose leaf pages or contained inside plastic wallets  
can easily become separated during moderation.

## **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>

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