

Examiners' Report January 2013

GCSE English Language 5EN2F 01

The Writer's Voice

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Introduction

Candidates engaged with the texts and understood the ideas and themes. They produced some lively responses to the writing tasks with some interesting ideas.

In Section A the overwhelming majority of candidates chose to respond to Q5.

In Section B the majority of candidates chose Q9.

Despite advice given in previous reports it was still the case that some candidates wrote their Section B (Writing) response immediately after their Section A response, whilst others wrote Section A part (b) responses in the Section B (Writing) section of the answer book.

Section A (Reading)

Part (a)(i)

This short question requires candidates to focus on specific language features, either grammatical features such as parts of speech, or devices such as imagery or sound effects. Most candidates followed the rubric in offering their own examples from the given extract from their chosen text. A few lost a mark by copying the one given as an example. Comparatively few gained 3 marks. Those who did showed accurate knowledge of the appropriate technical terms. However, their performance on this question did not necessarily correlate at all closely with their responses elsewhere on the paper.

Some candidates on part (a)(i) attempted to explain or comment on their chosen features, despite the example given. There was some vagueness in terminology, e.g. 'aural imagery' which sometimes made it difficult for examiners to accurately award marks.

Part (a)(ii)

Candidates generally engaged well with the given extracts, although they often missed opportunities to focus on language.

Despite the fact that candidates had the opportunity to refer directly to the given extract, not all candidates dealt well with this question, although there were a good number of responses which showed a sound command of the extract. Less successful answers were too brief or repetitive. It is important that candidates note the mark allocation and realise that very brief responses, e.g. a few lines, cannot possibly achieve the higher mark ranges.

More able candidates were able to make focused comments on the range of the writer's techniques and make relevant connections. Many candidates were able to comment on the writer's use of language and to recognise the techniques employed, although they did not always provide sufficient comment on these connecting them to the ideas and themes. Less able candidates did not engage with the texts and there was little comment on language and techniques, and responses were often brief and undeveloped.

Part (b)

Candidates were generally successful in identifying an appropriate extract for comment and more successful responses focused closely on the writer's techniques. However, this section was less well done than part (a)(ii) as candidates tended simply

to re-tell the plot or generally drift into narration without the close focus on techniques that are required.

A few candidates ignored the rubric and wrote about the given extract rather than choosing a new one.

Section B (Writing)

Candidates produced some lively and enthusiastic responses to the tasks and, despite some weak language controls, they often presented their ideas persuasively. More successful responses wrote with clear, developed ideas, a good sense of the appropriate register and accurate spelling and punctuation. Less successful responses were often brief, with unclear or undeveloped ideas and poor language controls. Many examiners commented on improvements in spelling.

The use of planning often helped focus the candidates' responses and those candidates who followed the bullet points often were able to structure their responses successfully.

Section A

Question 1

Touching the Void

There were very few responses to this question. Where candidates did attempt the question they were able to attempt part (a)(i) and part (a)(ii) but could not identify another extract for part (b) which suggests they had not selected the correct question.

Question 2

Anita and Me

There were no responses to this question.

Question 3

Balzac and the Little Chinese Seamstress

There were very few responses to this text.

3(a): There was some evidence of an understanding of language but a tendency to rely too heavily on quotations.

3(b): Reference was made to relevant extracts occasionally but examiners did comment that some responses did not attempt this section suggesting perhaps that candidates had chosen the wrong question.

Question 4

Heroes

4(a): Candidates understood the relationship between Francis and Nicole. The passage provided a good range of language uses and more able candidates were able to discuss them quite well. Many candidates displayed a good knowledge of the text. More able candidates were able to identify and discuss language features although examiners commented that there tended to be a lack of focus on language.

4(b): Candidates mostly made suitable choices of a second passage. More able candidates were able to discuss language but there was a tendency to narrate and therefore a loss of focus on the writer's techniques.

This is from the beginning of a candidate's response to Q4(a)(ii).

In the extract Cormier specific language to show how difficult the relationship between ~~Francis~~ Francis and Nicole was.

Cormier shows how Francis feels about letting Nicole get raped as he says "as if it was part of the hell I had earned" this simile communicates how Francis feels that he deserves to be sent to hell. The religious references could make the reader feel that Francis

(Section A continued)

A second coming a chance to help Nicole while she was being raped.

In the extract Nicole uses a rhetorical question to show how she felt disappointed with Francis while angry. "Why didn't you do something?" This question is one of many and the repetition of these questions shows how Nicole thought she could rely on Francis. To the reader this would suggest Francis isn't a hero but a coward changing their view of him.

Cormier uses short sentences to create the impression that Francis stood for a very long time waiting for Nicole to come back, "Somewhere a door slammed. Later, a dog barked, a car roared by. I finally went away" the way Cormier says ~~out~~ of all of these events happening has a monumental affect on the reader as it portray Francis longing for forgiveness from Nicole the reader would then truly understand Francis's regret and sadness.



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examiner comment

The candidate shows a generally sound grasp of the passage with awareness of the difficulties of the relationship between Francis and Nicole. There is generally sound understanding of the writer's techniques and how they contribute to the presentation of ideas. The response was given a mark of 11/13, at the top of Band 4.



ResultsPlus

examiner tip

Closer focus on the writer's use of language by selecting and commenting on individual words and their effects would have been needed to achieve Band 5.

This is from the middle section of a candidate's response to part 4(b) focusing on Chapter 14, where Francis confronts Larry.

"blustering against store windows and kicking debris into the gutters" This quotation uses pathetic fallacy as it reflects on Francis's mood. The wind is so strong and powerful it also gives an image of a dark dull cold day and Francis feels sad and is always down. Also

(Section A continued)

what he is about to do is a powerful thing as he is going to kill Larry LaSalle.

'Does he suspect my presence here? Does he have a premonition that he only has a few minutes left?' Francis is asking himself rhetorical questions but in his mind. This makes the reader feel a little sorry for Francis as it's like he doesn't want to do it but feels like this is the only way to get revenge on Larry LaSalle. Also that the actions of Larry LaSalle has ruined Francis's whole life and that all Francis's life has been about is to get his revenge on Larry LaSalle.

'The innocent faces of the two young German boys appear on my mind.' Francis is having a flashback of when he was in the war and feels that if Larry LaSalle a paedophile gets to live and two young Germans who are innocent and have done know wrong live it's not right, why should a rapist be alive when innocent people are dying for nothing?



ResultsPlus
examiner comment

The choice the extract is appropriate, although perhaps rather long. There is generally sound understanding of the passage and the candidate attempts to engage with the language although sometimes the comments are descriptive rather than analytical. The response was given 15/24, just into Band 4.



Comment on the effects the writer's techniques have, rather than describing what the writer has said e.g. the comment on pathetic fallacy, although valid, could have been more focused on individual words.

Question 5

Of Mice and Men

This was the most popular question in Section A.

5(a): There were some fairly sound responses to this extract, with candidates making reasonably clear references to the writer's techniques and language choices. Comments on the build up of tension, Candy's feelings and the oppressive silence were often reasonably developed and there was some focus on language. Some candidates used part (a)(i) as a step into the question but this only really worked if the techniques had been correctly identified in part (a)(i).

5(b): Most candidates were able to choose an appropriate extract – e.g. Curley's wife's death, Lennie's death or Lennie's fight with Curley – and found some sensible things to say, with some attempt to address language and techniques. More successful responses used a similar technique to their response to part (a)(ii) to produce well focused responses, with some developed comments on language and techniques. However, quite a lot of responses to this section tended to be narrative, missed references to language and did not connect the effects of techniques and ideas. There was some use of lengthy quotations with no explanation and some candidates chose very long extracts for comment. There were some quite brief responses to this section which cannot be successful given the larger mark allocation for this question.

There appeared to be a mis-match in the level of response to part (a)(ii) and part (b), with a clear focus on the text and language in part (a)(ii), but a lack of reference to the text and techniques in part (b). This might suggest poor time management or a lack of ability to focus on the second part of the task.

This is a candidate's response to Q5(a)(i).

Write your answer to Section A Question (a)(i) here:

Example 1: hook

Feature: verb

Example 2: little

Feature: adjective

Example 3: hong

Feature: noun



ResultsPlus

examiner comment

The candidate scored 3 out of 3 for this response, correctly identifying three parts of speech.



ResultsPlus

examiner tip

To obtain full marks, candidates should clearly identify the word or phrase and correctly name the language feature being used. If a phrase is chosen, the word or words referred to should be clearly underlined.

This is a candidate's response to Q5(a)(ii).

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

In the extract when Candu's dog got shot, every one was very sympathetic like "Slim Said Shortley" he does not want Candu to get upset so he keeps his talking small. Also Slim tries to change the subject on numerous occasions like when ^{Slim} he was talking about his mules and their bad hooves



ResultsPlus

examiner comment

This is a brief and limited response although there is an attempt at a reasonable point about Slim. It was given a mark of 3 out of 13, a low Band 2 response.



ResultsPlus

examiner tip

Candidates should choose a number of examples from the extract to help them to write a more detailed response. Limiting their response to one aspect will not provide sufficient material to comment on.

This is a more successful response to Q5(a)(ii).

a.ii) In the beginning of the extract Carlson takes out Candy's dog to be shot. Near the start Slim says 'you know what to do... take a shovel'. This shows us that Slim feels sorry for Candy and wants the dog to be buried. The short sentence 'Take a shovel' & implies he's being respectful as he's being considerate. Steinbeck is showing some of the men on the ranch do care about each other apart from George and Lennie.

Later Slim says 'Slim said loudly' one of my
males got a bad hoof...', This is showing there's
an uneasy silence in the room which Slim is trying
to ~~break~~ break. The words 'loudly' suggests
he's trying to draw everyone's attention away
from the loud gunshot supposedly to happen soon.
Steinbeck is telling us that people knew how
hard it must be for Candy, but they also want to
just get on with their lives.

Nearing the end Whit 'broke out' 'What
the hell's takin' him so long?' which tells us
that everybody wants Carlson to shoot Candy's dog
already as the tension's difficult. The words 'takin' him'
suggest Whit could be referring to anybody, he
~~try to say it~~ says it in a way to ^{disguise} ~~disguise~~
it so it looks as if he's talking about George
dealing. Steinbeck shows us that people
~~don't~~ have a sympathy for Candy and don't
~~to~~ want him to go through the event.



ResultsPlus examiner comment

Although the response is limited to three references, there is a sound understanding of techniques and effects. The candidate has commented on the effects of individual words. It was awarded 12 out of 13, a secure Band 5 response.



ResultsPlus examiner tip

Candidates should pick out individual words or short phrases to comment on, and focus on the writer's techniques and the effects that these have on the reader.

This is the opening of a response to Q5(b).

(Section A continued)

b) In this part of the question I will be looking at the reaction of the men ~~the~~ to ~~the~~ Curley and Lennie's fight. This event happened on bottom of page 90 and page 91. The event starts when Curley can't find his wife, so he goes into the bank house, by this point he's full of rage. And Lennie is sitting down remembering, ^{and laughing} about the American dream and the rabbits. Curley thinks that he Lennie is laughing at him, so Curley throughs a punch at him and Lennie doesn't do a thing just lets Curley punch him to bits. Just as the other men are about to intervene George shouts "get him Lennie" and at this point Lennie catches one of Curley's punch and crushes his hand until it bleeds and breaks. There are a lot of reactions on these pages but the good ones are Curley's, Lennie's, George's ~~reactions~~ ~~reactions~~. I'll start off with Curley's reaction to Lennie's laughter. A good phrase he said is

(Section A continued)

"No big son-of-a-bitch is gonna laugh at me". This phrase tells us how angry he is and that he really wants to start a fight.



ResultsPlus

examiner comment

The focus on the extract where Curley fights Lennie is a suitable one. Some reasonable points are made, although there is a slight tendency to narrate. It was awarded 14 out of 24, a top Band 3 response.



ResultsPlus

examiner tip

Candidates should focus on identifying relevant quotations and commenting on the writer's language, rather than re-telling the content of the chosen extract.

This is a candidate's response to Q5(b).

b) Near the end of section Six (pages 105-106) the characters find the body of Curley's wife. The drama and tension of this event is created by Steinbeck's emphasis on how quiet or loud the setting is. 'A rise of voices' and 'a drum of running feet' show this. Steinbeck uses the emphasis on sound by using verbs such as 'rise' and 'drum' and uses these to describe how loud or quiet something is. It seems that the louder the noise is described

(Section A continued)

to be, the higher the tension rises. However, after Steinbeck rises the tension, he then brings it back down by using adverbs such as 'quietly' and ~~he~~ he also uses a metaphor; 'the spell was broken.' use of this metaphor ^{and the word} ~~and the~~ 'broken' at the end then 'breaks' the the tension and the story then descends into chaos.

Steinbeck shows reactions to the event by using emotive language to describe the anger that the characters feel. 'Curley suddenly came to life' and 'He worked himself into a fury' are examples of Steinbeck using emotive words. The word 'fury' suggests that Curley has worked himself into a rampage where he feels unstoppable. Where before this, ~~Steinbeck's~~ Steinbeck's use of the ^{adverb} 'suddenly' describes how quickly Curley achieved this rage. Steinbeck makes the reader wonder what Curley is going to do.

Steinbeck's use of language also shows how the reactions contrast each other. He uses adverbs such as 'furiously' to describe how Curley reacts. Where as he uses the adverb 'quietly' to describe how calm Slim is keeping. These differentiations between the characters cause the reader to effectively 'split into two sides' and choose

(Section A continued)

whether to side with the 'Furiously' moving
Curly, or the 'quietly' moving Slim.



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examiner comment

The response is sound and clear, at the upper end of what is to be expected on this tier. Writing about the scene where the body of Curley's wife is discovered, the candidate deals well with the language at word level and uses embedded quotations in an appropriate way. The response was awarded 24 out of 24, the top of Band 5.



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examiner tip

Note how the candidate had selected appropriate quotations and clearly explained the effects of individual words and phrases.

Question 6

Rani and Sukh

There were a small number of responses to this text in this series.

6(a): Some responses made valid language comments on the given extract but there were also responses with an over-reliance on plot and narrative rather than a focus on language.

6(b): The football match was quite a popular choice for the second extract but many candidates tended to narrate and lose focus on the language and techniques.

Question 7

Riding the Black Cockatoo

There were no responses to this question.

Question 8

To Kill a Mockingbird

There were a small number of responses to this question.

8(a): Most candidates picked up on Scout and Jem's discomfort and were able to discuss the language. There were some successful responses that considered how the atmosphere was conveyed and some comments on colloquial language which showed an appreciation of the context of the novel.

8(b): The most common choice of extract was the court scene but a lack of development and reference to the text limited responses.

Section B

Question 9: Designer brands

The majority of candidates chose this question.

AO4(i) and (ii) (Content and ideas)

Many candidates had interesting ideas about the importance (or otherwise) of designer brands and some identified peer pressure and bullying as reasons why young people want to spend money on brand names. There were examples of personal viewpoints presented persuasively and with clarity. More successful responses had a sense of audience and purpose with clear paragraphing often helped by evidence of planning. The bullet points also helped the candidates structure their responses. Less successful responses did not have a strong or consistent sense of audience and purpose and lost focus on the task, sometimes commenting on mobile phones or computer games. Less successful responses tended to be brief, often lacking paragraphs and clear development of ideas.

AO4(iii) (Spelling, punctuation and grammar)

At the top of the range, candidates often accurately used punctuation marks such as exclamation marks and speech marks (for quoted interviews). However, on less successful scripts spelling and punctuation were often poor, e.g. the mis-spelling of 'clothes' as 'cloths'. Also there were problems with sentence structure and some random use of capital letters.

This is a response to Q9.

Write your answer to Section B here:

I am writing an article about, young people spending too much money on clothes and are often too influenced by brands and designers labels;
I think young people do spend quite a lot of money on designer labels, some are okay but not every piece of clothing you have needs to be designer labelled; spending too much money on designer ~~entire~~ clothes may lead you to not having any money for the necessary items such as food and drink, and equipments for school, maybe credit for your mobile and much more. I think it's worth buying some things that are designer labelled but not every piece of clothing because if it breaks or rips etc. you can't always afford to keep replacing them for new ones, and if you buy some cheaper items say from primark you can afford to maybe replace them.



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examiner comment

The candidate's response is brief and undeveloped, although a few valid points are made. There is a lack of paragraphing to help organise the ideas. There are a number of errors, especially in the spelling. It was awarded 6 out of 16 for AO4(i) and (ii), Band 2, and 3 out of 8 for AO4(iii), Band 1.



Candidates should plan their responses so they have enough to say and organise their writing into paragraphs.

This is the second part of a more successful response to Question 9.

Secondly, do designer clothes look better? Well I personally believe so. On the other hand, you can buy pretty good clothes from anywhere. £3 a top from Primark, £15 for a pair of jeans. So why does it seem that designer clothing is better? Is it because of the ridiculous price tag? Maybe. Is it because they look better? No way, I shall explain. If everyone loved designer clothing because of the actual print/design, then the fakes industry would be absolutely booming. But are fakes worth buying? How many people would know? How many people would walk up to you and say "Hey nice shirt dude, mind if I take the serial number to see if it's real?" Not a lot I would think.

Moving swiftly on, ~~if~~ if we are accusing young people of spending too much money on clothes, what do we want them to put this money towards? A charity? Not likely. Study books? Let's be

(Section B continued)

realistic. If young people aren't going to spend their money on clothes, it wouldn't take them long to find something useless to spend it on. Games for consoles are now around £40 each. Songs from iTunes are now 99p each. I even saw today whilst browsing, you can buy nothing for £3.99. That's right. Google it if you don't believe me. It is literally a box with nothing in it. Would you rather a young person come home with some nice durable clothes that are designer or a load of nothing and no money? I know which one I would choose.

To conclude this article, I will leave you with this. Designer clothes are expensive because they have someone's name on it. But we, as humans, take pride in having something more expensive than someone else. Is this pride worth the extra money? Or is pride just another sin. Thank you for reading my article, you can mail me on our mailing page, or you can subscribe to me by clicking below.



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examiner comment

A clearly constructed response, showing an appropriate register for such an article. There is a definite sense of purpose and the writing is lively. There are occasional slips in accuracy but these do not detract from the quality of the response. This was awarded 16 out of 16 for AO4(i) and (ii), the top of Band 5, and 8 out of 8 for AO4(iii), the top of Band 3.



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examiner tip

Candidates should think carefully about how to organise their response and the register chosen so that their writing has a clear sense of audience and purpose.

Question 10: School or college council application

AO4(i) and (ii) (Content and ideas)

Candidates who chose this question often had quite strong ideas to support their application. There were lists of amazing personal qualities that candidates offered but some concentrated on the problems in the institution without offering any solutions. There was some evidence of good speech writing skills, not just in the greeting and sign off, but also in the use of rhetorical questions, lists of three and direct address. However, the requirement for a speech caused problems with less able candidates, who either wrote an essay or used a letter format. A number of responses lacked suitable introductions and conclusions. More successful responses used the bullet points to help them structure their responses. There were some very brief responses which were not able to develop their ideas sufficiently.

AO4(iii) (Spelling, punctuation and grammar)

Similar points were made by examiners to those on Q9.

Here are the opening paragraphs of a response to Q10.

Write your answer to Section B here:

Hello my fellow students.

Today I am not here to nag at you to choose me to be your new student member. I am just here today to let you know ~~where~~ they're ~~is~~ people that care about what you want and what you need and one of those people are me, Bethany Williams.

Let me start by telling you about myself I love making other people happy. I'd rather someone else ~~up~~ be happy than me. I love talking whether it's about clothes, music, make up or even school I'll talk about it. Even though I love talking I also love listening. I'd sit there and listen to someone talking about their relationship problems all day.

Anyway enough about me. I'll tell you a few things ^{that} ~~or~~ ~~about~~ I wanna do



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The ideas about representing a school council are reasonable and generally appropriate. The argument could have been more developed, however. There are errors in spelling, although words such as 'wanna' may be seen as an attempt to find a suitable register for a speech. The response was awarded 11 for AO4(i) and (ii), mid Band 4, and 6 for AO4(iii), top of Band 2.



ResultsPlus examiner tip

Think about how a plan would have helped to develop ideas. Checking your work through carefully at the end will help to correct errors.

This response has a plan and the opening paragraphs for Q10.

Write your answer to Section B here:

Plan: Intro - Good morning, rhetorical questions etc. Humour

Para 1 - Why I should become school councillor.

Para 2 - How I can relate to the problems in school and students' views. Personal skills and strengths.

Para 3 - How I would tackle those problems. Topics that the students choose.

Para 4 - Anything else.

Conclusion - 'Any questions' Overall summary.

(Section B continued)

Good morning ladies and gentlemen. I'm sure many of you know why I'm here and why I'm doing this... Hopefully ~~interesting/serious~~. No, but really, I'm here to attempt to tackle the ^{issues} ~~problems~~ the school have been facing.

Now I know this school is amazing. I've been going here for just over four years and I think it's wonderful, the teachers are kind... mostly, the facilities are ~~really~~ great, but most importantly learning is fun. However, nothing in life is perfect, not even this school. ~~But just like~~ I'm here to ~~represent~~ represent the ~~student's~~ ~~view~~ students' views, not just my own. All I'm doing is getting the student's points across.

~~Example of~~ This parts going to be hard. I mean, I don't like to brag, but I guess I'm going to have to try and to ~~try~~ ~~get~~ get you to pick me. Anyway... I guess, Oh, I do almost all my homework on time, I listen in class, as I'm sure many of you may know, those who teach me. ~~But~~ I also respect other peoples' views and try to cooperate in a team. I do lots of outside activities like judo. I play a musical instrument, the piano. But I also play many sports.



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examiner comment

This is a spirited response to the task, in which the candidate adopts a suitable stance for addressing peers and gives a number of ideas about how the role would be carried out. There is a clear sense of audience and purpose. The writing is mostly accurate, but punctuation marks are sometimes omitted where they would be helpful. Spelling is accurate. It was awarded 14 out of 16 for AO4 (i) and (ii), Band 5, and 7 out of 8 for AO4(iii), Band 3.



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examiner tip

Notice how the plan has helped the candidate to structure a clear response and how the candidate has adopted a suitable tone, e.g. in the third paragraph, to address the audience.

Paper summary

Candidates engaged well with the ideas and themes of the texts studied. They seemed better prepared for the tasks and made some attempts to comment on the writer's techniques, although not always successfully.

On the writing tasks, the enthusiasm with which some candidates wrote was evident, although some candidates did not develop their ideas sufficiently. Candidates' ability to organise their ideas and structure their responses was commendable and there was an improvement in spelling, punctuation and grammar.

Section A

Based on their performance in this section, candidates are advised to:

- make sure they clearly underline the chosen word/phrase for part (a)(i)
- correctly identify the language features for part (a)(i)
- focus on the whole extract for part (a)(ii)
- carefully choose a second extract for part (b) and make sure it is not too long
- keep focus on the task for part (b) – do not slip into narration
- keep focusing on language and techniques and how effective the language is in influencing their views of the writer's presentation of ideas and themes.

Section B

Based on their performance in this section, candidates are advised to:

- plan their work
- write in the appropriate register with a clear sense of audience
- focus on expressing their ideas clearly
- try to develop their ideas so their responses are not simply a list of points
- focus on accuracy in spelling, punctuation and grammar
- give themselves time to check through their writing for errors.

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