

Examiners' Report/
Principal Examiner Feedback

Summer 2014

Pearson Edexcel International GCSE
in English Language A (4EA0)
Paper 02R

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Publications Code UG038754

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Overview

IGCSE 4EA0 Paper 2R is a paper lasting one hour and thirty minutes. It is very similar in style and content to the main IGCSE 4EA0 02 Paper 2, but is set for candidates in a different time zone. This is the first session that candidates sat this R paper. Question 1 is a reading question based on the Edexcel Anthology and in June 2014 candidates had to respond to the short story "The Necklace". Question 2 is a writing question and candidates have to complete one written piece from a choice of three. The choices for June 2014 were the text of talk to a teenage audience about the influence of role models, a letter to a newspaper about how to protect the environment and a creative piece entitled "All's Well That Ends Well".

This was considered to be a fair paper which any candidate who had covered the syllabus should have been able to tackle confidently. The indications are that the paper worked in a similar way to the main R paper. Because of the time zone difference, a higher proportion of the students who sat the R paper had English as an additional language. This does not appear to have had a significant impact on their performance, although some candidates' writing was affected by the fact that they were writing in a second, or even third, language.

Reading

Question 1

Excellent knowledge of the text was shown generally. There was some very good engagement and identification with themes and events, especially concerning moral issues presented and pity created for Monsieur Loisel. Many candidates wrote in a developed way about the character of Madame Loisel. There was evidence of strong knowledge of techniques employed to present ideas overall, with tasks distinguished by depth of commentary and varying degrees of specificity. Weaker answers however, tended to paraphrase, showing limited engagement at all; others listed features of presentation with no commentary. On the whole, many responses seen were level 3, with low level 3 responses showing sound engagement with themes, but repeatedly and too briefly calling features 'interesting' without specific explanation or elaboration as to how such techniques would interest readers. Stronger (level 4/5) answers explained, explored and evaluated points thoroughly. Stronger responses made mature points about structure, such as patterns, contrasts and climax. They also discussed the overall style, such as whether it was moralistic or realistic and so on. Such answers dealt with the use of irony as well as genre, such as identifying echoes of fairy tales and even context, reflecting on the social values of the age, hierarchies and so on.

Writing

Question 2a

The text of the talk on role models was a popular one. There were some common grammatical errors which concerned tenses, the use of plurals and word omissions. This may have been because a significant number of the candidates seemed not to have English as a first language. There was not much

variety of punctuation overall. Most responses showed clarity of purpose and logical formulation of points and ideas. Overall, candidates found this to be a very accessible and engaging task. Lower level answers were a little monotone, more essay-like and showed fewer oratorical qualities. The strongest responses showed great rhetorical skill and good involvement of audience. Higher end answers demonstrated greater crafting of language, employing varied sentence lengths and evocative vocabulary. More powerful responses used illustrative examples rather than just listing general ideas and varied between self-reflection and discussion of general concerns to show their own engagement and consideration of universal issues.

Question 2b

The task requiring candidates to write a letter advising newspaper readers about how the environment can be protected produced some very interesting responses. One of the strengths in evidence was the knowledge about the subject matter shown by the candidates. Again, there were some common grammatical errors involving the use of tenses, subject/verb agreement and word omission. There also needed to be a greater variety of punctuation overall. Most candidates displayed a generally strong sense of purpose, but some weaker responses advised a newspaper on its journalistic practice (rather than readers), whilst some explained problems without advising about solutions. Some did not get the balance right, explaining problems in too much depth and then only briefly advising of strategies to overcome these. Stronger responses showed a very strong grasp of structure with sharp openings and definitive conclusions. A really impressive range of ideas was demonstrated collectively; students are very informed about and engaged by environmental issues including scientific and statistical evidence. Stronger responses exhibited a vast breadth and range of different solutions within their own work; several wrote of local concerns specific to them (for example, local tree planting schemes). Answers at the higher end were highly convincing and showed real maturity with strong use of counter-argument and pre-emption of audience's attitudes and current behaviour to explain how to reform and overcome resistance to their proposed reforms.

Question 2c

There was a good variety of punctuation seen in the responses to this creative task. Despite some students' tasks seen initially which seemed to struggle to work towards this given end, ultimately, sound ability was exhibited overall to shape narratives with logical plotting of events and sound structures. Varied ability to develop characters fully was also displayed. There were generally strong openings and development, but weaker responses tended to tack on the phrase hastily at the end. Some candidates tried to cover too many plot events, to the detriment of building up character and atmosphere. There was, on the whole a broad range of original ideas. It appears that no really derivative examples and there were some very diverse approaches to the topic. The strongest example seen was highly creative and unrealistic in the sense that it was based on a monster; more experimental approaches seemed to have greater impact. Level 3 responses were generally safely realistic, perhaps containing autobiographical elements, such as teenage central characters and their parents.

