

# ResultsPlus

Examiners' Report

June 2011

GCSE English Language 5EN2F 01

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# Introduction

This report will provide exemplification of candidates' work, together with tips and comments, for Questions 1-10.

This was the first examination of the new specification in English Language. This consists of three elements: Unit 1: English Today - 20% (Controlled Assessment); Unit 2: The Writer's Voice - 40% (this examination); and Unit 3: The Spoken Language - 40% (Controlled Assessment).

Unit 2 is assessed for skills in **both** reading and responding to prose texts **and** candidates' own writing. The examination included a new form of language-based questioning on extracts from long texts. In addition, many new Centres were sitting the examination, and candidates were mainly from Year 10. In the Reading section (Section A) many candidates chose Question 5, 'Of Mice and Men', but all texts received responses. In Unit 2, candidates must answer two questions, as follows:

- one reading response to EITHER an extract from a Different Cultures prose text OR an extract from a non-fiction text
- one writing task for a specified audience expressing opinions and analysing ideas on a topic relevant to students' experience.

The Assessment Objectives for the paper are:

## Section A: AO3: Studying written language

(i) Read and understand texts, selecting material appropriate to purpose, collating from different sources and making comparisons and cross-references as appropriate.

(ii) Develop and sustain interpretations of writers' ideas and perspectives.

(iii) Explain and evaluate how writers use linguistic, grammatical, structural and presentational features to achieve effects and engage and influence the reader.

## Section B : AO4: Writing

(i) Write to communicate clearly, effectively and imaginatively, using and adapting forms and selecting vocabulary appropriate to task and purpose in ways that engage the reader.

(ii) Organise information and ideas into structured and sequenced sentences, paragraphs and whole texts, using a variety of linguistic and structural features to support cohesion and overall coherence.

(iii) Use a range of sentence structures for clarity, purpose and effect, with accurate punctuation and spelling.

Examiners are looking above all for signs that candidates are responding in a mature and reflective way to the language and ideas of prose writers and are communicating effectively on the selected topic.

The responses of candidates had many strong features. Examiners were impressed by:

- evidence that they had understood the writers' ideas
- the widespread ability to select pertinent examples of the writers' language, with a grasp of a range of language features, and to offer comment that related these examples to the ideas and themes of the texts
- personal writing that showed a strong and suitable register

Less successful responses:

- showed an insecure grasp of language or of ideas
- failed to support their points by appropriate textual evidence
- wrote reasonably about a topic, but without a secure control of language or argument.
- Overall, the response of candidates was a pleasing one to examiners. It was clear that candidates had often enjoyed greatly their study of the prose texts, and their own writing was often fresh, vivid and imaginative.

## Question 1

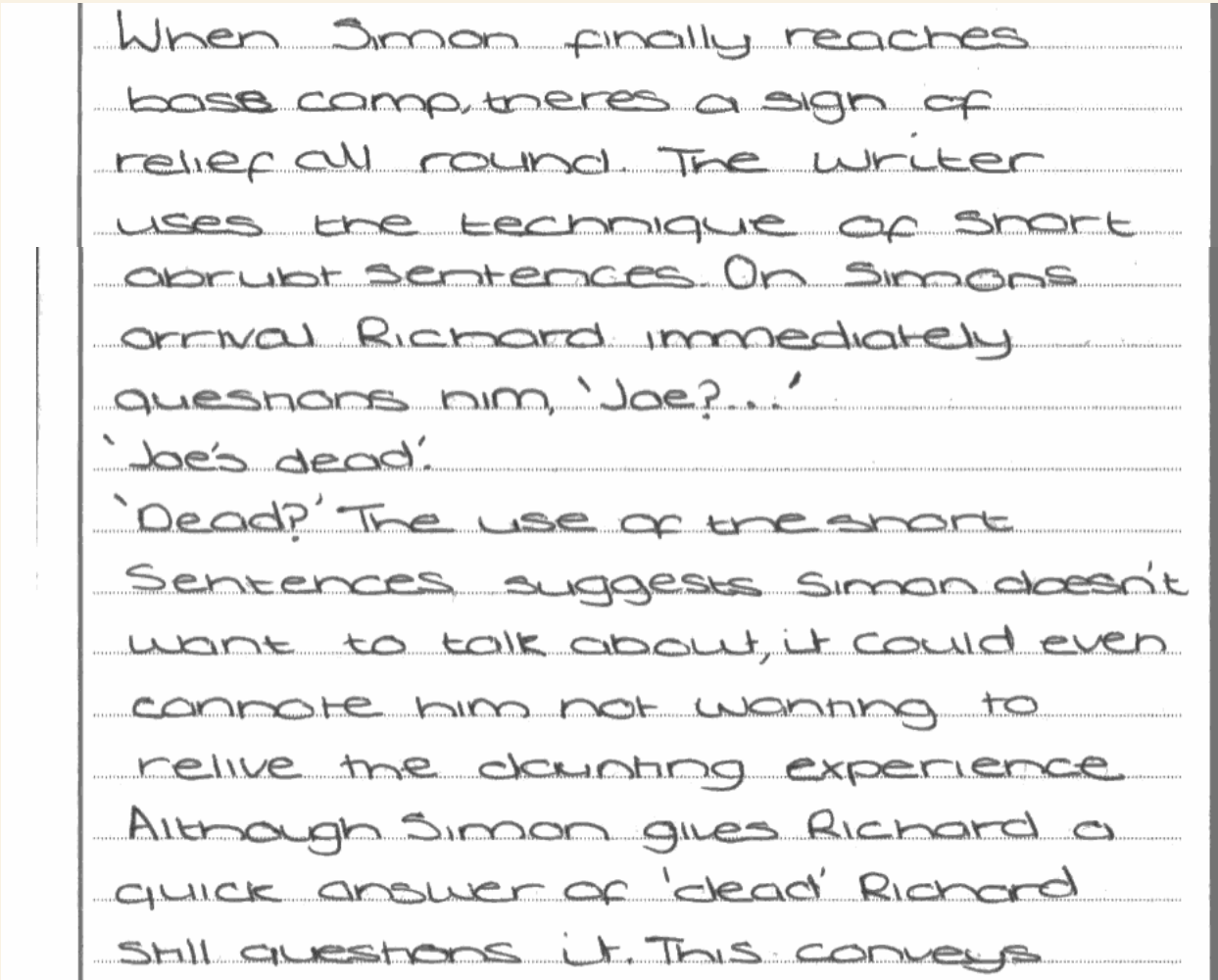
### Section A: Studying Written Language

#### Question 1: Touching the Void Touching the Void

(a) Those who responded on this text showed a reasonable grasp of Simon's emotions, as revealed by the given extract. One candidate, for example, commented that 'it is noticeable that Simon is reluctant to tell Richard that Joe is dead'. Generally, candidates were able to use the text to make some relevant points. Better candidates could integrate their selected quotations into general comments on Simon's thoughts and feelings.

(b) Candidates were generally able to identify a suitable second section from the text and make valid points. One candidate, for example, wrote soundly about the passage where Simon wished to leave Sarapo but found that the place exerted a strong hold on him.

Q1 (a) (ii) This extract is from a candidate's response to (a) (ii), focusing on Simon's feelings about speaking to Richard concerning the accident.



When Simon finally reaches base camp, there's a sign of relief all round. The writer uses the technique of short abrupt sentences. On Simon's arrival, Richard immediately questions him, 'Joe?...' 'Joe's dead.' 'Dead?' The use of the short sentences suggests Simon doesn't want to talk about it, it could even connote him not wanting to relive the daunting experience. Although Simon gives Richard a quick answer of 'dead', Richard still questions it. This conveys

still questions it. This conveys  
the level of shock and dis-  
belief that such a thing could  
happen.



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**Examiner Comments**

This candidate's response included a sound study of the extract provided. Understanding was secure and references to the text were clear. In this extract, the candidate focused closely on the effect of short sentences. This is a Band 5 response for this tier.



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**Examiner Tip**

Make sure that your points about the technical effect are well supported and developed, as in this example.

## Question 2

### Question 2: Anita and Me

(a) This text was not offered by many candidates, but there were some sound responses from those who did so, showing a clear appreciation of the depiction of the girls' dressing up, such as the use of the simile 'like a goldfish' for Sally's lips: 'not the best of compliments', as one candidate expressed it.

(b) Candidates were able to write in a relevant way about a second extract. One, for example, focused clearly on the episode with the panic over her mother's car, and Meena's reactions to the old lady's abusive comments to her. Another chose the incident of the stealing of the collecting tin, where Anita seeks to put the blame elsewhere; the candidate noted, reasonably, that her sense of guilt was atoned for later in the novel.

Q 2(b) This is a candidate's response to the (b) part of the question, commenting on the stealing of the collecting tin.

2b) Meena is affected by what happens to her when she steals the collection tin and lies saying it was baby. I opened my mouth to allow the story sitting on my lips to fly out and dazzle my papa but stopped myself when I saw how furious he was. Meena feels bad for taking it but does not want to take the blame "it was baby!" I wailed... Meena reflects on this later in the novel and sets things right.



### ResultsPlus Examiner Comments

The extract chosen by the candidate was very appropriate, with some attention to how Meena is affected, although this was the whole of the answer. The bullet points were covered, but the answer was rather brief. It was at the upper end of Band 3.



### ResultsPlus Examiner Tip

Note that this is a very brief answer. Think about how to choose an extract which allows you to cover the points more fully, not just quote a small number of examples.

### Question 3

#### Question 3: Balzac and the Little Chinese Seamstress

(a) Those candidates who chose this text generally found it rewarding and were able, for example, to comment on the alliterative phrase 'prudent and pitiless' to describe the father's attitude. They could also usually focus on the description of the Seamstress's appearance and on the father's importance and status.

(b) A number of different extracts could have been chosen for this part of the question, such as her decision to leave for the city and how this affected her clothing and attitudes. The discovery of the Little Seamstress's pregnancy was selected by some, with a realisation that in traditional Chinese society this was a particularly serious event: 'I'm in trouble'. The importance of keeping the pregnancy, and subsequent abortion, secret from her father was explored by some candidates, who saw a change to the Seamstress's personality as an effect.

Q 3 (b) This is the start of a candidate's part (b) answer, focusing on the discovery of the pregnancy.

B) The little seamstress was a traditional, respectful daughter to the tailor but in the novel her personality is changed forever. On page 147 the little seamstress tells the narrator she's pregnant. The writer uses speech to picture the event and starts off with the seamstress saying 'I'm in trouble'. The writer ~~used~~ used 'my heart sank to see the tears well up in her eyes.' This is showing the seamstress realising what she's done and that she's broken the law. The seamstress



#### ResultsPlus Examiner Comments

The candidate used a well-chosen extract, the Seamstress's pregnancy and abortion, for b), showing a sound knowledge of writer's ideas and language, with short embedded quotations. This is a firm Band 5 response.



#### ResultsPlus Examiner Tip

Choose your second section carefully to allow yourself the chance to develop a sustained and secure response.



## Question 4

Question 4: Heroes

(a) The candidates writing about this book mostly responded with some carefully chosen examples of the writer's language to back the points they made, concerning how Francis felt uncomfortable about the visit to his landlady's house, and his thoughts about Nicole.

(b) Candidates mostly had a sound knowledge of the text and often were able to identify clearly another example of the injured Francis, such as his vivid description in the opening chapter. They were able to follow the bullets and some produced full and accurate responses. Less effective answers talked rather generally about Francis without focusing clearly on a particular episode, or failed to show close knowledge of the character's emotions or understanding of how such an injury would affect someone.

Q 4 (a) (i), the identification of three language features.

Write your answers to Section A Questions (a) and (b) here:

1. Language Features. 1) "like a lump on my back" - This is a simile. 2) "in the last hospital had said about how money talks." This is personification. 3) "I thought of Nicole Renard, realizing I had not thought of her for, oh, maybe two hours." - This is emotive language.



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**Examiner Comments**

This example is included to show how the short question can be answered clearly, accurately and briefly. In (a) (i), the candidate made clear identification of three language features, as required. Each of these quotes accurately from the text and then states succinctly what the feature is, using correct terminology. Time was not wasted which would be needed for the rest of the question, (a)(ii). This response scored full marks.



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**Examiner Tip**

This is exactly what is needed for part a (i): the three features should be identified clearly and the text to which they refer should be quoted so that it is easy to see which words are being referred to, by underlining the word or words intended if you are quoting a longer phrase.

Q 4 a (ii) This extract is taken from the start of a candidate's (a) (ii) response.

In this extract we get different views of what Francis feels. When Francis describes himself he uses a simile 'I am like the hunchback of Notre Dame, my face like a gargoyle' when Francis says this the readers feel sympathy for him. ~~Francis~~ when the writer is talking about Francis he often uses emotive language which makes the readers feel sympathy for him.



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**Examiner Comments**

The candidate's response was generally sound, for example in its reference to the use of similes, with some relevant reference but a tendency to become rather general instead of developing the point clearly. This is a Band 4 response.



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**Examiner Tip**

Look at how to use PEE effectively, making you extend a point rather than repeating it.

## Question 5

### Question 5: 'Of Mice and Men'

This was a very popular question, with this text having been studied by many of the candidates entering the examination.

a) (i) An examiner noted that 'candidates frequently copied out a phrase containing the noun/verb/adjective they wished to identify without indicating which was the relevant word.' Examiners also found occasional uncertainty about what constituted a 'language feature', for example with slang, dialect and pronunciation used interchangeably. One candidate, for example, wrote of the words 'he combed his long, black, damp hair straight back': "this is an adjective, verb and simile".

(a) (ii) There were reasonably sound responses to Slims introduction, his character and his role in the novel. The best dealt with the introductory description and the dialogue to make sound inferences about his likely relationship to George and Lennie. These answers were strongly differentiated from those at the bottom of the range, where there was little understanding of the character – and some strong misunderstanding: he was seen at times as an arrogant, conceited individual and some candidates thought he was cocky, that he 'loved himself', or that he put too much store on his personal appearance: such, largely, is the effect today of the image of combing back his hair.

(b) This produced some reasonable responses especially on Crooks, but other answers were very brief. Those who chose Crooks kept focused on Chapter 4, the obvious choice.

Another popular choice was Lennie, especially with regard to his physical and mental characteristics.

Curley and George also featured. Some weaker scripts offered nothing more than the copying out of sections of the given extract, or drew general points at random from the whole novel.

This extract is from another candidate's response to Q 5 (a) (ii), being the opening to the answer.

ii) The language in the extract influences my view on Slim by the way he is described. "He looked kindly at the two in the bunk house". This makes me think that Slim is kind, he won't be a thret to George and Lennie. Also, when Steinbeck uses language like: "His hands, large and lean, were as delicate ~~as~~ in their actions as those of a temple dancer." This makes you believe that, although he can be mighty, and tough, he can also be loving, caring and nice towards others. In this extract, Slim is always seen and described in a kind maner. He is a friend to most guys on the ranch, and he is well respected ~~for being nice,~~



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**Examiner Comments**

The candidate shows sound understanding of the presentation of Slim in the given extract, including contrasts within his character and close reference to examples. This places it in Band 5.



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**Examiner Tip**

Use your examples fully to gain the highest marks.

Q 5 (b): this is the whole of one candidate's answer to 5 (b) on 'Of Mice and Men', focusing on the character of Curley.

iii) John Steinbeck describes Curley, but it's ~~not~~ not how he's described, it's how John Steinbeck describes the way Curley talks to the other men, especially Lennie; When we are first introduced to Curley, the way he is described, "A thin young man with a brown face" he seems like a generally nice person. But when he first speaks he seems really abrupt and unpolite, "he glanced coldly" shows us that he doesn't care, and he makes presumptions about people before he knows them. He uses a noun to describe the way "he stiffened" and "glanced coldly".



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#### Examiner Comments

The candidate wrote about a chosen extract dealing with the character, Curley. The reply was very brief, showing only limited understanding of how the writer uses language. This is an upper end Band 2 response.



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#### Examiner Tip

Perhaps this response was so brief because of misjudging the time: make sure you divide your time sensibly, to allow yourself to write fully on all parts of the question. There is a need to develop answers in a more sustained way, in order to move to a higher band. You must focus on how the language contributes to the effect of the description.

5 (b) This extract is taken from the final part of a candidate's answer to 5 (b), again focusing on Curley.

how you treat a wife. Maybe sometimes Curley wonders why not many people give him respect, i think he just can not see how ~~much~~ much he treats people with Disrespect when he can finally see that then ~~maybe~~ maybe he will sort himself out and treat people with more Respect.



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### Examiner Comments

The candidate has chosen the character of Curley. However, this answer does not focus clearly on a particular extract but remains very general. The response overall shows a limited understanding. This is a lower Band 2 response.



## ResultsPlus

### Examiner Tip

Once you have chosen your character for a question such as this, make clear immediately which extract from the text you are referring to, for example by page numbers or chapter/section number, and choose relevant quotations which illustrate the character. It is better to keep the extract short, to enable you to give specific examples of how the language influences your view of the character.

## Question 6

### Question 6: Rani and Sukh

(a) Among those candidates who chose this text, there were some appropriate answers, showing good awareness of Punjabi customs and traditions and Sukh's reactions to them.

(b) Most candidates could offer a reasonable answer to this part of the question, showing sound understanding of the cultural differences and how these are presented in the novel. One possible extract was the contrast between Natalie and Rani, and Rani's fears of her brothers and father, early in the novel. Another, on which one candidate offered some reasonable analysis, was a scene focusing on traditional Punjabi attitudes towards boyfriends and husbands, with the topic of arranged marriages discussed.

Q6 (b) This extract is from the middle section of a (b) response, focusing on where Rani is kept in her room by her family.

'He slapped me across my face.' The edge verb 'slapped' connotes physical abuse, aggression towards Rani. This would be seen as wrong in Western society because we wouldn't slap a member of our family in any case. We see 'slapping' as something hurtful and that shouldn't be used on a family member. 'Dragged me to my room.' The emotive word 'dragged' also connotes physical abuse that her brothers are using on her further. The verb 'dragged' also connotes that her brothers were forcing her to get to her room. It also connotes that to her brothers, ~~as~~ they were just dragging a body they didn't care who it was or if they were alive. Or not.



### ResultsPlus Examiner Comments

The chosen extract, which gives ideas on the subject of arranged marriages, was a very appropriate choice for Punjabi culture and traditions, with clear and well-developed comments taking it firmly into Band 5.



### ResultsPlus Examiner Tip

In your preparation, make a list of extracts for various possible topics, thinking about the language in each. In the examination, think carefully about what ideas the extract you choose contains and make sure that this extract will give good examples to support your points, as is done here.

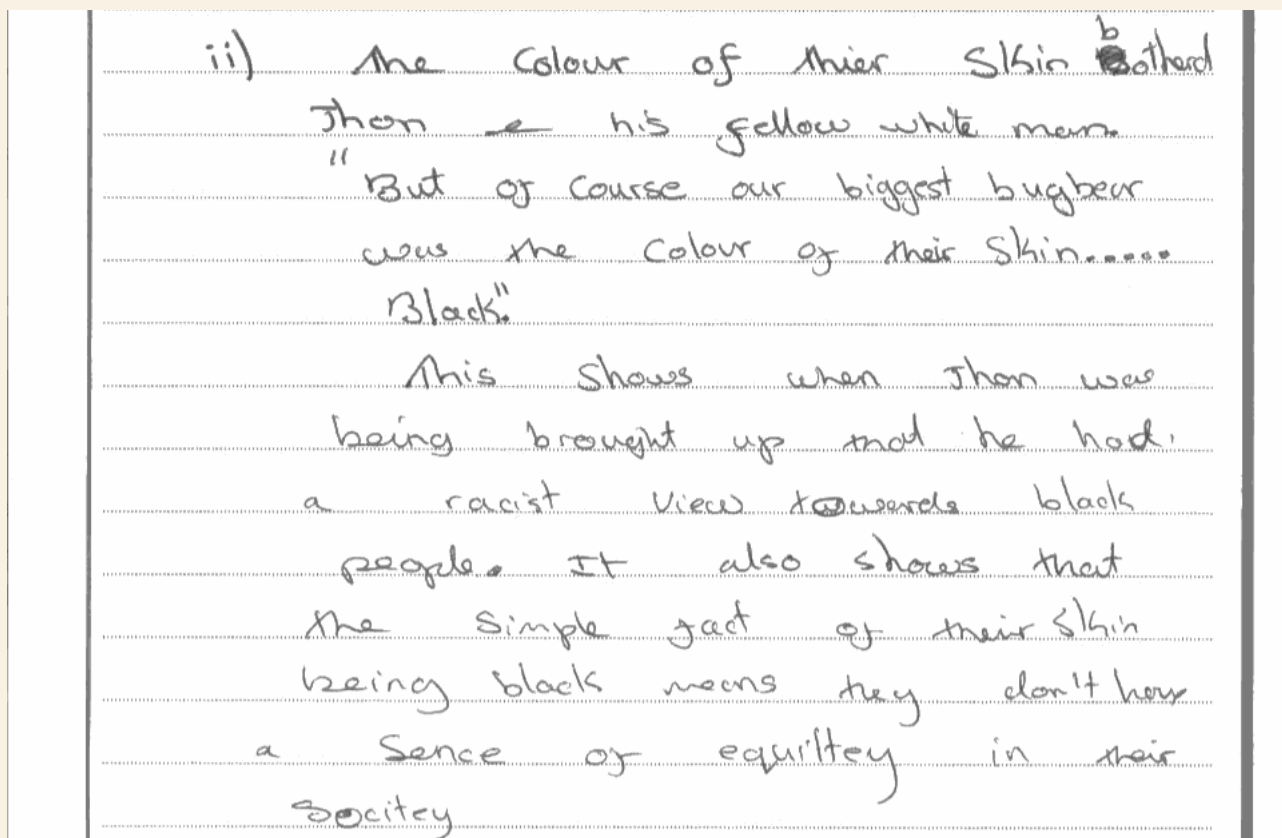
## Question 7

### Question 7: Riding the Black Cockatoo

(a) Those candidates who attempted this text responded to the issues and the importance of language in conveying attitudes – discussing, for example, the importance of the word 'black': the 'biggest bugbear was the colour of their skin'. Candidates could relate to the concept of racism on the grounds of colour, sometimes noting how alien such attitudes were to today's young.

(b) There were a number of possible extracts from the text which could be selected to shed light on the changes in the narrator's attitudes and understanding, such as his first telephone conversation with Gary Murray, where he had his stereotypes challenged starkly. The ceremony of the skull was another, where candidates could see how strongly John had been changed by events and now related much more closely to the Aboriginal people he had met.

Q 7 (a) (ii) This is an extract from the start of an (a) (ii) response, focusing on how John had felt about Aboriginal people and culture.



### ResultsPlus Examiner Comments

The writing shows limited understanding of the given extract - only the 'racist' point is made with some support; other points are not clearly made. This is a Band 2 response.



### ResultsPlus Examiner Tip

Think how to make your points clear, drawing on parts of the text that support them and help you to explain your ideas. Give as much relevant detail as you can in the time available,



## Question 8

Question 8: 'To Kill a Mockingbird'

a) Candidates were often able to show the reasons why this experience was so terrifying for Scout, and how language choices such as the use of active verbs contributed to this. The level of understanding was not completely secure among weaker candidates.

b) Candidates chose various incidents from the novel to explore Scout's feelings and the effect of the event described. Incidents in or connected with the trial and the court scenes were appropriate choices: for example, the 'lynch mob' incident at the Maycomb jail.

Q 8 (b) This extract is the main part of a candidate's response to Q8(b), choosing the Court scene to comment on.

In the novel there is another important event 'the court scene'. Harper Lee uses '...' in the extract to give a pause and build up tension.

~~The abuses.~~ This scene is linked to social inequality as it isn't right to be racist, it is also linked to theme moral education as Atticus has ~~never~~ taught Scout & Jem the wrongs and virtues of life. He is a good teacher and has morals that Scout & Jem have grown up throughout the book and learnt from there further.



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**Examiner Comments**

The candidate's chosen extract was the Court scene. The response was lacking in detail, with only general comments about themes. This is a Band 2 response.



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**Examiner Tip**

Make sure that you choose a clearly defined section and develop your points by including relevant detail which helps explain the effects of the writer's language.

## **Question 9**

Section B: Writing

Question 9: The 2012 London Olympic Games

### **Content and ideas:**

Most candidates used the bullet points to structure their answers to the question on the 2012 London Olympic Games. Paragraphing tended to follow this structure and was more in evidence, according to some examiners' reports, than in previous series.

Many candidates who chose the question were enthusiastic about the Olympic Games, both because of the excitement of the Games themselves and because of the economic and other benefits that they felt they would bring to London or to Britain more generally. The best answers focused on what the Games would offer young people. These often contained knowledge of venues/events and well-known names: Usain Bolt is an athlete whose name proved easier to remember than to spell. Candidates' own ideas included some sound contributions, and occasionally indicated knowledge of how the preparations are going and how the games will be 'rolled out' to the public. The ticket debacle was frequently mentioned.

A significant number of scripts expressed concerns about traffic jams or the logistics of providing sufficient rubbish bins. Others revealed worries about the cost, disturbance and lack of accessibility.

There were a number of misunderstandings which impeded candidates' ability to develop an effective argument, despite the extent of media coverage: for example, various candidates believed that they last for only a day, that their purpose is to raise money for charity, that anyone interested can take part and that spectators will be given the chance to watch famous competitors such as David Beckham and Prince William. They sometimes described them as: 'children's games', 'a special sports day' or just a run-of-the-mill athletics event'.

Although few candidates merited Band 5 marks, Band 1 answers were also encouragingly rare. Many answers had a clear text structure, in particular leading to a forceful conclusion.

### **Spelling, punctuation and grammar**

At the top of the range, candidates often used accurately such punctuation marks as exclamation marks and speech marks for interviews. However, on weaker scripts spelling and punctuation were often poor, and there was much misunderstanding of sentence structure and, in particular, what constitutes a written sentence. Polysyllabic vocabulary associated with the topic was mostly correct in spelling - possibly as a result of media and poster coverage.

Q9 This is from the middle of the response of a candidate to the question on the Olympics.

Thirdly the country will be improved in many ways after the game. Things like new roads, better public transport and better services will be in place to accomodate people from around the world seeing and competing in the ~~paralympic~~ games. For example Weymouth in Dorset that is hosting the sailing have recently had a new and improved road built. The old one was busy, dangerous and narrow which caused loads of traffic jams. Especially in the summer.

Now thanks to the games they have just had a new road built to accomodate everyone taking part in the games. The road has been built between Dorchester and Weymouth replacing the old one. So now Weymouth have a new road ~~now~~ which will be useful even after the games. That shows the ~~the~~ games are improving the country in many ways.



### ResultsPlus Examiner Comments

The candidate chose to write a letter to a newspaper: the writing was interesting and appropriate, with the register maintained throughout. The writing was convincing, with a range of well-balanced points. In the written communication, there were a few slips with punctuation: spelling was mostly accurate. This was one of the highest scoring responses for this tier. This is an encouraging outcome.



### ResultsPlus Examiner Tip

Note how the candidate uses a very personal form of address to communicate directly with the newspaper editor. You can also see how the writing is well planned, with a number of clear paragraphs each making a new point and leading to a conclusion.

Q9 This is the start of a candidate's response to the question on the Olympics.

Write your answer to Section B here:

Olympics On the way!!!

Buy some tickets now! In 2012 London Olympic Games, it ~~there~~ is going to be fun for all of people of any age. The ~~Olympics~~ 2012 Olympics 2012 will be held at Wembley Stadium at 10 in the morning. It will last for a month so everyone will have a chance to watch their idols: such as Usain Bolt and many more athletes will be coming around the world.



### ResultsPlus Examiner Comments

The ideas are reasonable and appropriate: the candidate writes with a generally sound grasp of purpose and audience. (Band 4)  
Technical control is reasonable but with occasional shortcomings. (Band 2)



### ResultsPlus Examiner Tip

Use a strong opening which makes the reader wish to read on. One possible way of doing this is attempted here - a dramatic headline and opening sentence. However, beware of over-use of exclamation marks, and rely on words for your effects.

## **Question 10**

Section B: Writing

Question 10: on a modern invention

### **Content and ideas:**

Examiners reported that the majority of responses to the question about a world-changing modern invention were of reasonable quality, with the best distinguished by detailed understanding of the chosen invention. Many responses were of a good length – candidates mostly found plenty to write about and the better ones developed their points, often drawing relevantly on their own experience.

Some candidates, however, misread the question and thought they had to provide an invention of their own – these were of varying degrees of implausibility. Sometimes the writing took the form of an advertisement rather than an article.

Not all choices could reasonably be regarded as 'inventions': candidates chose such subjects as football, fast food and the building of youth centres which were consequently hard to write about effectively within the terms of the question.

Most candidates, however, interpreted the question correctly. A number of answers focused on the car, sometimes extolling its benefits while showing an awareness of the down sides.

Very many answers focused on the mobile phone. They underlined the importance of these phones in teenagers' lives: 'Without them, what would you do all day?' 'If you don't have a smart phone, then your life is pointless'. Other popular choices were the Internet, computers and more specifically laptops, and the television.

### **Spelling, punctuation and grammar:**

Technical vocabulary generally posed fewer spelling problems than some examiners had expected; they suggested that this may be the result of constant advertising, familiarity with product 'jargon' and so on. Nevertheless, control of grammatical suffixes and agreement is weak for many of these candidates.

Q 10 This is the start of a candidate's response to the question on inventions, dealing with the Internet.

Where would we be now had the internet not be invented you ask, well be ready for that question to be answered right here now and look no further.

As we all know the internet has provided people the freedom to discuss things or chat without having to be there face to face in a quick manner and has provided us with a load of information which would have only been possible in the past by going all the way to a library and finding the appropriate book. Search sites on the internet such as Google have also recently been adding sections such as news, weather, books, entertainment and discussions which in turn gives people a whole wide range of choices to choose from.



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#### Examiner Comments

The candidate showed a clear sense of purpose, form and audience, with well-chosen vocabulary and sound control of expression and meaning. This candidate qualified for the top end of the Band 5 range for the Tier.



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#### Examiner Tip

If given a choice of topic, choose one which you really know about, so that you can write in detail with clear reasons, as is done here.

Q 10 This is from the middle of a candidate's response to the question on inventions, focusing on mobile phones.

The invention has many advantages and disadvantages, the main advantages are that you can now communicate with people on the other side of the world, a second advantage is that you can keep upto date with the new because it is possible to connect to the internet through the phone. They can also be used for something else for example a alarm clock.

There are also some disadvantages with using a phone, they are that Scientist's are now finding out that the waves that the phone send's out are effecting the human brain, also because people use them so much it is starting to become addictive.



### ResultsPlus Examiner Comments

The candidate showed some grasp of purpose and audience, although the register could have been stronger. The quality of written communication was not secure, with many flaws in spelling and punctuation. Overall awarded Band 3 and Band 1.



### ResultsPlus Examiner Tip

To improve the standard, the candidate would need to work hard on achieving greater accuracy and avoiding common errors.

## **Summary**

Overall, the response of candidates was a pleasing one to examiners. Candidates had responded well to writing about the prose texts, showing understanding of such aspects as setting, an event, ideas, characters, relationships and themes.

To improve their performance, candidates should:

- when dealing with the given extract from the prose text, focus on the specific demands of the question and draw on as much of the extract as possible to make their points
- show a clear grasp of language features and their influence on your views
- choose a second extract with care, making sure that the examiner can see which extract is meant, for example by giving page numbers, chapter number or clear identification of the extract
- write your answer to Section B, the Writing task, in the correct section of the answer booklet
- in their own writing, pay attention both to the need to write in an appropriate style (eg magazine article) and in clear, accurate English.



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