

Moderators' Report/
Principal Moderator Feedback

November 2013

Pearson Edexcel GCSE in English and
English Language (5EH01)
English Today

Edexcel and BTEC Qualifications

Edexcel and BTEC qualifications are awarded by Pearson, the UK's largest awarding body. We provide a wide range of qualifications including academic, vocational, occupational and specific programmes for employers. For further information visit our qualifications websites at www.edexcel.com or www.btec.co.uk. Alternatively, you can get in touch with us using the details on our contact us page at www.edexcel.com/contactus.

Pearson: helping people progress, everywhere

Pearson aspires to be the world's leading learning company. Our aim is to help everyone progress in their lives through education. We believe in every kind of learning, for all kinds of people, wherever they are in the world. We've been involved in education for over 150 years, and by working across 70 countries, in 100 languages, we have built an international reputation for our commitment to high standards and raising achievement through innovation in education. Find out more about how we can help you and your students at: www.pearson.com/uk

November 2013

Publications Code UG037427

All the material in this publication is copyright

© Pearson Education Ltd 2013

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>

General Overview:

Centres and students have a choice of two themes to answer that are set by Edexcel. For 2013-2014 these are 'Children's Literature' and 'Online Social Networking' and this was the first series using these themes.

For Reading students must complete one reading task individually and following their preparation they have up to two hours to complete the task. The response must be a written response of up to 1000 words. For the chosen theme students select two texts from the six Edexcel texts provided and prepare by making notes and planning their response to the task. Three texts are paper-based and three are digital, i.e. intended to be read on screen.

The reading response must show that students can:

- make comparisons between two texts
- select appropriate details from two texts to support their ideas
- explore how writers use presentation and language to communicate their ideas and perspectives in two texts.

In Writing students must complete one writing task from a choice of two on their chosen theme. Following their preparation they have up to two hours to complete the task and their response must be an individual written response of up to 1000 words.

The writing response must show that students can:

- make choices in writing that are appropriate to audience and purpose
- spell, punctuate and use grammatical structures that are accurate and appropriate for purpose and effect.

This was the seventh series of Unit 1 and all students coped well with the demands of the assessment. The majority of students had been well prepared by centres for this component and engaged well with the given tasks and texts. Both topics were well received by students, being accessible and within their experience and these provided students with opinions, experience and knowledge which helped in the writing tasks.

Students engaged well with both accessible themes and their chosen tasks and texts. Some centres entered both themes and some smaller centres seemed to have successfully let students choose their tasks and texts individually.

Feedback on Marking:

Both themes were evident although Online Social Networking was slightly more popular. For the Children's Literature theme the most popular chosen texts were the interview with Roald Dahl and the Children's Book Week webpage. All texts had been studied across centres seen. Centres focused mainly on comparing Roald Dahl and Children's Book Week, especially for low ability students. For the Social Networking theme the most popular texts were the Internet Safety Film 'Where's Klaus', the Childline webpage and the Childnet Leaflet. The Kansas State article and the Mail Online article were also popular, with only a few students choosing to study the Facebook page. For the first time all texts were used in both themes and students were encouraged to respond to the video text. In the writing task for the Children's Literature theme, there was a fairly even split between writing a leaflet to persuade parents and a podcast review. There were some creative responses to the leaflet where issues such as encouraging reading and parents reading with children were covered, and some leaflets on using e-books were innovative and interesting. In Social Networking the article and leaflet were fairly evenly balanced. The articles and leaflets showed very good knowledge of a variety of online safety topics including cyber bullying, reasons to use social networks and in some cases why they are a good idea as well as a bad one. It was clear the students enjoyed writing about their ideas.

Overall, while there was evidence that centres are encouraging comparison it is still the key assessment issue in this unit, despite it being the most established controlled assessment unit. As last time very few students failed to compare. In many centres it was obviously the focus of the teaching, but still in many cases there were spurious comparisons, or students making a wide variety of comments about e.g. all elements of language or presentation before making a comparison. In some centres the structure of

the responses across the sample got in the way of focussed comparisons. The vast majority of students were most confident when writing about writers' ideas/perceptions. Again detailed language analysis was generally lacking. Image was less successful overall, though in some centres it was excellent. Teachers' comments often showed a generous interpretation of the AOs especially bands 4 and 5. At the higher bands quality of comparison in Bands 4 and 5 very often did not match the quality of the rest of the response. There appeared to be more specific comparisons this year, quite possibly due to more focused teaching of this aspect, but in a number of centres, students weren't really getting to grips with the detailed analysis that is required for a Band 4 response in this area. Specific comparisons only, e.g. 'In a similar manner, an authoritative tone is also evident throughout the Browne article' and 'Meanwhile Dahl seeks to inform and advise the reader rather than persuade them' can be awarded at the bottom of Band 4, but not at the top end. There were very few students who were able to make discriminating comparisons even though there were some perceptive and insightful comments made about individual texts. In few cases comparisons were insightful, e.g. 'In comparison to the personal perspective in the Dahl website, Browne's perspective is moulded and guided by the interviewer'. At the top end there were some students who produced excellent pieces of analysis of two texts, but where the marks given did not reflect the key part of the task, which is comparison. Some students again had sound comparisons (Band 3) while other bullet points were Band 5, and this needed to be reflected in the marks given.

Sound comparison was very evident in all responses that were comparative, but often over-rewarded. An example of some comparison is 'The presentation of the two pieces of text are very different from one another'. Sound comparison is 'In both texts there is basic, clear and easy to read fonts', 'The two texts have different audiences'. These could be about any text. In quite a few cases marks at the top end were inflated because all bullets had been marked at Band 5 with sound comparisons. There were many cases where the assessment indicated by annotations and summative comments was very accurate, but the numerical marks did not reflect these comments and in some cases were fixed just into a grade boundary from

the June 2013 series, especially at C and A. For example 'Some sound comparison' was accurately assessed but given a mark at the top of Band 3 rather than the bottom, 'some specific comparison' given a mark at the top of Band 4 rather than the bottom of the band or top of Band 3. The summative comments mostly were accurate, though for example one did identify that there were 'some sound comparisons' which would indicate top Band 2 or bottom Band 3, awarded top Band 3.

Sound comparisons such as 'Both of the texts appeal effectively to their audiences' and 'both texts use images to great effect' were seen across the scripts. This series it was noted that there were students who had been taught to use discourse markers such as 'On the other hand', 'whereas', and 'however' to start statements which were not comparisons. Centres need to ensure that students are genuinely making comparisons between texts rather than starting a statement about a text with a comparative term. Whilst any texts can be compared centres need to differentiate these to suit the ability of their students. Centres did a cross section of all the social networking texts but the Childline one seemed to be the most popular. There were some particularly good comments on the images and presentation of the Childline text for social networking. Surprisingly, most centres who did the 'Where's Klaus' text gave disappointing responses on images and presentation. There was so much to say here, but students seemed to gloss over any detailed analysis of the text, in most cases just commenting on the dialogue with the images, and even then with little real detail. Students who responded to the Children's Literature texts did so with interest and enthusiasm and compared the images and presentation thoughtfully and with insight.

When assessing students' work, centres are only sometimes looking to analyse how well the response shows a comparative understanding of two texts, preferring instead to justify their assessment on the secondary aspects of the mark scheme, such as 'writer's perspective', and 'understanding of presentational devices'; these descriptors were easily the most common annotations on scripts. This generally resulted in generous marking as most students can make sound and sometimes thorough or

perceptive comments on the perspectives of writers and their use of language and presentational devices, but not as many can do this as part of a consistently comparative discourse.

Centre application of the marking criteria for the writing task was more accurate and it was clear that centres are more comfortable with the demands of the writing task which were familiar to teachers and students. Centres need to be aware that task setting is vital and that students should be primarily rewarded for the ideas and sense of purpose and audience, the top two bullets in the criteria. The main problem with writing was where the writing task had not been completed on the coversheet or on the student work. The completion of accurate task titles is essential as it can impact on the student's achievement of purpose and audience. Some task titles were incorrect, e.g. 'Writing to persuade about social networking' is not the task set. The marks for writing showed consistency, although they could be a little generous given some pedestrian voice and essay-like organisation, particularly in the leaflets. Audience and sense of purpose are key features for this task.

Students who responded to the Social Networking article task generally showed knowledge of how to construct this type of text and were able to organise points accordingly, although there were many repeated ideas. The best responses were where students attempted to persuade people to avoid social networking, often by highlighting the negative aspects! These responses often included lots of facts and figures and anecdotes of affected and traumatised adolescents! However, if there is one criticism to be made for this task it was that many students did not really make it clear from whose viewpoint they were writing and consequently, 'the voice' was not always as convincing or clear as it could have been. Where the task is to persuade from a specific point of view this needs to be clear.

The leaflet tasks seemed a more popular choice with lower ability students. There were a couple of issues that this gave rise to, most notably that many responses were similar in both what points were made and how these points were structured and organised, and also with not addressing the audience

of parents more directly, which in turn affected the assessment focus, 'sense of purpose and audience'. In terms of similar points made, this would suggest that the task was heavily teacher-led, and thus potentially inhibiting original ideas and students' notes were in the form of a paragraph plan.

Assessment criteria for AO3iii were applied consistently in most cases, although as with previous series it did tend to vary across centres as to whether it was generous or harsh, particularly between Bands 2-4 where some were harshly marked while some were too generous, especially in relation to punctuation and sentences. For high achieving students in Bands 4 and 5, there was a tendency to award 6/7 marks where there was clearly not enough evidence of using punctuation devices with precision and sophistication, and for deliberate effect, whilst in some centres there was a clear reluctance to award 7 marks if only minor errors had occurred. Some centres did not accurately assess marks for spelling, giving marks for 'mostly accurate' spelling when there were frequent errors.

Comparison is the core part of the reading question and that this should underpin all other parts of the reading response. Comparison is a key skill in this section of the paper. Centres need to be aware that the rule of thumb is that comparison fixes the mark in a band and then the quality of the other bullets determines the mark within the band. There remained some difficulties with assessment albeit with a very small number of centres, where assessment objectives were not met. Centres had all used the correct series for the date of entry, which is an improvement on the last three series. There was evidence of internal moderation but centres still need further guidance on this as occasionally they inflated marks with no rationale, or did not internally moderate the whole required sample which devalues the process. In this series there were again fewer cases of comments on scripts being written to students rather than to the moderator and folders and individual pieces being graded. There was a lot of evidence that centres had marked accurately but then given numerical marks to push the students into what were grade boundaries for F, C and A in June 2013. There was a lot of clustering at these marks.

There were continued difficulties with administration of the moderation process despite reminders and checklists being shared extensively. Some student notes taken into the controlled assessment did not follow awarding body guidelines and had full sentences, paragraphs and teacher structured notes sheets. Some centres did not follow procedures for students with special consideration and did not include JCQ coversheets or indicate whether the students had earned marks themselves for AO3(iii). There was a lot of evidence that centres that had entered in previous had not followed the advice on administration or assessment given in their feedback reports.

Administration

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

- Some centres didn't send their moderation samples
- Some centres sent samples after the deadline. Where the deadline is just after a half term there is a need to make sure these do arrive in time for the deadline.
- Some centres (a minority) did not include any teacher comments at all.
- Some centres did not include the EDI.
- Some record sheets identified the writing task incorrectly which impacts on achievement of purpose and audience.
- Some candidate notes were teacher structured or contained full sentences
- Some use of IT was not within awarding body regulations.
- Some (but a minority of) centres did not send highest and lowest candidate folders.

Pearson Education Limited. Registered company number 872828
with its registered office at Edinburgh Gate, Harlow, Essex CM20 2JE



Llywodraeth Cynulliad Cymru
Welsh Assembly Government

