

Examiners' Report
November 2013

GCSE English Language 5EN2H 01

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Introduction

This was a new examination series which was intended to be primarily a re-sit. This clearly affected the nature of the entry, with many borderline students but also some of a higher quality. This led to a relatively small entry. The low numbers who answered on a number of the texts meant that the report is unable to make general comments in those cases because there was too little evidence to hand.

On this tier, students were required to analyse the language and the writer's intended effects in a given passage. They then had to select an extract for detailed analysis. Also, for the writing task, there was an emphasis on transactional writing.

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

The responses of students had many strong features, although the nature of the examination meant that there were a limited number of excellent responses.

In the Reading section (Section A) the overwhelming majority of students chose to respond to Question 5, 'Of Mice and Men'. This no doubt reflects both the popularity of 'Of Mice and Men' and its familiarity to teachers.

Successful students:

- were able to select appropriate examples of the writer's language and demonstrate the ability to relate them to the writer's intended effects
- were able to select an appropriate passage from another section of the text and explore a range of language features successfully linking them to the writer's purpose and the ideas and themes of the text
- wrote in a way that showed an effective grasp of an appropriate register, together with the ability to engage well with the intended readership.

Less successful responses:

- showed an insecure grasp of language (for example, confusion over terms) or failed to support their points with appropriate reference to the text
- tended to make unsupported or undeveloped comments on language or relied too heavily on narration
- did not develop and sustain ideas and did not have secure language controls.

Overall, examiners felt that students had responded positively to the tasks

Students had often engaged thoughtfully with their study of the prose texts. The best wrote detailed responses to the texts, and examiners read many enjoyable and well-argued answers to the two Writing tasks.

Section A (Reading)

There was a range of responses with some students producing detailed and focused responses. The majority showed clear understanding of the texts but often lacked the ability to fully focus on and analyse the language of the extracts. Some comment was made about incorrect identification of language terms and unsupported/speculative comments made by students.

Question (a):

Examiners commented that there was generally a clear understanding of the given extracts but many responses lacked a secure and detailed focus on language. Better responses were able to offer sustained analysis with a confident knowledge of language. Examiners also commented that students generally engaged well with the given extracts.

Question (b):

Students were generally successful in identifying an appropriate extract for comment and better responses focused well on the writer's techniques. However, some examiners observed that this section was less well done than a) as students tended drift into narration without the close focus on techniques that is required.

Students sometimes used passages that had been used as part a) texts in previous series and showed thorough knowledge of the text but were not always able to adapt the material to a different question.

Some examiners observed that the extract chosen was sometimes too long limiting the student's ability to focus closely on the task. A few students used more than one extract.

Section B (Writing):

Examiners did comment how much they enjoyed reading responses in this section, especially Question 10.

The majority of students were able to write in appropriate styles and structure their responses effectively although examiners did comment on a lack of adventurous vocabulary and ambitious punctuation. Examiners, as usual, commented on problems with technical accuracy.

Question 1

Touching The Void

This text was offered by too few students to permit any general comment.

Question 2

Anita and Me

This text was offered by too few students to permit any general comment.

Question 3

Balzac and The Little Chinese Seamstress

This text was offered by too few students to permit any general comment.

Question 4

Heroes

- a) Examiners commented that students showed engagement with the text and there were some successful responses with focused and thoughtful comments on language. Some students made thoughtful links between the table tennis matches and Francis's experiences in the war with focused comments on language. Most students recognised that the extract depicted the game as important and tense, through e.g. the use of short sentences ("spin and chop"/"serve and return"). Francis was seen as confident and knowledgeable ("kill shot...soft shot"), convinced he would win ("invincible"/"in control"). The majority of students identified these ideas, often with correctly identified language features and techniques used, although evaluation of their effectiveness was not always sustained. Weaker students were often able to identify interesting examples of language, but were unable to develop comments on them effectively or slipped into narration.
- b) Students mostly made suitable choices of a second passage. Better choices were Francis' first meeting with Nicole or the final visit to Larry and some examiners did comment that some of the chosen extracts (e.g. the rape scene) were dealt with less successfully. Responses that selected the initial meeting of Francis and Nicole had some effective exploration of religious references ("pale purity") and his pledging his love ("kneeling"/"like a knight at her feet"). The irony of his pledge was picked up by the better answers. Examiners commented that some students were able to identify appropriate quotations but sometimes the comments on language lacked development. Weaker students tended to narrate rather than analyse language.

This is the opening section of a student's response to Question 4 (a).

4a) "I had survived more games" Cormier uses this quote to suggest to the reader that Francis is winning. The word "survived" has connotations of alive. Also this links back to when Francis was at war as he "survived" when he jumped on a grenade. Maybe Francis uses survived to suggest he is still alive and still fighting. This quote proves to the reader that Francis is good at table tennis, as he has won all of the games he has played.

"I felt invincible, impossible to defeat." Francis expresses to the reader that he feels like a superhero. The words "invincible" and "impossible", have connotations of a hero and better than any other player. "impossible" means that Francis is un-beatable which tells us he is a star player. Could Francis win the table tennis tournament? Surely somebody would give Francis a hard match?

Cormier now creates tension to the chapter as "Louis Arabelle had also been winning" this makes the reader feel like they want to read on and find out who will win!

"Both of us undefeated", the word "undefeated" has connotations of a champion, a winner and a hero! This again, links back to when Francis was in the war, the word hero.

Surely Francis is a hero. Cormier uses this short sentence to create tension between Francis and Louis.



ResultsPlus Examiner Comments

The response is thorough with some elements of assured understanding of the writer's ideas. The student tries to link the language of the extract with the wider context of the novel. Although there is a sustained focus on language, the comments are sometimes not fully developed. The response was awarded 10 out of 16 marks, the lower end of Band 4.



ResultsPlus Examiner Tip

Always try to fully develop comments on the language the writer uses and its intended effects.

This is an extract from the same candidate's response to Question 4 (b).

"I felt like a knight at her feet" suggests to the readers how serious Francis feels about Nicole. Francis treats Nicole like a princess as "knight at her feet" creates a romantic scenario. This shows the importance of Nicole to Francis, as he shows how much love, he has for her. Francis uses the quote "my love and loyalty for ever". "for ever" has connotations of for life ^{and} until he dies. Francis shows us how important Nicole is to him by saying he will love her until he dies. Francis is crazy about Nicole, he has so many feelings for her.

"aware of her presence" tells the reader that Francis is, not stopping thinking about her. This definitely points out to the reader that Francis is in love with Nicole. She is very important to Francis as he always shows the reader how he feels about her. "aware" has connotations of knowing and seeing, Francis sounds a little like he is always knowing where she is and what she is doing. Which makes the reader understand how important Nicole is to Francis.

"I hoped that one of Nicole's books would fall to the ground so that I could rush forward and pick it up." This quote shows how Francis feels about Nicole, he obviously can't stop thinking about her and tells the reader an ~~awful~~ awful lot. He shows how much he loves her by using his caring side. "pick it up" proves that Francis cares for her and wants ~~her~~ her to know.



ResultsPlus Examiner Comments

A methodical approach which shows thorough understanding of ideas with sustained reference to the text. This was awarded 10 marks out of 24, at the bottom end of Band 3.



ResultsPlus Examiner Tip

Try to fully analyse language and comment on the writer's intended effects.

Question 5

Of Mice and Men

This was the most popular question. Some examiners felt that there was less evidence of narrative responses than in previous series although weaker responses tended to narrate.

- a) The extract was accessible and there were some interesting and developed interpretations of the text.

The majority of the students showed a secure understanding of the passage and a good knowledge of the ideas and themes of the text as a whole.

Successful responses developed interpretations of Crooks with effective language analysis and thoughtful comments e.g.

references to the 'meagre' light and its symbolic meaning and Crooks' 'pain tightened lips' as a metaphor for how difficult/impossible Crooks finds it to speak his mind in the society he lives in.

Students looked closely at the physical description of Crooks, often commenting on the reader's reaction of sympathy with a character who had had poor treatment from white people all his life.

Many students commented on the repetition of 'rights', linking to the segregated society of the time.

The majority showed sound understanding of the extract but sometimes the comments made were rather simplistic

e.g. 'Crooks is a nasty man.'

or had a limited focus on language. Some students wrote too much about racism without directly linking it to the language of the text.

- b) Most students were able to choose an appropriate extract e.g. the attack on Crooks by Curley's wife which was the most popular. Successful responses were able to keep a firm focus on how Crooks is treated and relate this to the language used e.g. bringing in the society of the time, the hierarchy on the ranch, the irony of Curley's wife calling him "Nigger" when she herself has no name. Some students developed their discussion of Curley's wife 'stood over him' and 'so that she could whip him again' very thoughtfully. Many looked at her tone in her delivery of "Listen nigger" and most made something of the "growing smaller" phrase with reference to juxtaposition/oxymoron by better students. Many commented successfully on the repetition of 'Nigger' and 'no'. Students who chose Crooks being allowed in the bunkhouse at Christmas or the episode with Slim and the tar for the mule's hoof generally were less successful as the extracts did not offer as many opportunities for detailed analysis. Weaker responses to this section tended to be narrative. Some responses lost focus on how Crooks is treated or seemed to be writing about Crooks' character or how Crook's treats Lennie. There was some use of lengthy quotations with no explanation and some students 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. A few students used 2 or more sections of the novel to comment on which limited their response.

This is a candidate's complete response to Question 5 (a).

In the extract, the reader is introduced to the character of Crooks and we learn ~~his where~~ about where he lives a little more. Crooks is a somewhat troubled man, keeping high defences, especially around the other ranch workers; but also he is well aware of his rights and realises deep down that there is little hope for a black man like himself, living in an era when racism was very common.

Primarily, the extract opens with the description of Crooks living a lonely and troubled life. The name 'Crooks' has even been given to him, presumably, by the other ranch workers, due to his "crooked spine" (normalisation/determinism). This highlights the abuse that Crooks suffers with, making him an "aloof" man. The adjective "aloof" intimates that he keeps his distance as he knows if he did not, he may well get hurt. Plus, Steinbeck writes: "on raising his eyes he stiffened and a scowl came on his face", denoting that he defensively acts tells us he is a star player. Could Francis win the table tennis tournament? Surely somebody would give Francis a hard match?

Cormier now creates tension to the chapter as "Louis Arabelle had also been winning" this makes the reader feel like they want to

read on and find out who will win!

"Both of us undefeated", the word "undefeated" has connotations of a champion, a winner and a hero! This again, links back to when Francis was in the war, the word hero.

Surely Francis is a hero. Cormier uses this short sentence to create tension between Francis and Louis.

The tension rises even more as Cormier uses ~~defeating~~ "catching me off balance". This sentence also creates tension as everyone knows that Francis and Louis are unbeatable and they are fighting to win! "catching" has connotations of secretly and playing sneakily. This questions the reader into thinking will Francis win?

At the end of the page Francis shows the after effects when he has won. Francis is so happy and because he has just won his ~~mind~~^{body} is still functioning as if he is playing. This quote proves it, "my heart beating furiously, blood pumping joyously" the two adjectives "furiously" and "joyously" both explain what it feels like to know ~~the~~^{that} Francis has

won. It is an overwhelming feeling for Francis to know he is now a champion

Alltogether, Francis has been very dedicated to his table tennis, we as readers can see how good Francis gets because Cormier uses lots of tension, to draw the readers in and get their attention.



ResultsPlus Examiner Comments

A perceptive response with detailed interpretation of language. This response was awarded 15 out of 16 marks, a Band 5 response.



ResultsPlus Examiner Tip

Notice how the response offers word-level analysis of language and links comments about context closely to the analysis of the text.

This is the first part of a response to Question 5 (a).

Steinbeck uses this extract to show how defensive Crooks is. He introduces Crooks character who is so fearful of rejection he automatically puts up a guard to protect himself. However Steinbeck presents him as being very proud and independent.

~~Even~~ Crooks is very defensive when Lennie first comes into his room, before Lennie even has a chance to speak he is attacking. 'Crooks said sharply', The ^{adverb} ~~adjective~~ 'sharply' suggests he is trying to cut into Lennie with his words, make him feel weak and back down. He wants Lennie to be afraid. This could give the reader an uncomfortable feeling, feeling as they shouldn't be there reading about Crooks up tight character.

'Crooks was a proud, aloof man.', the underlined adjectives implies Crooks no longer cares what anybody thinks, he happy with who he is. Even though it seems like nobody else does; he is happy with his skin colour. He knows that he is a better person. However

a slight sense of ~~agge~~ arrogance is present as he might not be as good as he thinks. The reader may feel as if he is a confident character but also may feel intimidated.



ResultsPlus
Examiner Comments

There is a sound understanding of the text and the writer's ideas with clear reference to the extract to support the response. This was awarded 6 marks out of 16, a Band 2 response.



ResultsPlus
Examiner Tip

A more detailed explanation of how the writer uses language would have improved this response and moved it into band 3.

This is a less successful response to Question 5 (a).

The language influences our view on the character by using emotive language mostly. Crooks is come across as a very lonely guy, which is one of the main themes in the book. 'a scowl on his face' The adverb 'scowl' implies that he isn't a very happy person. When someone scowls we think of seeing something we don't like, in this case it's when Lennie walks in the room which suggests that Crooks doesn't like other people. Lennie doesn't realise this and tries to make friends with him. 'smiled helplessly in an attempt to make friends' the adjective 'helplessly' implies that he's scared of Crooks. Crooks obviously gives the impression of a intimidating guy if ~~the~~ Lennie look 'helplessly'

Another one of the main themes is shown in this extract, marginalisation. 'cause I'm black' this is a good example of the theme because at the time America was separated ~~from~~ ^{into} whites and blacks. And this was carried out in the ranch, Crooks had a separate bunk to the rest of the workers. 'I ain't wanted in the bunk house.'

language is used to show just how bad segregation was at this time had been. Steinbeck uses certain words to imply the past events, 'halter chains' the noun 'chains' suggests that Steinbeck is trying to bring up the past, when slavery was a big thing to the world.



ResultsPlus
Examiner Comments

There is generally sound understanding with mostly clear reference to the extract. This was awarded 3 out of 16 marks, a Band 1 response.



ResultsPlus
Examiner Tip

Make sure you correctly identify language terms and try to make comments on why the writer chose particular words.

This is a complete response to Question 5 (b), using the extract when Curley's wife attacks Crooks.

b) In another part of the novel, towards the end of section four, Curley's wife acts viciously towards Crooks; a clear reminder that even in 1930s America, a white woman (especially one who is married) has far more rights and is higher upon the social status, than ever a black man.

Firstly, Curley's wife treats Crooks in a bitter and mean way, "She closed on him". The past tense verb "closed" insinuates that there is and never will be, hope for Crooks, and he will never be treated as equals with the other white ranch men. Steinbeck writes this to perhaps highlight

the meanness of women in this era. What is more, the speech from Curley's wife: "I could get you strung up on a tree so easy it ain't even funny", reprimands and further insinuates that even white women have more rights than black men. However, the modal verb, "could", suggests that Curley's wife has anticipated doing it, but probably never would. The repetitious name-calling of Crooks, "Nigger" shows that even she, a woman that Steinbeck gives no name to, relishes in the discrimination and prejudice given to Crooks. A few paragraphs forward, Curley's wife is described as, "waiting"; perhaps because she continually wants to assert the fact that she is of a higher social status, and enjoys bringing him further down, so, "she could whip at him again", with the verb, "whip" ironically being played to sound like what the slaves endured shortly before Steinbeck's time. This may make the reader feel extremely uncomfortable at someone who could be so bitter and nasty to someone else because of their skin colour.

As well as this, Crooks' response is somewhat diminutive and portrayed as commonly done. Crooks is seen as, "toneless"; "with, "no personality", and, "reduced himself to nothing". This highlights the terrible fact that, even as he tried to build up high defences to

withstand such harshness, he still cannot ignore what she said. "Crooks seemed to grow smaller" gives the impact that, as Steinbeck juxtaposes, "grow" and "smaller", he is trying to disappear away from all the discrimination in society. The comparative "smaller" suggests he is ~~is~~ maybe trying to hide, or diminish himself from the severity and reality of the world. This makes the reader feel very sympathetic towards Crooks.

Furthermore, Candy's surprising response offers little hope to Crooks, as when he feels that everybody discriminates against him, he at least has someone else on his side. Candy tries to reiterate the prospect of Curley's wife lying for Crooks to get lynched: "We'd tell you about framin' Crooks." The contracted modal verb and third person plural pronoun of "We'd" signifies that Crooks has someone who is trying to help him, even if he does not want to receive it dutifully. All this may make the reader feel somewhat relieved that there may be hope for Crooks against Curley's wife.

In conclusion, this extract highlights the deep harshness of life in 1930s America, especially at a time when racism was very common. Also, Steinbeck tries to capture the time of his era in this book, even

though it is portrayed a little pessimistically. Crooks' input in the phantasmagoric dream is snatched away too, even before ^{of the} aforementioned scene when Curley's wife arrives, he knows deep down that there is no hope for a black man in that era.



ResultsPlus Examiner Comments

A full response which demonstrates a consistently perceptive understanding of the text, ideas and language. There is sophisticated analysis of language. This was awarded full marks: 24 out of 24, Band 5.



ResultsPlus Examiner Tip

Notice how this response consistently focuses on language using word-level analysis and makes mature and thoughtful comments about context that are closely linked with the language of the extract.

This is an extract from a response to Question 5 (b), using the part where Curley's wife attacks Crooks.

wife knows she has authority over him just because she is white and he is coloured. 'Well, you keep your place, Nigger.' This use of the down-grading ~~adjective~~ ^{expletive} 'Nigger' shows she knows what to say to really upset him. The fact she separates him from the others by calling him this really hits him hard! The reader feels disappointed and sorrow.

Another point Curley's wife makes is 'I could get you strung up on a tree so

easy it ain't even funny.' The use of the modal verb 'could' suggests Curley's wife knows what authority she has and she is certain she can do it. Also it comes across as very threatening towards Crooks. He ~~hasn't~~ has not done anything wrong but he is having his life put on the line because he has stuck up for himself. This gives the reader a strong dislike to Curley's wife.

~~From~~ It could be argued that Crooks is so hurt by what has been said he feels empty. 'Crooks reduced himself to nothing. There was no personality, no ego - nothing to arouse either like or dislike.' The personal pronoun 'himself' suggest he has listened to what Curley's wife has said and he has taken it on board. All his life he has been told he is worthless and useless and now he's finally starting to think of himself. He's like an empty shell, he has no value and he is not need for anything. This makes the reader feel as if they should not of been so harsh on

Crooks and should not of been so quick to judge him.

He is so scared of one person ~~he now~~ ~~speaks~~ ~~his~~ his voice is 'toneless'. The adjective shows how empty he is, he is like a blank page with nothing on. He feels ~~as~~ as if he has no rights to speak with feeling. He just speaks the words that answers the question. He feels as if he should only speak when he is spoken to. This gives readers the reader a sense of pain, that people actually used to treat people like that. The thought of this sickens them.



ResultsPlus Examiner Comments

A thorough and sustained personal response with a good understanding of how language is used. The points made are fully developed. The response was awarded 13 out of 24 marks, Band 3.



ResultsPlus Examiner Tip

When thinking about the language features of an extract, make sure you consider why you think the writer has chosen particular words, phrases or images.

This is part of a response to Question 5 (b), using the part where Crooks tells Lennie about his past.

Crooks does ~~miss~~ ^{miss} as he is confident and eager to tell Lennie about how he has been treated. Furthermore, he does this as he has never told anyone his personal and past life. Hence the reason for coming closer to Lennie as he still wants it to remain a secret. The reader may feel ~~guilt~~ ^{eager} to hear ~~his~~ ^{his} ~~past life and how different or similar it may be to ours.~~

Crooks went on explaining "The white kids come to play with at our place, an' sometimes I want to play with them, and some of them was pretty nice. My ol' man didn't like that. But I know now." Crooks is contrasting his childhood to the present, ~~now~~ ^{now}. The adjective "pretty" shows that he had respect for some of the white people back then but now he thinks that there is no other white person that is nice. The reason for him to think like this is because of the ranch workers and ranch owners. He has been forced to think and judge every one ~~exactly the same as~~ ^{exactly the same as} one person. The reader must feel sorrow and guilt as he has had a hard life compared to everyone else on the ranch.



ResultsPlus
Examiner Comments

There is sound understanding of the text and ideas but the response lacks full development of language points. It was awarded 7 out of 24 marks, Band 2.



ResultsPlus
Examiner Tip

Make sure to comment on the writer's use of language and focus on using short quotations to support points made.

Question 6

Rani and Sukh

There were only a few responses to this text so examiners' comments are limited.

- a) There was a very strong sense of engagement with text and sympathy with Rani. There were some quite able responses although a couple wrote more about Rani's attitude to Divy. Students were able to identify and comment on the violent words and there were many comments on Divy's dominance.
- b) There were appropriate choices of extracts e.g. where Rani's father questions her about having no work to do. Students were able to identify how Bali Rai shows how Rani is treated and make some reasonable comments. Occasionally the responses focused on how Divy treats Sukh especially in the final part of the book, and so lost focus on the task.

Question 7

Riding The Black Cockatoo

This text was offered by too few students to permit any general comment.

Question 8

To Kill a Mockingbird

- a) Students often showed thorough understanding of the text but lacked the ability to focus on and analyse language in any depth. Many commented on the description of the men as 'shadows' and 'shapes' but some did not go any further than this. Most mentioned or explored Atticus's composure in a difficult situation, the atmosphere outside the gaol, and how Scout misjudges the situation. More successful responses looked at how Atticus is presented and recognised the change in Atticus with the arrival of Scout, Jem and Dill and a couple commented on the contrast between Scout's naivety and Jem's understanding. Weaker responses lost focus on the task commenting on context and background of the novel.
- b) The common choices of extract were the attack on Scout and Jem at the end of the book or Mrs Dubose. Those who chose the mad dog or the knot hole were less successful. Better responses were analytical with a secure focus on language. Weaker responses tended to narrate using references to the text to support their narration rather than to comment on language. There were some undeveloped and brief responses.

This is an extract from a response to Question 8 (a).

The language used by Atticus influences my view of the lynch mob as the pleasant and calm questions of "Indeed? Why so?" and "Do you really think so?" shows his desperation to keep the situation calm as he is outnumbered by men who "smell of stale whiskey". As Atticus is normally shown as a reasoned man throughout the novel his "trembling" fingers indicate that for once he is truly frightened and doesn't believe that he is able to solve the incident without violence.

Scout's retrospective perspective of the novel influences our view as through her childhood perspective she is unaware of the severity of the situation. Even as a child, Scout is able to draw meaning from Atticus as she figures out "somebody's man would get jumped but little does she know that it was close to being her father. Scout's retrospective perspective means that as a reader, we are able to understand what Scout couldn't at the time.

Finally the ~~off~~ anonymity of the members of the Lynch mob influence my view of the event as it is unclear as to who these people are, which in a small town like Maycomb where everyone knows everyone else, is terrifying as we do not know of their characteristics. In the case of "Shadows became substance as light revealed solid shapes moving towards the jail door" it induces fear as shadows are what we fear in our dreams yet they are now people who we don't know. Also the shadows indicate darkness and so introduces terror by the way of the sublime as what we cannot see is in fact scarier than what we can as our imaginations can run wild.



ResultsPlus Examiner Comments

A response which shows an assured understanding of text and ideas with some assured language comments. This was awarded 11 out of 16 marks, Band 4.



ResultsPlus Examiner Tip

For a band 5 response, comments could have been developed yet more fully so as to demonstrate a really perceptive grasp.

This is an extract from the same candidate's response to Question 8 (b), using the extract when Scout and Jem are attacked by Bob Ewell.

Harper Lee creates terror in the language used to describe this challenging situation through introducing the sudden realisation that "He was running, running towards us with no child's steps." This language shows that this challenge is not like anything else that Jem and Scout have faced before and suddenly turns what they thought to be a child's prank into a very serious situation.

The lack of dialogue in this extract besides from "Run, Scout! Run! Run!" and "Jem, Jem, help me, Jem!" also supplies an unnatural feel to the challenging situation as the silence is very foreboding and when combined with the darkness at this time is like something of a nightmare come alive and so as a reader we are very much kept in the dark and are unaware of what is happening to Jem and Scout.

The retrospective narrative used by Harper Lee to explain these events ~~at~~ allows the reader to understand the challenge that Jem and Scout were facing. Scout says "I thought, Jem's up" shows her childlike innocence yet as an adult she looks back and says "one's mind works very slowly at times" which shows the duality of the situation ~~as~~ because as a child she is unable to comprehend what is actually going on around her.

Jem's role in this challenging situation is as a protector to Scout and so when "he was up like lightning" we know that what was first a very child-like situation, is now very dangerous. However in ~~this case~~ all the confusion it slowly dawns to Scout, "that there were now four people under the tree." This language is effectively used to finally reveal to the reader what was actually going on.



ResultsPlus
Examiner Comments

A good personal response with a wide range of points with assured comments. The response was awarded 18 out of 24 marks, Band 4.



ResultsPlus
Examiner Tip

Note the pertinent selection of references to support the points and the assured comments the candidate makes.

Question 9

'Life for today's teenagers is better than ever!'

Many examiners commented that they saw a good range of responses which were engaging and enjoyable to read.

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

The majority of the students thought that life was better and many focused on technological development as the reason for this. Some students focused rather too much on technology rather than teenagers, sometimes losing focus on the purpose of the article. Interestingly many students identified education and especially the changes to exams as the biggest problem for teenagers today. Some students adopted the voice of an adult effectively. The majority showed a clear awareness of audience and purpose and the responses were sustained. Better students had sustained and focused ideas with a strong register. Weaker students had problems with register and audience and some struggled to find convincing ideas.

AO4(iii) (Spelling, punctuation and grammar).

There was some technically assured writing with a range of sentence structures and punctuation but sometimes extensive and ambitious vocabulary was not always matched by technical accuracy.

Examiners commented on the usual range of errors – misuse of apostrophes, comma splicing, lack of sentence control, problems with spelling and homophones and problems with capitalising the first person pronoun.

This is the first part of a response to Question 9.

Do you agree that life for today's teenagers is better than ever? With all of today's modern technology and countless reality tv shows - how hard do the teenagers today really have it? Personally, I think they have it quite rough. School and university is much more harder than years before and teenagers now are under a significant amount of pressure. Many young people today are also ~~un~~addicted obsessed with

self image / body image. Is that really healthy? Well, you can't really blame them with all of the magazines around. It is said that 1 out of every 3 girls have an eating disorder. Life of a teenager can be rough. Money to get into university is so much more expensive than what it was before hand, subsequently, many more young people are launched into debt. Drugs and alcohol rates for teenagers have rose up to more than 15% over the last 2 years; which can led to depression and severe anxiety in later life.



ResultsPlus
Examiner Comments

The ideas are appropriate with a clear sense of purpose and audience. There are no obvious paragraphs but there is a sense of organisation. Mark: 5 out of 16, Band 2.

There are occasional slips but some ambitious vocabulary. Mark: 4 out of 8, Band 2.



ResultsPlus
Examiner Tip

It is important to organise your work clearly with the use of appropriate paragraphing.

This is the first part of a lively response to Question 9.

Sat at home planning your future? Telling all your mates what you're going to be when you're ~~old~~ older? Well ~~you~~ you ~~STOP!~~ STOP! You clearly haven't experienced the amazing life of a teenager.

First of all, Puberty? I mean, come on. Nothing is better than growth spurts and voices breaking. One minute you're 4ft 7", ~~the next~~ the next, you're nearly 6ft. ~~Yes~~ Yes, that's right folks 6 FEET TALL! And what could be better than going from a high pitch voice, to a low pitch voice. Then back to a high pitch voice. Then back to a low pitch voice. Here's the fun never ends!

So, I bet you're thinking, "surely nothing could be better than that". Well you're wrong! Just wait until I tell you about ~~ex - wait for it - AMS!~~ ex - wait for it - AMS! That's right, I ~~haven't had so much fun in my life. Exams are just the best.~~ haven't had so much fun in my life. Exams are just the best.

First of all, you'll be sitting at home revising whilst your mates are outside playing footy. Second, you sit in a huge, freezing cold sports hall, ~~debbbbb~~ writing about a novel - no wait, - novella for 1 hour and 45 minutes! I've got to tell you. ~~That 1 hour and 45 minutes, was the best hour and 45 minutes of my life!~~

However, once you've done all of your exams, you're pretty much going out to party and all that boring junk. Unless... Yep! RE-SITS! re-sitting an exam is even better than the first exam. Mainly because you'll be paying £20+ to get the same A* you got before. But also because you'll be getting to go back, and sit in the freezing cold sports hall again!



ResultsPlus Examiner Comments

An amusing and assured response strongly focused on audience and purpose with a strong register. Mark: 11 out of 16, Band 4. There are some errors which do not impede meaning. Mark 6 out of 8, Band 2.



ResultsPlus Examiner Tip

Note the strong sense of audience and lively style.

Question 10

Complaining about a holiday

This was the more popular task.

Generally examiners enjoyed reading these responses. It was clear that students engaged with the task – they knew about holidays and they knew how to complain.

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

The differentiator in this task tended to quality of vocabulary and expression of ideas as the material covered by most students was similar. Better responses were lively, engaging and often humorous with a strong register. e.g. '...ambushed by predatory party animals constantly shouting "Conga"'. Rhetorical questions were often used effectively. The tone adopted by most students was appropriate and showed a real awareness of audience and the need for formality. Many students successfully adopted the voice of an adult. Weaker responses tended to lose focus on audience and purpose or had unrealistic content. The majority of the students complained about fairly predictable things – the flight, accommodation, food and facilities in an appropriate fashion, but some examiners thought students used rather absurd examples of problems encountered e.g. monkeys in the bathroom.

AO4(iii): Spelling, punctuation and grammar:

Similar points were made by examiners to those on Question 9.

This is an extract from a response to Question 10.

Firstly, the food, drinks and service
-staff- were appalling! Do the
staff not think to wash their
plates? I was horrified when I
picked up a bit of chicken that
already had a bite taken out of
it! The drinks were consistently
flat (and that's the last thing you
need in the baking heat, don't you think?)
The staff were so ~~not~~ reliable, I
had to ask them several times to

bring me one drink! I am especially furious at the fact that you sold me this holiday convincing me how brilliant the staff are!

Secondly, you personally promised us a FREE cruise on our third day. And do you know what? The hotel didn't even do cruises, they weren't even near the sea! I am mortified with your lies to persuade us to go on this disastrous holiday. Also, where was the 'massive' pool that was so supposedly nice and relaxing? Oh yes it wasn't there! In stead, there was the smallest grottiest pool I have ever laid eyes on. I can't even explain how disappointed my children were.



ResultsPlus
Examiner Comments

The ideas are effective and sustained.
Mark: 9 out of 16, Band 3.
The writing is accurate with occasional slips. Mark: 6 out of 8, Band 2.



ResultsPlus
Examiner Tip

Note the secure and sustained sense of purpose and awareness of how to address the intended audience.

On arrival, the nightmare continued. Our clothes ended up in Benidorm and my other essentials in Majorca! I do not know why but, to be completely honest, I get the feeling that your agency wanted me on a 'young mans' holiday. I tell you now, I am too old for such adventures. We finally, arrived at our 'luxury' resort and within two days our bags had arrived. I congratulate you on such an achievement for it seems to be the only thing you managed to impress with for the entire two weeks!

We met our activities advisor and sorted out what was taking place throughout our stay, we told him our age and physical state while he handled the rest.

Our first activity: boring, sad and really quite depressing. It consisted of 2 hours of watching a random Malay 'entertainment'. We sat and watched and simultaneously fell asleep! We met with our advisor

and simply stated 'We're old but not dead!' This was probably our biggest and only mistake for because I am pretty he tried to kill us for our next activity.

Activity number two: ~~is~~ dreadful, dangerous and destructive. Banana boating? Our advisor seriously thought that banana boating madness a good idea for me and my wife who has an apparently dangerous hip replacement; Dangerous for her! As I previously stated I strongly believe that my dearest Margaret and I could've died that day.



ResultsPlus

Examiner Comments

A compelling response with a strong and consistent focus on audience and purpose with mature control.
Mark: 14 out of 16, Band 5.

The writing is accurate with only occasional slips.
Mark: 7 out of 8, Band 3.



ResultsPlus

Examiner Tip

Note the confident tone and the strong sense of audience and purpose.

Paper summary

While the unusual nature of this examination meant that students' work only occasionally reached the highest standard, the best students showed careful preparation and a strong personal response to the prose texts, dealing clearly with the language of the given extract, as well as on the presentation of character and ideas.

In their writing, students demonstrated the ability to write with a clear sense of audience and purpose with effective ideas.

Based on their performance on this paper, students are offered the following advice.

Students should ensure that in Section A (Reading), they:

- engage in a sustained manner with the writer's use of language and its effects and avoid just mentioning language features ('feature spotting').
- choose an appropriate extract for part (b) that enables them to explore language fully in relation to the writer's presentation of ideas, themes or characters
- ensure that comments on context are always focused on the task.
- avoid slipping into narrative instead of analysing the text.

In Section B (Writing), they should:

- address the audience, which was clearly specified in the two questions
- develop effective ideas, presenting them coherently in a sustained response
- use a range of sentences, correctly punctuated, and check work for common errors.

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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