

IGCSE

English Language (Specification A)

Teacher's guide

Edexcel IGCSE in English Language (Specification A) (4EA0)

First examination 2012

Issue 2



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This teacher's guide is Issue 2. We will inform centres of any changes to this issue. The latest issue can be found on the Edexcel website: www.edexcel.com

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Introduction

The Edexcel International General Certificate of Secondary Education (IGCSE) in English Language (Specification A) is designed for schools and colleges. It is part of a suite of IGCSE qualifications offered by Edexcel.

About this Teacher's guide

This Teacher's guide is for teachers who are delivering, or planning to deliver, the Edexcel IGCSE in English Language (Specification A) qualification. The guide supports you in delivering the course content and explains how to raise the achievement of your students; it should be looked at in conjunction with the following publications:

- IGCSE English Language (Specification A) (4EA0) specification
- IGCSE English Language (Specification A) (4EA0) sample assessment materials (SAMs) (which includes the mark schemes)
- The *Edexcel Anthology for IGCSE and Certificate qualifications in English Language and Literature* (available on our website).

The aims of this guide are to:

- expand on the information about course requirements contained within the specification
- explain assessment procedures
- suggest teaching approaches to some of the anthology pieces
- provide examples of course planning.

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Why choose this qualification?

Edexcel IGCSE English Language (Specification A) qualification enables students to:

- develop their understanding of the spoken word and the capacity to participate effectively in a variety of speaking and listening activities
- develop the ability to read, understand and respond to material from a variety of sources, and to recognise and appreciate themes and attitudes and the ways in which writers achieve their effects
- develop the ability to construct and convey meaning in written language, matching style to audience and purpose.

Key features and benefits of the qualification

- Free anthology of reading material available to download at the beginning of the course contains a range of reading material.
- The anthology contents and the examination questions are designed with the needs of an international entry in mind.
- A wide range of reading and writing tasks.
- Two routes for assessment: 100% examination, or 70% examination and 30% coursework (Edexcel-approved teaching institutions only).
- Assessment opportunity in January and June examination series.
- Coursework option includes assessment of Speaking and Listening.
- Gives progression to AS and Advanced GCE in English Language, English Literature or English Language and Literature, or equivalent qualifications.

Go to www.edexcel.com/igcse2009 for more information about this IGCSE and related sources.

Support and training

Edexcel support services

Edexcel has a wide range of support services to help you implement this qualification successfully.

ResultsPlus – ResultsPlus is an application launched by Edexcel to help subject teachers, senior management teams, and students by providing detailed analysis of examination performance. Reports that compare performance between subjects, classes, your centre and similar centres can be generated in 'one-click'. Skills maps that show performance according to the specification topic being tested are available for some subjects. For further information about which subjects will be analysed through ResultsPlus, and for information on how to access and use the service, please visit www.edexcel.com/resultsplus

Ask the Expert – To make it easier for you to raise a query with us online, we have merged our **Ask Edexcel** and **Ask the Expert** services.

There is now one easy-to-use web query form that will allow you to ask any question about the delivery or teaching of Edexcel qualifications. You'll get a personal response, from one of our administrative or teaching experts, sent to the email address you provide.

We'll also be doing lots of work to improve the quantity and quality of information in our FAQ database, so you'll be able to find answers to many questions you might have by searching before you submit the question to us.

Examzone – The Examzone site is aimed at students sitting external examinations and gives information on revision, advice from examiners and guidance on results, including re-marking, re-sitting and progression opportunities. Further services for students – many of which will also be of interest to parents – will be available in the near future. Links to this site can be found on the main homepage at www.examzone.co.uk.

Training

A programme of professional development and training courses, covering various aspects of the specification and examination, will be arranged by Edexcel. Full details can be obtained from our website: www.edexcel.com

Section A: Qualification content

Introduction

- The IGCSE in English Language (Specification A) (4EA0) is based on the legacy Edexcel IGCSE in English Language (4355) which has proved to be an attractive and flexible course.
- The IGCSE in English Language (Specification A) (4EA0) is essentially the same as the legacy Edexcel IGCSE in English Language (4355) in terms of its overall structure, apart from some modifications within the content of the Edexcel Anthology for IGCSE English Language (Specification A) and IGCSE English Literature.
- These changes have been introduced in order to give some new set texts, which have been chosen to add interest and variety for students and centres.
- Due to the introduction of the downloadable anthology, free of charge, centres will have immediate access to the new texts.
- Tiering has been removed from Paper 1. All students will now sit the same examination, removing the need to select a tier of entry some months in advance.
- The IGCSE in English Language (Specification A) (4EA0) comprises two assessment routes:
 - route one – 100% written examination paper (Paper 1 and Paper 2)
 - route two – 70% written examination paper and 30% internally assessed coursework (Paper 1, Paper 3 and Paper 4).
- Paper 1 – is taken by all students, and makes up 70% of the total qualification. The paper is divided into three sections. In Section A students will answer all questions on an unprepared non-fiction reading passage. In Section B students will answer two compulsory questions based on a passage from Section A of the anthology. In Section C one question will be set to test students' ability in writing to **inform, explain, describe**. The anthology must **not** be taken into the examination.
- Paper 2 – is the examination alternative to coursework. Students answer two questions – testing reading and writing. One compulsory reading question will be set on a piece from Section B of the anthology and one writing question from a choice of tasks which focus on the ability to **explore, imagine, entertain** and **argue, persuade, advise**. The anthology must **not** be taken into the examination.
- Paper 3 (Reading and Writing) – is one part of the coursework alternative to 100% examination route of study and must be taken with Paper 4. Paper 3 requires students to complete two assignments (one reading, one writing). The reading assignment must be based on Section B of the anthology. The writing assignment must be a piece of personal and imaginative writing.
- Paper 4 (Speaking and Listening) – taken with Paper 3 completes the coursework alternative to 100% examination route of study. Students complete three assignments (one individual talk, one pair work and one group work).

Section B: Assessment

This section summarises the alternative routes which can be taken: Paper 1 is the compulsory unit; Paper 2 is taken by those opting for the 100% examination route. Those who opt for coursework take Papers 3 and 4 instead of Paper 2.

Two possible assessment routes

Route one – 100% written examination paper (Paper 1 and Paper 2)

- Paper 1 is externally assessed through an examination paper of 2 hours and 15 minutes

AND

- Paper 2 is externally assessed through an examination paper of 1 hour 30 minutes.

Route two – 70% written examination paper and 30% internally assessed coursework (Paper 1, Paper 3 and Paper 4).

Assessment overview

The table below gives a simple overview of the assessment for this course.

We recommend that you make this information available to students to help ensure they are fully prepared and know exactly what to expect in each part of the assessment.

Route One

Paper 1	Percentage	Marks	Time	Availability
English Language (Specification A): Paper code: 4EA0/01 Set and marked by Edexcel Single tier of entry	70%	60 marks	Two hours 15 minutes	January and June examination series First assessment June 2012
Paper 2	Percentage	Marks	Time	Availability
English Language (Specification A): Paper code: 4EA0/02 Set and marked by Edexcel Single tier of entry	30%	30 marks	One hour 30 minutes	January and June examination series First assessment June 2012

Route Two

Paper 1	Percentage	Marks	Time	Availability
<p>English Language (Specification A):</p> <p>Paper code: 4EA0/01</p> <p>Set and marked by Edexcel</p> <p>Single tier of entry</p>	70%	60 marks	Two hours 15 minutes	<p>January and June examination series</p> <p>First assessment June 2012</p>
Paper 3	Percentage	Marks	Time	Availability
<p>English Language (Specification A):</p> <p>Paper code: 4EA0/03</p> <p>Reading and Writing Coursework</p> <p>Two coursework assignments, internally set and assessed and externally moderated by Edexcel</p>	20%	80 marks (40 marks for each assignment)	n/a	<p>June examination series</p> <p>First assessment June 2012</p>
Paper 4	Percentage	Marks	Time	Availability
<p>English Language (Specification A):</p> <p>Paper code: 4EA0/04</p> <p>Speaking and Listening Coursework</p> <p>Three coursework assignments, internally set and assessed and externally moderated by Edexcel.</p>	10%	120 marks (40 marks for each assignment)	n/a	<p>June examination series</p> <p>First assessment June 2012</p>

Assessment Objectives and weightings

Route one

Assessment Objective (AO)	% in IGCSE
AO2: Reading All students will be required to demonstrate an ability to: (i) read and understand texts with insight and engagement (ii) develop and sustain interpretations of writers' ideas and perspectives (iii) understand and make some evaluation of how writers use linguistic and structural devices to achieve their effects.	50%
AO3: Writing All students will be required to demonstrate an ability to: (i) communicate clearly and appropriately, using and adapting forms for different readers and purposes (ii) organise ideas into sentences, paragraphs and whole texts using a variety of linguistic and structural features (iii) use a range of sentence structures effectively, with accurate punctuation and spelling.	50%
TOTAL	100%

Route two

Assessment Objective (AO)	% in IGCSE
<p>AO1: Speaking and listening</p> <p>All students will be required to demonstrate the ability to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) communicate clearly and imaginatively (ii) use standard English appropriately (iii) listen to and understand varied speech (iv) participate in discussion, by both speaking and listening, judging the nature and purposes of contributions and the role of participants. 	10%
<p>AO2: Reading</p> <p>All students will be required to demonstrate an ability to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) read and understand texts with insight and engagement (ii) develop and sustain interpretations of writers' ideas and perspectives (iii) understand and make some evaluation of how writers use linguistic and structural devices to achieve their effects. 	45%
<p>AO3: Writing</p> <p>All students will be required to demonstrate an ability to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) communicate clearly and appropriately, using and adapting forms for different readers and purposes (ii) organise ideas into sentences, paragraphs and whole texts using a variety of linguistic and structural features (iii) use a range of sentence structures effectively, with accurate punctuation and spelling. 	45%
TOTAL	100%

Assessment summary

Route One

Paper 1	Description	Knowledge and skills
<p>English Language (Specification A):</p> <p>Paper 1</p> <p>Paper code: 4EA0/01</p> <p>Two hours, 15 minutes</p>	<p>Structure</p> <p>Students must answer ALL of the questions in Section A, the TWO compulsory questions from Section B and a question from Section C</p> <p>Section A (Reading)</p> <p>Questions on an unprepared non-fiction passage</p> <p>Section B (Reading and Writing)</p> <p>Reading question</p> <p>Based on a passage from Section A of the anthology</p> <p>Writing question</p> <p>A topic based on the passage from Section A of the anthology which was used in the previous question</p> <p>Section C (Writing)</p> <p>A writing question (no choice) to: inform, explain and describe.</p> <p>This is a single tier paper and all questions cover the full range of grades.</p> <p>60 marks overall, 20 for each section.</p> <p>No anthologies or dictionaries are to be taken into the examination</p>	<p>The assessment objectives covered in this assessment are:</p> <p>AO2: 35%</p> <p>AO3: 35%</p>

Paper 2	Description	Knowledge and skills
<p>English Language (Specification A): Paper 2 Paper code: 4EA0/02 One hour, 30 minutes</p>	<p>Reading Question 1: This is on one piece taken from Section B of the anthology</p> <p>Writing Question 2: ONE question from a choice of THREE covering to explore, imagine and entertain to argue, persuade and advise</p> <p>This is a single tier paper and all questions cover the full range of grades 30 marks overall, 15 for each question No anthologies or dictionaries are to be taken into the examination</p>	<p>The assessment objectives covered in this assessment are: AO2: 15% AO3: 15%</p>

Route Two

Paper 1	Description	Knowledge and skills
<p>English Language (Specification A):</p> <p>Paper 1</p> <p>Paper code: 4EA0/01</p> <p>Two hours, 15 minutes</p>	<p>Structure</p> <p>Students must answer ALL of the questions in Section A, the TWO compulsory questions from Section B and the question from Section C</p> <p>Section A (Reading)</p> <p>Questions on an unprepared non-fiction passage</p> <p>Section B (Reading and Writing)</p> <p>Reading question</p> <p>Based on a passage from Section A of the anthology</p> <p>Writing question</p> <p>A topic based on the passage from Section A of the anthology which was used in the previous question</p> <p>Section C (Writing)</p> <p>A writing question (no choice) to: inform, explain and describe.</p> <p>This is a single tier paper and all questions cover the full range of grades. 60 marks overall, 20 for each section.</p> <p>No anthologies or dictionaries are to be taken into the examination</p>	<p>The assessment objectives covered in this assessment are:</p> <p>AO2: 35%</p> <p>AO3: 35%</p>
Paper 3	Description	Knowledge and skills
<p>English Language (Specification A):</p> <p>Reading and Writing Coursework</p> <p>Paper code: 4EA0/03</p>	<p>Two coursework assignments:</p> <p>Unit 1 – a piece of writing responding to Section B of the anthology</p> <p>Unit 2 – a piece of personal and imaginative writing to explore, imagine, entertain or to argue, persuade, advise</p> <p>Internally set and assessed and externally moderated by Edexcel</p> <p>80 marks overall, 40 marks for each assignment.</p>	<p>The assessment objectives covered in this assessment are:</p> <p>AO2: 10%</p> <p>AO3: 10%</p>

Paper 4	Description	Knowledge and skills
English Language (Specification A): Speaking and Listening Coursework Paper code: 4EA0/04	Three coursework assignments: An individual talk A pair work assignment One group work assignment Internally set and assessed and externally moderated by Edexcel 120 marks overall, 40 marks for each assignment.	The assessment objectives covered in this assessment are: AO1: 10%

Examination questions

The following section is intended to give not only a clear indication of what the examination papers will look like, but also to offer practical assistance for preparing students for the demands of the questions. Since the form of the examination is essentially unchanged from the legacy Edexcel IGCSE in English Language (4355), teachers and students will be able to find much relevant material by studying past papers and examiners' reports. There are some new examples which reflect the changes in the anthology selection, as well as examples from the material which was used in the previous specification.

Exemplar examination questions can be seen in the sample assessment materials for Paper 1 and Paper 2; some are quoted in this section. More examples of reading questions are given in this guide on the anthology pieces.

You will note that the quality of the student responses included is often very high (grade A). We recognise that this does not reflect the full range of students' responses. Nevertheless, the reason for including scripts of this quality is to give as clear an idea as possible of what constitutes a really effective answer, which can be of particular value for teaching and discussion. Some grade C responses are also included – with areas that could be improved.

Paper 1

Section A (Reading)

The compulsory questions which assess AO2 Reading are designed to test students' response to an unprepared non-fiction passage. The passage will be drawn from a range of contemporary non-fiction, including autobiography, travel writing, reportage, media articles, letters, diaries and writing which expresses a personal opinion, and the questions will reflect the nature of the passage. The material will be chosen with regard to what is accessible and appropriate for students. The pattern of questioning is short, specific questions followed by a more sustained question drawing on the passage as a whole.

All the Reading objectives will be addressed in the questions in this section. Students will be expected to read the passage carefully and show ability in their answers to respond to the writer's choice of detail, approach to the subject matter and use of techniques. They will also need to be able to interpret the meaning of the passage, including its implications, and be able to quote and make textual references to support their points.

Questions will be phrased to be student-friendly and clear. The shorter questions will be more factually based and the phrasing more structured, straightforward and direct, for example 'What similarities and differences ... does the writer notice?' 'Find four examples of...' The final question in this section will require an overall interpretation, for example: 'Show how the writer is successful in using language to make the situation real to the reader.', 'What indications are there that this is an eyewitness account?'

An example of a passage and accompanying questions can be found in the sample assessment materials.

Section B (Reading question)

This question, which assesses AO2 Reading, is based on students' reading of the selected prose passages from the anthology. Students must answer ONE question on the passage which is specified. Students will be expected to show 'insight and engagement' and to 'develop and sustain interpretation'. Students may be asked explanatory questions, such as: 'Explain how the events were a turning point.' They may also be asked to evaluate character, for example: 'What personal qualities does Karen show in overcoming her difficulties?'

Two typical questions from passages are given below, and indicate the kind of question which may be found in the full range of passages. See the sample assessment materials for a sample passage and accompanying questions. A further example for one of the new pieces, with a student response and examiner comments, is also given.

Explorers, or boys messing about?

How does the writer try to persuade the reader towards his point of view, that the men were irresponsible and immature?

Chinese Cinderella

How does Adeline Yen Mah present her relationship with her family?

A Passage to Africa – George Alagiah

Example question

In this passage, how does George Alagiah present his views about his experiences as a television reporter in Somalia?

You may include brief quotations from the text to support your answer.

(10 marks)

Student answer

Grade A

George Alagiah has clearly been struck in a powerful way by what he encountered in Somalia. He wants to make his readers see what terrible conditions existed there and how fortunate we are to live in such a different world. He also shows that journalists often just start out by looking for the best stories they can find. But in this case, the stories really got to him on a deeply emotional level.

The most powerful effect of Alagiah's writing is the way he focuses on particular individuals and their tragedies. He describes the death of the ten year-old Habiba in a graphic way: 'No rage, no whimpering, just a passing away'. He is also skilled at creating not only images of the terrible sights he saw but also uses the other senses to convey the horror, as when he writes: 'the smell of decaying flesh'.

One of the striking ways he presents his experiences is by drawing attention to a particular moment or sight. He does this especially when writing about the smile of the unknown man. His translator's explanation that he was 'embarrassed to be found in this condition' disturbed him and he could not get it out of his mind. He also realises that he never even found the man's name, and feels guilty about that, too. He almost seems ashamed of his life as a journalist and the way in which he was normally able to report on such events in a detached way.

Overall, then, Alagiah brings across to the reader the way in which people in that situation lack basic necessities and human respect. However, he also reflects on how he felt to be witnessing and reporting on these events.

Examiner's comments

This is a well-focused response which makes very thoughtful points about the writer's views and experiences. There are relevant examples focusing on the detail of Alagiah's language. The writing is accurate, with only a few minor errors.

Section B (Writing question)

This question, which assesses AO3 Writing, is based on a topic related to the specified passage from the anthology which has been used for the Section B Reading question. Although it is connected to the previous question in subject-matter, it will be assessed for Writing only. Because of the diversity of the material in the anthology, and the variety of ways in which it could provide stimuli for writing, none of the writing triplets is specified for this question. Any one of them could be targeted, but the aim will be to choose a topic that will relate to all students, and the form and audience required will be similar to those in other writing questions. Forms might include diary entries, letters (formal and informal), feature articles for magazines and so on. A variety of audience is also possible, ranging from the general ('Give your views on a controversial subject relating to the passage.') to the specific ('Write an article for a school magazine on ...'). The readership could also be defined by the given context ('Write a review of a film, or book or television programme, suitable for posting on a website, which dealt with a similar theme to that of the passage.') Note that the purpose and the audience will define the style; if the student is asked to write a letter to a headteacher, then the choice of 'street language' and other slang would clearly be very inappropriate. Similarly, a letter to a friend would not be convincing if it did not include some conversational phrasing.

See the sample assessment materials for an example.

Section C (Writing question)

This question, which assesses AO3 Writing, is a 'freestanding' question, relating to **inform, explain and describe**, such as:

Your best friend has just received some very bad news and their reaction was, 'There's no point fighting it. Just give up.'

Write a letter to your friend explaining why they should adopt a positive approach to the news.

Some example questions, with students' responses and examiners' comments, are shown below.

Example question 1

Your school is to have a new building and your headteacher has decided it would be a good idea to bury a time capsule in the foundations, containing information about the school which future generations might find interesting. Write a lively account of your school in the form of a letter to pupils of the future, to be placed in the capsule. You should include information about the curriculum, sports and school rules.

Student answer

Grade A

Dear student of the future,

If you are reading this, you have obviously been digging up a school from the past, and have come across our message. I am sure things have changed a great deal from our time in the early twenty-first century. Who knows, perhaps you do not even go to school (some hopes!). You will undoubtedly use technological aids far more sophisticated than anything known to us. I can hardly begin to imagine just how much things will have changed. Anyway, just in case they have altered beyond all recognition, here is a snapshot of our school life.

First, the curriculum. Basically, the curriculum is a collection of subjects of all kinds. We have a thing called the National Curriculum, so people all over England (do you still have England, I wonder, or are you part of some great new European state?) all take the same subjects. It starts with English and mathematics and science, which everybody has to take right through to the age of 16. Lucky us - I love English, and mathematics is not too bad, but I could do with some rather more exciting science. Somehow we hardly ever seem to get to do real experiments.

We also do history, geography, religious studies and languages, as well as technology, art and music. There is really quite a lot to take in, I suppose, and we still have some old-fashioned things called examinations to see how much we have learnt. I hope for your sakes that these are now obsolete.

One of the best things about school is sport, though. We now have a fantastic range of possibilities on offer. In our parents' days, all they did was rugby and cricket, but we have a really good range of team and individual sports, and our school has a great sports hall and large playing fields. You may have seen these when you came to dig up the school. They placed the capsule right underneath the sports hall, which is where we play badminton and tennis and do gymnastics, weight-training and climbing. Sport is the best part of the week. My favourite is golf, since I think I am more of an individualist than team player, and rugby has a habit of giving you nasty injuries, whereas the chance of being struck on the head by a golf ball is quite remote. Do you know about golf? If not, the idea of whacking a small white ball all over the countryside and trying to get it into a tiny hole may seem slightly bizarre. But I love it. It's great being out in the open. Come to think of it, we even have electronic games where you can play golf without ever having to leave the house. But what's the point of that? Sport should be a real challenge, not a virtual waste of time.

Now for the very difficult subject of school rules. Of course, everyone likes to hate rules, and to protest that they are just a violation of our freedom. But I am rather old-fashioned about this, and reckon that if everyone thinks they can do whatever they like, in the end nobody can do what they want. The worst rules are about what we wear. For some weird reason, it has been decided that everyone has to look like everyone else - like 'clones'. We have only just started cloning animals. Who knows, by your time you may all be clones of some idealized brainy and super-fit person. I do hope not, because, like I said, I am a bit of an individualist. I don't see why anybody should make me wear a bright green blazer and a horrible stripy tie, so that I can look like everyone else in my class. Uniform, I hate it.

There are some sensible rules though, and the best one is that the most important thing is respect and tolerance, and treating everyone else like we would wish to be treated. I can't see how anyone can object to these rules, and I hope that your society still believes in them

So that's just a little glimpse into our school life. You probably wonder what I think about school. We have a saying that 'school days are the happiest days of your life'. Of course, I can't really comment on that, since school days are all I can remember! But I guess on balance it is not so bad, and no two days are exactly the same.

I hope that this has made you think about what life at school was like for the students of my generation and that my letter has reached out to you across the years.

Your friend from the past,

Joe

Examiner's comments

This is a lively and interesting letter, written in an appropriate style. The suggestions in the question have been included and the answer is sustained and well structured. The writing is accurate and the sentence structure varied.

Example question 2

'My room.'

Write a letter to a friend who has never visited you, giving information about the room you spend most time in.

You should:

- describe what this room is like
- explain what you think of it
- say how you would like to improve it.

Student answer

Grade C

Dear Bethany.

How are things going? It seems ages since we saw or spoke to each other! What you been up to? Anyway, I just wanted to write you this letter about the room I spend most of my time in. It's the best yet. But enough of me just telling you. Let me explain....

This room is one of a kind. It's not too big nor too small. Quite frankly, it's actually a reasonable size. It's quite dark but that's only because when I have one of those days at school or have a fall out with my parents, I just need space and time to myself, you know what I mean.

There's a huge window on the right next to the door which is directly facing the moon at precisely twelve o'clock. This room isn't really the most comforting place but it sure is the most relaxing. Not too long ago I brought a close friend over, not as close as you, but brought one over and left him alone while he slept at my house. He told me it was like a stress relief room.

I wanted to make this room a room like no other. The floor is a blue, soft, squeezey kind of carpet, so when you step on it, it leaves your footprints on it, then rises up very slowly when you step off. Also I put a two thousand pound sofa in as well. I haven't the slightest idea why I decided to get that, I just thought it matched the carpet. I'll tell you now, though, that sofa was worth every penny.

You would think I would put a television in it, but guess what?..... I didn't. I decided that television is not really stress relief equipment, is it? Also I must not forget the one thing that livens up this room the most.... the light switch... Ha, ha, I'm only joking. It's really my dog, called Sweet. Well, I couldn't think of any other name, OK?

At the moment I'm saving up for the last thing that this room needs, of course I have to say it's going to be the most expensive thing in the world, but I know in the end I'm going to get it. I spose your scratching your head thinking of what it could be? Well.... it's you. I need you in this room with me at all times so we can relieve our stress together. Step on the carpet and leave footprints all over the place, and I need you with me at all times.

When you get the chance please reply and come down and visit me as soon as possible because I really think it's time you saw my room.

Love you loads

James

Examiner's comments

This is a low grade C essay. It is lively and personal, has a clear register and tone and has an appropriate structure for a letter to a friend. The writing informs, explains and describes details of the room in an appropriate way. To achieve a higher mark, the student should aim for more ambitious and expressive vocabulary, with greater variety in sentence structure. The colloquialism is not inappropriate in terms of register, but the writing comes across as rather lacking in ambition.

Example question 3

'Entertaining relatives: heaven or hell?' Write a magazine article, drawing on your own or your friends' experiences, explaining how to make things go as well as possible and pointing out what should be avoided.

Student answer

Grade A*

We can all sympathise when it comes to entertaining the family. And just this once, it would be so good to ensure the whole event runs successfully and smoothly, whether you're entertaining four or forty. First of all, a truly happy family is a well-fed family; keep them quiet for as long as possible by cooking and presenting an enormous and magnificent meal and insisting no-one leaves the table until every last tasty dish of food is gone. This may also provide an excellent chance to catch up with those whom we don't get to see so often (out of choice or chance). Conversely, it's best not to end up sitting next to the aged relative who will bore the life out of you by droning on about the weather or an excellent shot they made in golf that morning. It may be wise to have some sort of elaborate seating plan; that way, any potential arguments between certain relatives who nearly came to blows at the last family gathering can be avoided for as long as possible.

Secondly, ensure some form of entertainment is provided. Bored relatives are even less fun than unfed relatives, and again, all dull conversations can be kept to a minimum. Board games work fine, but any team games are fantastic at bringing the different age groups of the family together. Warning: some relatives (Uncle George) may get over-competitive; avoid this by making regular offenders the judge or host of the game.

And finally, always make sure your relatives know when to call it a day - it is possible to have too much of a good thing! Subtle hinting on your part may be necessary, my personal favourites including, 'Gosh, isn't it getting late?', accompanied by looking at your watch every five minutes. Be warned. This does only work at night - I would suggest the former at two-thirty in the afternoon.

But I reckon the main thing to remember, however your day pans out, is that you should just make the most of your family's company - blood is thicker than water, so make the most of your relatives while you can - and perhaps keep Auntie Dorothy away from the wine. Again.

Examiner's comments

This is a good grade A* essay because it is a lively, well-expressed and amusing article. It has confident and effective stylistic flourishes, and the reader is engaged and entertained with witty information and anecdotes. The register and vocabulary are fit for purpose and the writing is technically assured, making its points concisely and effectively.

Paper 2

Question 1 (Reading)

This question, which assesses AO2 Reading, is based on students' reading of the selected poems from the anthology. Students must answer ONE question on the poem which is specified. Below is an example of a question with a student answer and examiner comment.

Example question

Look again at the poem 'Electricity Comes to Cocoa Bottom' and show how the poet presents the relationship between the physical environment and the events and feelings portrayed.

In your answer you should make close reference to the language of the poem.

Student answer

Grade A

The poem 'Electricity Comes to Cocoa Bottom' has very strong links to nature and the physical surroundings of the setting are all interlinked to the main series of events. This is a way of seeking to place more importance on the occurrences in the poem. It gives a sense of nature being replaced by human creations and of expectation.

'Electricity Comes to Cocoa Bottom' uses a lot of natural imagery to describe the small village of Cocoa Bottom. It also uses the reactions of the people in the village to enhance the importance of the occurrences.

All the children and Grannie Patterson had gone to see Mr Samuel's lights. This gives examples of the oldest and youngest of the populus, thus suggesting that people young and old went to witness the glorious event. There is a sense of dramatic irony in the way the children 'waited' for sunset so they could see the lights while, in the meantime, they used oil lamps to light the dark around them.

A significant image is 'The cable was drawn like a pencil line across the sun. This shows two things. Firstly it symbolises how the arrival of electricity is crossing out the old natural light as if it had become obsolete. But it also shows that the sun is low in the sky now as if the sun is preparing for this event.

Animal imagery is introduced through the fireflies and 'kling-klings' (birds). The way that the fireflies 'waited in the shadows/Their lanterns off shows that they were respecting and anticipating the arrival of electrical light. The birds also seem to be creeping in to view the event.

The breeze and bamboo seem to stop their swaying in anticipation of the event and the stanza finishes with the words 'Closing, Closing' which builds anticipation.

'Light!' begins the next stanza of 'Electricity comes to Cocoa Bottom. This short, monosyllabic word grabs the attention. Assured technical knowledge is shown here. Mr Samuel is then deified through the description that follows. The silhouette that is Mr Samuel, the gasps and 'fluttering of wings' all seem to show the power that Mr Samuel now has over the environment.

'Such a swaying, swaying' and 'tweet-a-whit' shows how, now this has happened, the bamboo and birds resume their natural exploits. The wind blows the grass, bending it into a bow as if nature is bowing to the one in control of the light.

The final stanza creates a cyclical structure with the lighting of the oil lamps and suggests that although this momentous occasion has taken place, not everything has changed.

The poem therefore relies heavily on the surroundings to increase the importance of the events occurring. Nature holds its breath to the new era of man-made light and then continues its workings afterwards.

Examiner's comments

This is a grade A essay because it presents a strongly reasoned argument in a clear structure and contains a variety of perceptive points on language. It also uses a wide range of relevant examples.

Question 2 (Writing)

This question, which assesses AO3 Writing, is a freestanding question, relating to one or other of the triplets: **explore, imagine and entertain**; and **argue, persuade and advise**.

Question – Advise

You have been asked to give a talk to students who are new to your school or college, giving advice on how to approach study and lessons, and on the school rules.

Write the script for the talk that you intend to give.

Question – Argue

Write an article for a magazine arguing for more expenditure of money on educational resources for your school.

Student answer

Grade A

Computers are essential. Editor, I agree and communicate my support for a campaign. We should not be reduced to scrounging for money off parents and pupils. Today, I ask you to rise up and take interest in information and communication technology.

It is the narrowminded and negative bureaucrats that dictate the measly money given to schools and colleges for technology. I believe, and I am certain, that nobody could deny this as a falsehood, that children have the right to an excellent education and it is time that our expectations of our Government are matched by spending on technology.

In my own school, we are reduced to the level of a 'Third-World' education. In many a case, I am forced to share a single computer with a collection of classmates. We are forbidden to print in colour and the size of our text is the smallest imaginable; the school simply cannot afford the ink or paper to allow us the ability to express ourselves creatively and explore our imaginations.

Meanwhile, in the private sector, pupils perfect their coursework with professional documents. Learning is interactive, it is a joy to teach and a pleasure to gain knowledge.

How can even the brightest of state school pupils hope to compete? This is an issue that cannot be ignored as places at university become harder and harder to earn. It is those that are successfully stimulated that can expect to win.

There has also been a scandalous drop in spending for physical education. This is senseless, from a Government that alleges its support for education and improvement. Whilst money is whittled away on footballs and hockey boots, we as a country are allowing the minds of the next generation to deteriorate. This waste of funding prevents the academics of the future from development of their learning. Computers are a gateway to a world of information and opinion. The student can be introduced to an involving array of data, images and graphics that show life and intellect as entertaining and enjoyable.

Henceforth, every man, woman and child must confront this scandal. Technology is our only hope, and so I place my hope in you, the public. We must not allow this neglect to continue, it is only through unity that we can overthrow the tyrannical principles of the Government that prevents teachers and pupils from the right to learn.

Examiner's comments

This is a very effective answer, with good use of rhetoric, vocabulary and sentence structure. There is a strong sense of the student's beliefs on the subject, and the writing uses ambitious phrases, mostly successfully.

Question – Explore

In a magazine article, explore what you see as the most important challenges facing teenagers in today's world and how they try to deal with them.

Student answer

Grade A

On considering this question I begin to feel my own emotions take over; no longer am I calm, reserved and un-biased but my true opinionated self has burst out of its shell. There are so many challenges to teenagers in today's world that it is virtually impossible to decide at which point to start; in my honest opinion the greatest and most important challenges of today come in avoiding several things. Fashion, drugs and falseness.

To start with the former. I do not mind admitting it but I am what many magazine columnists or clothes analysts call a 'fashion victim', not, I hope, because I look bad in what I wear, but because I care far too much about it. In this sense I have failed miserably in the challenge to avoid fashion awareness. Walking down the street in any town or city teenagers are rife, the several different 'latest styles' are flaunted endlessly on body-beautiful superstar look-alikes. Anyone wearing last months fashion is ensured a wide berth when making her way down the road; the slogan 'life is a catwalk' flashing up tirelessly on billboards boring into the minds of the teenagers. You may well ask 'what is wrong with this? People grow out of it.' This may well be true, but the competition between rival teenagers is a horrible thing. I do not know whether you have visited a girls school recently, but I have. Let me tell you it is not pleasant. Rival gangs patrol the corridors, each with their own trade mark fashion statement, such as pink socks or hair tie. The 'sad', 'uncool' group is instantly recognisable, their trademark is having no 'fashion sense' whatsoever. No one speaks to them or even acknowledges their presence.

A perhaps more serious issue is drugs: I say perhaps because in my experience it is much easier to avoid taking drugs than nearly everything else. However I gather that, in this case, I am an exception; for the entirety of my school life I have been warned of 'peer pressure' and how 'not to give in'. Again, I have no recollection of having to make an effort to avoid taking drugs, but on every street corner it is plain that it is occurring all the time.

It is incredible how many groups of six to seven teenagers sit around smoking or taking drugs, in full daylight, despite being underage. It is, I'm sure you'll agree, very sad to see, as you know that in taking drugs they are effectively ruining their lives, their job prospects and their quality of life in the future. In this case I do not believe that the challenge is so hard to take on, but it is the recognition of the challenge which poses the primary problem.

In answer to this there are not a huge number of solutions, perhaps the main one is to get schools around the country to provide more talks on the harmfulness of drug-taking. Certainly the many lectures I've attended on this subject, have been amusing but not very persuasive. The use of shocking statistics or pictures could help the dilemma.

I move on to my final point: to be yourself. There is nothing worse, I believe, than really liking someone and then finding out they were just pretending to like you. Alternatively it is awful when you become amiable with someone, but they think you are someone whom you are not. I believe that it is better to be yourself and to show your own feelings towards a person or something rather than keep up a pretentious attitude in front of them

A music teacher invites you to sing in a school concert, needless to say you don't want to, but instead of voicing your inner feelings you lie and inform him you have an extra English lesson. To cut a long story short a very embarrassing conversation ensues, before which the teacher has already worked out the original motive behind the falsity.

I have just failed the challenge, I have succumbed to lying and producing a false excuse. As I have just proved there is absolutely no point at all in lying, other than to preserve the feelings of the person in question, who ultimately is going to end up more offended than he previously would have been. Therefore I would argue that maintaining and telling the truth is a crucial part to the life of a teenager in today's world, and a huge challenge to keep up.

Without doubt there are more harmful things which a teenager must avoid, and more positive things he or she must do, such as concentrate on schoolwork and not be distracted by items such as television. A teenager, I believe, should also maintain a healthy lifestyle. However the three challenges I wrote on, I believe provide a balanced and more economical view on life. Rather than spend money on fashion items or take drugs or lie there are many more important things to spend your life doing.

Examiner's comments

This is a very thoughtful and maturely written approach to the subject. The examples are appropriately chosen, and the argument is constructed to make clear and effective points. Writing has a good command of vocabulary, despite the occasional slip in spelling and punctuation.

Using the mark scheme

The mark scheme gives the responses we expect from students. Indicative answers are given but during the standardisation of examiners process the mark scheme is updated and expanded to cover unexpected, but correct student responses.

Section C: Planning and teaching

Course planner

The course is designed to be taught over two years, or five terms, but it is possible to reduce this time to one year. Much will depend on the amount of teaching time available for teaching English, and on the ability of the students. It should be possible to cover the course in one year or, given that there are two series of examinations, one in June and one in January, for a period between one and two years, depending on when the course starts. The exemplar plan that follows could be compressed by combining two terms' work into one. Centres are, however, reminded that English skills are cumulative, and the more time students are given to cover the course, the more likely they are to succeed.

An example of course planning

There are many valid ways of organising the course. Teachers will have their preferred order for dealing with the materials. However, many find it useful to group the passages and poems studied into a small number of key themes. The table on the following pages shows a possible five-term course plan with such a thematic approach, although other titles or links can be made.

Term 1 of 5 – Exploration and self-discovery

Theme/focus of study	Outcomes
<p>Anthology, Section A: Non-fiction</p> <p>From <i>Touching the Void</i></p> <p>From <i>Taking on the World</i></p> <p>From <i>A Game of Polo with a Headless Goat</i></p> <p>Anthology, Section B: Literature</p> <p><i>An Unknown Girl</i></p> <p><i>A Hero</i></p>	<p>Reading AO2</p> <p>(Use work sheets in the subject-specific section of this guide for these texts)</p> <p>Anthology Section A: students study and discuss personal narratives, including features such as style, structure, viewpoint, creating a sense of place and atmosphere, building tension.</p> <p>Anthology Section B: students study and discuss the two texts; focus on use of metaphor in the poem, treatment of theme of courage in the story.</p> <p>Writing AO3</p> <p>Students practise skills studied above, by writing one or two pieces:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • autobiographical writing, eg a challenge overcome (inform, explain, describe) • story illustrating courage, moral or physical (explore, imagine, entertain).
Theme/focus of study	Outcomes
	<p>Coursework option</p> <p>Written</p> <p>Unit 2: Writing AO3</p> <p>The topics already given for the examination route (above) could be used to produce a coursework unit.</p> <p>Speaking and Listening AO1</p> <p>Individual talk.</p> <p>A talk to the class on an individual interest or experience (explore, imagine, entertain).</p>

Term 2 of 5 – The female perspective

Theme/focus of study	Outcomes
<p>Anthology, Section A</p> <p>From <i>The Explorer's Daughter</i></p> <p>From <i>Chinese Cinderella</i></p> <p>Anthology, Section B</p> <p><i>King Schahriar and His Brother (from The Arabian Nights)</i></p> <p><i>The Necklace</i></p> <p><i>Veronica</i></p>	<p>Reading AO2</p> <p>Section A: students study and discuss biographical and autobiographical writing, including features such as style, structure, viewpoint, selection of detail, presentation of fact/opinion.</p> <p>Section B: students study and discuss techniques and features of short-story narrative, including style, plot, character, theme, viewpoint, tone/mood.</p> <p>Coursework task (below) could also be used as a written outcome.</p> <p>Writing AO3</p> <p>Students practise skills studied above, by writing one or two pieces:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A short story on a title chosen by themselves or teacher (explore, imagine, entertain) • A discursive essay on a gender theme, such as equality (argue, persuade, advise).
	<p>Coursework option</p> <p>Written</p> <p>Unit 1: Reading AO2</p> <p>Essay on the short stories, eg compare and contrast the roles of the major female characters in TWO of the following stories: <i>King Schahriar</i>, <i>The Necklace</i> and <i>Veronica</i>.</p> <p>Speaking and Listening AO1</p> <p>Group work.</p> <p>Class discussion/debate on a gender issue, eg co-education, women's role in society (inform, explain, describe).</p>

Term 3 of 5 – Dilemmas and dramas

Theme/focus of study	Outcomes
<p>Dilemmas and dramas</p> <p>Anthology, Section A</p> <p><i>Your Guide To Beach Safety</i></p> <p><i>Climate Change: The Facts</i></p> <p><i>Explorers, or Boys Messing About?</i></p> <p>Anthology, Section B</p> <p><i>Out, Out –</i></p> <p><i>Electricity Comes to Cocoa Bottom</i></p>	<p>Reading AO2</p> <p>Section A: students study and discuss reportage and media, especially the use of language to interest the reader and to convey information; use of direct speech; structure; headlines.</p> <p>Section B: study of poems, looking at subject matter and theme, purpose, form and style (including use of figurative language).</p> <p>Writing AO3</p> <p>Students practise skills studied above, by writing one or more pieces:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a feature article for a magazine, with a specific readership, on a topic chosen by student/teacher (explore, imagine, entertain) • a letter to a newspaper arguing the case for or against a controversial opinion (argue, persuade, advise) • a critique of one (or both) of the poems studied, exploring a personal response.
	<p>Coursework option</p> <p>Written</p> <p>Unit 1: Reading AO2</p> <p>Topic (c) (above) could be developed for a coursework task</p> <p>Unit 2: Writing AO3</p> <p>Write a feature article for a magazine, with a specific readership, either (a) arguing the case for a controversial opinion (argue, persuade, advise), or (b) on an entertaining topic (explore, imagine, entertain).</p> <p>Speaking and Listening: AO1</p> <p>Pair work</p> <p>Pair work on theme/s raised by poems (inform, explain, describe)</p> <p>Group work</p> <p>Small group problem-solving task</p>

Term 4 of 5 – War and conflict

Theme/focus of study	Outcomes
<p>War and conflict</p> <p>Anthology, Section A</p> <p><i>From A Passage to Africa</i></p> <p>Anthology, Section B</p> <p><i>Disabled</i></p> <p><i>Refugee Blues</i></p> <p><i>The Last Night</i></p>	<p>Reading AO2</p> <p>Section A: students study and discuss the writer’s presentation of a war-torn country in the autobiographical account, considering how information is conveyed; structure; viewpoint and tone.</p> <p>Section B: students study and discuss the writers’ presentation of war in literary texts, including the use of language (especially figures of speech), rhythm and rhyme in the poetry.</p> <p>Writing AO3</p> <p>Students write imaginative and/or critical responses to the above texts.</p> <p>Contrasting letters/diary entries of a soldier in the front line (explore, imagine, entertain).</p> <p>Write a critique of either of the poems or of ‘The Last Night’, exploring a personal response to them (argue, persuade, advise).</p>
<p>Coursework option only</p> <p>Assemble coursework folders and award marks</p> <p>Finalise Speaking and listening marks</p> <p>Internal standardisation procedure</p>	<p>Coursework option</p> <p>Written</p> <p>Unit 1: Reading AO2</p> <p>Compare and contrast the presentations of the lot of soldiers and civilians in a time of conflict in ‘Disabled ’ and ‘Refugee Blues’.</p> <p>Unit 2: Writing AO3</p> <p>Topic in the examination route could be developed to produce a coursework unit.</p> <p>Speaking and Listening AO1</p> <p>Individual talk</p> <p>Present a TV journalist’s videophone report, from the front line of war, for a national/international audience (explore, imagine, entertain)</p>
<p>Mock examination</p>	

Term 5 of 5 – Preparing for the examinations

Theme/focus of study	Outcomes
Cover any remaining subject content Final revision Practice questions Coursework option Ensure deadlines are met for submitting marks and sample folders.	

Teaching ideas

Approaches to teaching the anthology

The following notes are intended to provide some support and framework for the teaching of the *Edexcel Anthology for IGCSE and Certificate qualifications in English Language and Literature*. They are not definitive. They should be developed and tailored by teachers to suit their own purposes. They are not intended to be copied and distributed to students.

Section A of the anthology

The following examples are taken from the two extracts: From *Taking on the World* – Ellen MacArthur and From *Touching the Void* – Joe Simpson. These two pieces lend themselves naturally to being linked together in a teaching unit, for example under a thematic heading such as 'Exploration and Self-Discovery'.

Taking on the World – Ellen MacArthur

Context

This is an extract from Ellen MacArthur's autobiography. It deals with an emergency she faced on the 44th day of the *Vendée Globe* yacht race when she had to replace an essential sail. The passage highlights the enormous physical and psychological challenges in sailing alone in heavy seas near Antarctica. The facts that it is Christmas and that she is female and small – most competitors were large, male and physically strong – make it even more extraordinary. The 'Mark' referred to in the last paragraph is Mark Turner, a close friend and sailing expert. Note that though MacArthur faces the physical challenge alone, she has the means, by communication technology, to keep in close contact with the rest of the world.

Structure and form

This is prose autobiography, with a strong narrative element. It is structured in paragraphs following the sequence of time.

Language

Ellen MacArthur, not very surprisingly, considering the nature of her achievements, insisted on writing the book herself, so, unlike many sporting autobiographies, the words are her own and not a 'ghostwriter's'. The style is unaffected and frank and perhaps all the more powerful for being very personal. The challenge may be a superhuman one, but the human being involved seems subject to the same feelings as the rest of us, so much so that you wonder what the motivation is, unless it is the challenge itself.

There is much use of the first person pronoun. Other features of style include:

- use of technical language (not overdone) giving a sense of the reality of the situation
- straightforward, direct language; active verbs (*climbed, worked, agonised, streamed*), limited and precise use of adjectives and adverbs; repetitively structured sentences often using a first person construction

- use of words/phrases/clauses that suggest struggle, effort or challenge – *the hardest climb to date; there would be no second climb on this one*
- many conversational features – for example contractions (*I'd*), fillers (*odd massive wave*), use of the verb *to get* and words like *thing*, repetition of words within a sentence for emphasis – add immediacy to the writing, though there is some loss of refinement
- syntax begins to break down as the passage reaches its climax; she even breaks into direct speech, as though talking to herself – *not far now, kiddo, come on* – again adding to the sense of urgency and drama; it makes the reader feel present
- occasionally more elaborate phrasing, including comparisons, is used – *as if I was stepping out on to the moon; This is what it must look like to the albatross; I felt like a million dollars* – but most of the writing is uncompromisingly literal – *I couldn't feel my fingers*
- strong focus on words that convey detail – of features and equipment of the boat, including the height of the mast, the weather, the waves – again giving a strong sense of actuality
- similarly direct language is used to detail her feelings – *agonised, exhausted, rallied* – and to convey the physical and psychological effort required – *This was by far the most dangerous part*
- the strongest phrasing, reflected in the use of more complex words, is often linked to moments of potential danger, sometimes suggestive of near panic – *a world over which I had no control; you are a passive observer; the frustration was unreal; no time for complacency now*
- humorous lightening of tone at the end with the reference to Santa.

Questions for students

1. Describe the climb briefly in your own words, making clear what the purpose and problems were.
2. Choose three words or phrases which you found effective and vivid in the passage in bringing out Ellen MacArthur's thoughts and feelings, and carefully explain your reasons for choosing each one.
3. Choose three words or phrases which you found effective and vivid in the passage in bringing out the dangers and difficulties she faced, and carefully explain your reasons for choosing each one.
4. Basing your ideas on the passage, what would you need to be a successful competitor in a round-the-world solo race? Think about personal fitness, qualities of character and equipment.
5. Is there anything in the passage that explains why Ellen MacArthur took part in this dangerous race?

Example examination questions

Paper 1, Section B

From *Taking on the World*

- **Reading:** How does this passage bring out the thoughts and feelings of Ellen MacArthur as she sails alone in a race around the world?
- **Writing:** Write about an occasion when you were in a difficult situation. Explain how you overcame the problems.

Example coursework activities

Paper 3, Reading and Writing

- **Writing:** Write a short story involving a challenge, an unexpected hero and a surprising outcome.

Paper 4, Speaking and Listening

There are various possible outcomes. For group work, a small- or large-group discussion on what makes people (especially young people) take risks might be productive. For the individual talk, students might be asked to give a talk on a challenging or adventurous activity or decision, in which they were involved. The questions above could be used for paired discussion or small group discussion. A representative who reports the group's findings back to the class could also be assessed for his/her individual talk. Another possibility is for a student to emulate Ellen MacArthur by presenting a monologue, based on character in a film, or book, or in a real-life situation. The monologue should reveal the character's thoughts and feelings in a challenging situation.

Follow-up activity

Visit Ellen MacArthur's website for further background material – www.ellenmacarthur.com – or read her book *Taking on the World*.

From Touching the Void – Joe Simpson

Context

Joe and his climbing partner, Simon Yates, were nearing the end of a climb in the Peruvian Andes when this terrible accident occurred.

The passage provides a focus on an extreme sport at a life or death moment. It raises many issues. What makes people participate in activities like this? What should one do when faced with a moral dilemma like Simon's? Is self-preservation more important than friendship? Note that, unlike MacArthur, these two are completely on their own.

Structure and form

This extract consists of two pieces of autobiographical prose narrative (perhaps better described as monologues), giving different perspectives on the same event. Relatively short paragraphs follow a sequence of time, but the real demarcations are provided by crucial developments in thought.

Language

Though both accounts are very similar in style, there are significant differences.

Both accounts:

- use of first person narrative
- narrative structure, but evaluation and analysis of the significance of what is happening are integrated into the storytelling
- use of direct speech to convey the immediacy of thought – *You're dead* – and to bring in other perspectives – *I'm dead. Everyone said it ... if there's just two of you a broken ankle could turn into a death sentence.*

Joe's account

- Conveys pain (and other feelings) by powerful metaphors – *pain flooded; a fierce burning fire.*
- Varied sentence structure, varying the pace and reflecting the impact of the moment. Minor sentences used at particularly dramatic moments – *My leg! My leg!*
- Strong, direct words, often verbs, used to convey movement, pain, etc – *catapulted; screamed; raced; ripped off.*
- Sometimes uncompromisingly direct to intensify sense of reality – *the impact had driven my lower leg up through the knee joint; we were above 19000 feet... and very much alone.*
- Words and images that convey thoughts and feelings vividly and frankly, sometimes in a sequence that conveys dramatic changes of mood and thought (paragraph 4 *A wave of nausea ... I'm dead*); phrasing becomes abstract and almost vague at times, suggesting trauma: *something terrible, something dark with dread; teetering on the edge of (panic).*

Simon's account

- More straightforward language, at least initially, conveying a sequence of mundane events and feelings largely through the verbs/adjectives – *glad, tired, grateful, rested, moved again*.
- Sudden change in pace/urgency in paragraph three with injection of dynamic words – *sharp tug; the rope lashed me*.
- Words that relate to logic, contrast with Joe's pained and emotional response – *totally rational, dispassionately; in a way I hoped he would fall*.

Questions for students

1. Summarise briefly in your own words (a) what happened to Joe and (b) what choices face Simon.
2. What words or phrases in Joe's account bring out most vividly (a) the pain he suffers as a result of his injuries and (b) his thoughts and feelings?
In each case choose three examples and give reasons for your choice.
3. What words or phrases in Simon's account show most clearly the difficult decision he faces? Explain carefully the reasons for your choices.
4. Compare and contrast the two accounts in:
 - (a) use of language
 - (b) perspective and viewpoint
 - (c) attitudes to what has happened.
5. What do you think Simon should do in this situation? Give him your advice.

Example examination questions

Paper 1, Section B

From *Touching the Void*

- **Reading:** Compare and contrast the presentation of the events in the two accounts.

You should comment on the following

- similarities and differences in attitude and viewpoint
 - similarities and differences in use of language.
- **Writing:** Imagine you have a friend who is interested in taking up mountaineering as a sport.
Write a letter to him either encouraging him to continue or persuading him to stop.

Example coursework activities

Paper 3, Reading and Writing

- Writing: Think about a real situation, or imagine a fictional one, involving two people who had very different experiences. Write two contrasting first-hand accounts, giving their thoughts and perspectives and, as far as possible, differing in the way they are expressed.

Paper 4, Speaking and Listening

The passage is similar to the Ellen MacArthur one, and the same tasks could be used. There are links also with the 'Explorers, or Boys Messing About?' newspaper article. A debate on the topic of whether the taxpayer should fund rescues is feasible, as is a small or large group discussion of why young people are attracted to extreme sports. Students could also research extreme sports (there are many websites devoted to them) and give individual presentations on them.

Follow-up activity

The extraordinary sequel to the events in the passage is recounted in Simpson's book *Touching the Void*. Students might also like to read a follow-up book written by Simpson called 'The Beckoning Silence', in which he provides further insights into the world of the mountaineer. This book concludes with a spellbinding account of an attempt on the North Face of the Eiger.

Section B of the anthology

Out, Out – Robert Frost

Context

Robert Frost (1874-1963) was one of the major American poets of the 20th century. His poetry is based mainly on the life and scenery of rural New England. 'Out, Out-' was published in the collection 'Mountain Interval' in 1916. The setting of this poem is a farm and, although the scenery around the farm is beautiful, life is too hard for it to be enjoyed fully by the family, even by the young son, who has to work all day cutting up wood with a buzz-saw.

Frost wrote this poem after he read the following newspaper article.

Lancaster, Nov 18th – John M. Adams, son of Mr. and Mrs. James Adams, Route 3, Riverton, died last Saturday evening as a result of injuries he received while operating a power saw on his parents' farm.

The accident happened late Saturday afternoon while young Adams, his brother Stephen, 12, and his father were sawing logs. Apparently, the boy was momentarily distracted while feeding a piece of wood into the blade, which caught his hand and amputated it.

The youth's sister, Maude, 17, was witness to the accident. She said that her mother had sent her to call her father and brother to supper. The accident occurred, she said, just as she called to them.

Mr. Adams immediately drove to nearby Riverton for a doctor. He finally located Dr. E. L. White and drove him back to the farm.

Dr. White said that when he arrived the boy was already in shock from loss of blood, and that it was impossible to save him. The cause of death was listed by the coroner as accidental.

Funeral services on Tuesday were held in Riverton Congregational Church, and interment was in Good Hope Cemetery.

Structure and form

The poem consists of a single stanza. It is written in 'blank verse', with five stresses to a line (the 'iambic pentameter') and a lack of formal rhyme scheme. This form is one which suits the conversational tone. The poem can be seen as realistic, shocking and dramatic. Students should consider how the construction of the poem helps to achieve these effects.

The importance of the unusual title is something to be discussed. Particularly because of the dash after the repeated word Out; this indicates an unfinished statement.

This is a quotation from near the end of Shakespeare's play, 'Macbeth'. Macbeth has just learned of the death of his wife:

'Out, out, brief candle!

Life's but a walking shadow; a poor player,

That struts and frets his hour upon the stage

And then is heard no more.' Act 5, scene 5 lines 23-26

Why has Frost chosen to use it?

Frost has used the detached account in the newspaper obituary and given it life, drama and sympathy for the waste of a young life.

How is imagery used? Look at 'leaped out at the boy's hand'.

How does Frost focus on small details to make this scene powerful?

Language/comments

- The language the poet uses is simple and everyday. Study the use of direct speech.
- The poet's language raises a number of topics for exploration, such as:
 - What use is made of sound, especially at the start of the poem?
 - How effective is the use of repetition?
 - How much do we learn about the situation and character of the boy?
 - What do we learn of the sister, the relationships and the reactions to the boy's tragic early death?
 - What are the central themes?
 - What meaning or message do you take from the poem?

Follow-up activity

There are other poems by Robert Frost that could be looked up, for example *Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening*, *Mending Wall*, *Meeting and Passing*. You can hear Robert Frost reading this poem (it helps to grasp the rhythm) on www.poets.org, the website of The Academy of American Poets.

Electricity Comes to Cocoa Bottom – Marcia Douglas

Context

Marcia Douglas was born in England and grew up in Jamaica. She has given talks on the history and culture of the Caribbean, as well as her development there as a woman and writer. She is particularly interested in making cross-cultural comparisons which explore people's attitudes.

Summary

This poem conveys the phenomenon of electricity coming to a house in a village in the Caribbean. Both the humans, especially children, and the animals are drawn to witness the experience, pulled towards it like magnets. The poem is clearly intended as one that celebrates progress and development, but it does so with a particularly Caribbean flavour.

Ways into the poem

Imagine life as previous generations experienced it, without the domestic luxuries we enjoy, such as electric lights, running tap water, central heating, electric/gas fires and cookers. Carry out a role play of a domestic scene where one of these amenities happens for the first time.

- Stimulus material: Imtiaz Dharker's poem 'Blessing' which describes a burst water pipe in a developing country and the importance of water to the community.

Structure and form

The first two stanzas of free verse are of similar length (detailing the audience settling and then reacting to this event), whilst the third is noticeably shorter (commiserating with their failure to record it). The line lengths also vary which is particularly significant between stanzas one and two, since the poem appears to come to a close as the natural light fades: 'Closing. Closing', then bursts into life as the electricity is switched on 'Light!'

Language/comments

Much of the language used is familiar, yet poetic and descriptive with rhythmic variations. It is a nostalgic and celebratory poem.

- This poem uses a fictional style, as if telling a children's story and begins mid-tale *Then all the children ...* The proper nouns sound fictional *Cocoa Bottom...Grannie Patterson* which draws us into the magical moment which is described. We sense a young audience for this poem and can imagine it being read in an excited and dramatic voice, brought to life via the many verbs of movement *swooped...fluttering...swaying*.
- The event is clearly an important one since the children 'camped' and the lamps are *filled with oil* – expectation is high. Tension and suspense are created: *waiting...watching...waited*, reinforced by the alliteration.

- Descriptions are vividly colourful: *yellow, orange*, and there are many references to light, natural or man-made *lamps...sunset...sun...fireflies...lanterns*. The fact that one of the older generation, Grannie Patterson, tries to view the event surreptitiously enhances its importance, since it unites all ages.
- It is ironic that the fireflies' *lanterns* are off since they already demonstrate the power the humans aspire to and a further irony comes from the fact that everyone is waiting for the dark to come so they can see light! Yet the fireflies, like the birds, the breeze and the bamboo lining also anticipate this minor miracle. The personification is especially powerful here: *a breeze...held its breath...bamboo lining...stopped its swaying*, as nature too heralds this new dawn and almost seems in a state of worship and thanks: *bowed heads*. The use of onomatopoeia livens the scene – *tweet-a-whit* – as this poem appeals to several of our senses, heightening the experience.
- Language is exotic: *kling-klings...orange trees...bamboo lining...mongoose ferns*.
- The rhythm of the lines and pace slow down at the end of stanza one almost to a standstill, but then increase as soon as the electricity comes on: *Light! Mr. Samuel smiling on the verandah* as the line lengths begin to build again, thus raising their momentum to match the excitement and enthusiasm felt by the crowd.
- Douglas successfully uses a pattern of three: *such a gasp, such a fluttering of wings...such a swaying*, as if, like humans, nature too celebrates this moment by its own natural movements.
- The poem ends, however, on a regretful note that not one who witnessed the event could record it (possibly because of lack of literacy or equipment to do so) and thus a sad element is introduced to this joyous occasion. There is a great sense of disappointment and loss: *the moment had passed*.

Veronica by Adewale Maja-Pearce

Context

Adewale Maja-Pearce lives in Lagos, Nigeria, where he runs Yemaja, an editorial services agency. His latest book is *Remembering Ken Saro-Wiwa and Other Essays*. He is well-known as someone who documents the problems and struggles of the Nigerian people.

Summary

The focus of the short story is the contrasting experiences of young Africans, one male and one female, in the second half of the twentieth century in African society. The story focuses especially on the constraints that confine Veronica to a life of poverty surrounded by violence and brutality, comparing her lot (to an extent self-appointed, since she declines invitations to escape from the village's squalor) to the life of opportunity accessible to Okeke through education, travel and a taste of city life and luxury.

Language and ideas

The story is rich in imagery which explores both the contrasting lifestyles of city and countryside and the imprisonment and resignation of Veronica's existence. Okeke is an intelligent and sympathetic observer, drawn powerfully back, on an emotional level, to the society he has left for better things, and aware that there is an eternal current flowing through the villagers' lives.

The story benefits from an approach which draws students into its fabric through a focus on detail.

A suggested approach is:

1. Read the opening paragraph only (lines 1-10)
 - What clues and hints are there about how the story will develop? Underline or highlight the key words and phrases. Compare your underlined/highlighted version with another person's. Discuss the similarities and differences between the two versions.
2. Read the second paragraph (lines 11-16)
 - What do the following words (lines 13-16) suggest about Veronica: '*...she asked me endless questions about my school and the town and what I was going to be when I grew up?*'
 - What can you predict about how the lives of Veronica and the narrator might unfold from what we read in lines 1-16?
3. Read the rest of the story
 - How accurate were your predictions, based on the first two paragraphs, about Veronica and the narrator?

4. Re-read closely paragraphs 2-4 (lines 11-26)
 - How does Adewale Maja-Pearce build up an impression of:
 - Veronica
 - Okeke
 - the relationship between them?
 - Highlight, in three different colours, words and phrases that relate to Veronica, Okeke and their relationship.
5. Look again at the next section of the story (lines 27-51)
 - How does the writer use dialogue and her own narrative comments to add to the reader's understanding of Veronica and Okeke?
6. Re-read lines 52-64
 - These 13 lines span a period of 10 years. Why does the writer pass over them so rapidly? What are the most important things she tells us in this section?
7. Re-read lines 65-112
 - Line 65 begins: '*I was shocked ...*' What shocked Okeke about the village and about Veronica and her situation?
 - What do we learn about the causes of the troubles?
8. Re-read the final section of the story (lines 113-142)
 - What are your thoughts about Veronica and Okeke in these concluding lines?
 - Compare the last line of the story with lines 42-43: '*I snapped a twig and threw it into the water. It bobbed on the current and then vanished from sight.*' In what ways could these words be seen as symbolic?
9. Write a single sentence which sums up the moral of the story, or the 'message' the writer seems to convey.
10. Select an alternative title for *Veronica* by choosing a word or a group of words used in the story. Explain and justify your choice.
11. Okeke says (line 139): '*I cried that night for the terrible waste.*' Who or what do you think was responsible for that terrible waste?
12. What does *Veronica* suggest to the reader about gender roles, the effects of education and the differences between urban and rural life in this society?

A Hero – R K Narayan

Context

Rasipuram Krishnaswamy Narayan (1906-2001) was an Indian novelist, who wrote in English. His novels and short stories are largely based on his experiences as a teacher in India and are set in the imaginary Southern Indian town of Malgudi. They depict daily life in the town in rich and often comic detail. 'A Hero' is a typical example of his style of writing.

General

The story is very economically and dynamically told. Ironic humour is central to its impact. It is important for students to think about this, and about how R K Narayan engages our interest and shapes our response to the story, through use of language (including dialogue), the structure of the story and so on. There are many examples of stylistic features, but it is less important for students to show knowledge of technical terms than to show how these work to further the writer's purposes. A good understanding of the central characters is also essential, and of the themes, which include family relationships, growing up and differing concepts of courage.

Questions for students

1. Read the opening sentence: *For Swami events took an unexpected turn*. What is the impact of this sentence on you? How do you think the story will develop?
2. In the argument between Swami and Father (lines 7 to 18), with whom do you agree more? Which words or phrases in this extract are the most important in shaping your response to it?
3. Why does Swami think that the idea that he should sleep in his father's office room is 'a frightful proposition'? How does he try to change the subject? Why does he fail?
4. Swami knows his *father's tenacity* (line 27). What does this phrase mean?
5. What does the section from line 29 to 51 tell you about the relationships and tensions in the family? Comment on how Father, Mother, Granny and Swami react to each other in these lines. How does R K Narayan make this section humorous?
6. Considering what you have learnt so far in the story, what is your view of Swami's character?
7. The reader is told that Swami *didn't like the strain of cruelty he saw in his father's nature*. Looking specifically at the section between lines 50 and 66, do you think his father is presented as cruel or caring?
8. The plot develops to a climax between lines 71 and 100. How does the writer hold the reader's interest in this section? In particular, think about his use of words and sentences; how suspense is sustained; how Swami's fears are brought out; and the use of humour.
9. What do lines 96 to 106 tell us about Swami, his father and the burglar?

10. How does Swami react to the praise he receives? What is your opinion of him and what he did? Which words or phrases in this extract are the most important in shaping your response to him?
11. How does the last section (lines 110 to the end) add to your understanding of Swami and his father and the relationship between the two?
12. Looking back again at the first sentence, and your answer to question 1, how have events and developments turned out to be *unexpected* for (a) Swami, (b) Father and (c) you, as reader?

Sample examination question

Paper 2

How does R K Narayan bring out the tensions in the relationship between Father and Swami and to what extent have these been resolved by the end of the story?

You should consider the following points

- their differing views on the newspaper article
- their disagreement about where Swami should sleep
- the influence of Granny
- the impact on the relationship of the incident with the burglar in the office
- the writer's use of language.

Sample coursework activities

Paper 3, Reading and Writing

- **Reading:** How does R K Narayan make 'A Hero' interesting and amusing for the reader?
- **Writing:** Write an account of the incident that might have appeared in the local newspaper.
- **Writing:** Write a short story, which develops in an unexpected way, from the viewpoint of a child.

Paper 4, Speaking and Listening

The questions above could be used for group discussion with formal reporting back of the group's findings to the rest of the class. Characters in the story could be 'hot seated' to answer questions related to the text, or questions such as 'What makes a good parent?' 'How do you teach a child to be self-reliant?' This approach would provide opportunities for individual talk (*explain, describe, narrate*).

Follow-up activity

Research could be undertaken into R K Narayan and his novels, especially 'Swami and Friends'. Alternatively, some time could be spent looking at other stories which are written from a child's perspective. Graham Greene, who was an influential friend of R K Narayan, wrote several, including 'The Destroyers'. Saki's 'The Lumber Room' and/or 'Sredni Vashtar' have central boy characters who are comparable to Swami.

Coursework

This optional component is available only to centres specifically approved by Edexcel International to offer coursework.

The guidance below should be read in conjunction with pages 9-29 of the IGCSE English Language (Specification A) (4EA0) specification.

General comments

Coursework provides opportunities for more student-centred work. The best results occur when students have been encouraged to express themselves in ways which reflect their own interests and aptitudes. Ideally, there should be some negotiation between teacher and student about the choice of topic, so that work is tailored to the individual. This is particularly desirable in writing tasks; the best work usually comes from something which relates closely to the student, a memorable personal experience or strongly-held views. It is possible to set a common task for a whole class, but it should be framed in such a way that a variety of approaches is possible. A centre whose students write very similar essays, making identical points and using the same quotations, creates difficulties for the moderator. Students will be disadvantaged by such an approach. More successful centres give their students a choice of tasks of different levels of difficulty, reflecting the ability range in the centre.

There is no prescribed word length for coursework units; the nature of the task will often define its length.

Written coursework pieces may be either handwritten or wordprocessed.

Students can draft and re-draft work, but whilst this can be productive, it can also be a waste of time in a hectic schedule. Written coursework constitutes just 20 per cent of the whole course and it is important that the amount of time spent on it reflects this. The teacher may check drafts and give advice to the student, but drafts should not have every error scored, nor should they be re-phrased in the teacher's words. The student is responsible for his/her own work; it is the teacher's responsibility to ensure that the work is the student's own and to authenticate this by signing the declaration on the coursework frontsheet. Plagiarism is a growing concern amongst moderators. Usually it is obvious when work derives from a secondary source. Students who cheat in this way will be severely penalised.

The best approach to both written and oral coursework is one which incorporates them into a programme of work for the whole subject, providing back-up for examination preparation, as well as allowing students some degree of control over their achievements and giving opportunities for self expression.

Paper 3: Written coursework

This section should be read in conjunction with the information on pages 9-12 and the assessment criteria for Reading on page 25 and Writing on pages 27-29 of the IGCSE English Language (Specification A) (4EA0) specification.

Reading

Writing must be based on a piece or pieces from Section B of the *Edexcel Anthology for IGCSE English Language (Specification A) and IGCSE English Literature*. AO2 must be addressed to provide an opportunity for students to:

'read with insight and engagement....sustain interpretations....understand and make some evaluation of how writers use linguistic and structural devices to achieve their effects.'

Bearing this in mind, any assignment will need to be analytical and, at least partly, concerned with language. Empathetic approaches (diaries of characters, extension pieces, etc) would not allow for all these requirements, but they could be used for the Writing assignment. Essays should be fully developed not necessarily in terms of length but in ideas. The key word in writing about *'linguistic and structural devices'* is *'evaluation'*. Simply feature spotting is not enough, for instance pointing out a simile or an example of alliteration. Students need to think and write about the effect of the use of distinctive features.

Task setting is critical. The topic needs to encourage the student's personal reading of the text, and to create the potential for detailed study and for discussion of language.

A task which is phrased *'Write about the character of Swami in 'A Hero'* is likely to produce some very boring, formulaic essays and it is not clear where discussion of language would fit in.

With a little rephrasing the question could be made both personal and include an opportunity for some consideration of the way the story is written. For example: *'Write about what you have found interesting about R K Narayan's presentation of Swami in 'A Hero'*. Now the key words are *'you'*, *'interesting'* and *'presentation'*.

Teacher guidance could be given about aspects of the story to be considered in the essay, and there is also potential for small or large group discussion about it, but the topic now crucially requires a personal response and some interpretative thinking on *presentation*. This should naturally include the writer's use of language. The quality of the resultant essay will largely depend on the degree to which the student is able to develop (and of course sustain) an individual approach to the topic. Another good example of a task on this story is given in the specification *'How is suspense created in 'A Hero'?''*

Further examples of tasks

- *The central female characters in 'King Schahriar and his Brother' and 'The Necklace' are both faced with situations of their own making which threaten to engulf them. Compare and contrast the strengths and weaknesses of their characters as they are presented in the stories.*
- *Wilfred Owen aimed to convey 'the pity of war' in his poetry. How does he try to do this in 'Disabled'?*

Writing

The second assignment requires a piece of personal/imaginative writing. This assignment will be assessed solely by the writing criteria. The work must address all the writing Assessment Objectives, but the alternatives '*explore, imagine, entertain*' and '*argue, persuade, advise*' are specified.

It is enough for a task to focus on one of the verbs within a triplet, though this would not necessarily be exclusive. For instance, a piece which addresses '*imagine*' is likely also to '*entertain*', and as already indicated, '*argue*' and '*persuade*' are often closely linked.

This is the specification component where students have most freedom. As far as '*explore, imagine, entertain*' are concerned, any form of creative writing is possible: narrative, description, media scripts, diaries, travel writing – the possibilities are infinite. The task may be individual and original, or it may be an imaginative extension or empathetic response to one of the texts in the English Language anthology. Often, the best work has been based on the student's own experiences, particularly those tasks which deal with a crisis of some kind, whether light-hearted or deeply serious. Task setting needs to bear this in mind. It is possible to approach it on a class basis, but potential should be built into the topic to allow for individual approaches.

'*Argue, persuade, advise*' invite a similarly wide range of possibilities, including discursive essays, scripts for speeches, advertisement copy, pamphlets, magazine/newspaper feature articles on a controversial topic and so on.

Analytical essays on anthology pieces would **not** be acceptable for the writing assignment.

Examples of tasks

- *Write an original story of the kind that Scheherazade might have told to entertain her husband and delay her execution. (Entertain, imagine)*
- *Write about a time when you were under pressure and had to make a difficult choice. Make clear exactly what your thoughts and feelings were at the time and how you felt about the results of your decision. (Explore, entertain)*
- *'If I ruled the world, I would' Write a feature magazine with a family readership beginning with these words. (Argue, entertain)*
- *Write the script for a speech to be delivered to your class with the aim of persuading them to your point of view on a controversial topic. (Persuade)*

Paper 4: Speaking and Listening

The questions above could be used for pair or group discussion with formal reporting back of the pair's or group's findings to the rest of the class. Characters in the story could be 'hot seated' to answer questions related to the text, or questions such as 'What makes a good parent?' 'How do you teach a child to be self-reliant?' This approach would provide opportunities for individual talk (*explain, describe, narrate*).

Follow-up activity

Research could be undertaken into R K Narayan and his novels, especially 'Swami and Friends'. Alternatively, some time could be spent looking at other stories which are written from a child's perspective. Graham Greene, who was an influential friend of R K Narayan, wrote several, including 'The Destructors'. Saki's 'The Lumber Room' and/or 'Sredni Vashtar' have central boy characters who are comparable to Swami.

This section should be read in conjunction with the information on pages 13-17 and the assessment criteria for Speaking and Listening on pages 19-24 of the IGCSE English Language (Specification A) (4EA0) specification.

Assessment Objective – AO1

The Assessment Objectives are straightforward but **AO1(ii)** requires students to '**use Standard English appropriately**'. The following definition should provide some help in clarifying this area.

Standard English is the variety of the English language normally used in writing, especially printing. It is associated with the education system in all the English-speaking countries of the world, and is taught to learners for whom English is not the first language. It can be distinguished from other varieties of English, principally in terms of grammar and vocabulary, but not in terms of pronunciation, since Standard English is spoken in many different accents around the world. It is by no means identical with 'formal' English, since colloquialisms and slang are part of it.

For examination purposes, students will be expected to use Standard English – local dialect and idioms will be unacceptable if the communication of clear meaning to other (ie outside) speakers of English is impeded – and students will need to speak it with an accent that also does not impede communication with other speakers of English, whether as a first or an additional language.

Formal and informal contexts

'Informal contexts' include tasks and situations where students are talking to each other, for instance in small or large group-discussion work, or pair work, where two students may be analysing a poem together. Conversational and colloquial expression is naturally acceptable here.

'Formal contexts' usually require more careful consideration of register, reflecting the purpose and audience. A speech in a debate, for instance, will benefit from attention to rhetoric; a talk to the class and teacher on a hobby will need to take into account the public context and appropriate terminology.

The Speaking and Listening 'triplets'

All tasks will need to target one set of the triplet verbs.

Triplet 1

Explain, describe, narrate mainly provide opportunities for individual talk, as follows:

Explain

- Make something comprehensible by giving a clear and detailed account of a situation, problem or sequence of events or actions.
- Give a justification or rationale for one's own actions and words, or those of another person.

Examples

- Give a talk to the class explaining either (i) the rules of a game or (ii) the technicalities of a hobby or (iii) how a new piece of computer equipment works.
- Role play: Firstly, a student who is justifying his behaviour in a situation where he or she has broken the rules and secondly, a teacher who is explaining the actions he or she intends to take in response to this.

Describe

- Give the listener(s) an account or representation of a place, a person or an event.

Examples

- Give a description of a memorable event as though you were reporting it for a radio station.
- Describe to a group of tourists or travellers, who are in your area for a day, a number of places they could visit, so that they can make an informed choice of itinerary.

Narrate

- Tell the story of an actual event, experience or incident.
- Tell a fictional story, as a narrator or as a character in it.

Examples

- Give an account to a friend of a memorable episode from childhood.
- Take the role of a character in a short story and recount what happens from your point of view (for example, the father in R K Narayan's short story 'A Hero'), or create your own character and give a monologue telling your story.

Triplet 2

Discuss, argue, persuade are mainly associated with pair or group work, as follows.

Discuss

- Speak together purposefully about something which may, for example, involve making a decision or clarifying an approach or viewpoint or preparing for a specified outcome.
- Exchange ideas and opinions.

Argue

- Present reasons in support of, or opposition to a course of action or an opinion.
- Attempt to prove or disprove that an assertion is true.
- Express, develop and justify a point of view about issues, events, behaviour, attitudes, values, etc by the use of logical or rational exposition.

Persuade

- Influence listener(s) to accept a point of view on a given topic or argument, or engage in particular practical actions, by the use of emotive and/or logical appeal.
- Influence a person to behave in a certain way or accept particular beliefs.

Examples

- Discuss the pros and cons of various charities before deciding which one to make a contribution to.
- Exchange views, in a small group of four or five, on a controversial question, for example 'Should the production of genetically modified crops be stopped?'
- In a role-play exercise, represent a body of opinion within a committee of students, which should have representatives of other points of view on it, arguing the case for a particular line of action and persuading others to agree. Possible topics might be school uniform or a proposal to change the school rules on mobile phones.

Assessment opportunities

As always with oral work, there is a need for a flexible approach to assessment opportunities and teachers should use their own judgement as to how best to allow their students to succeed. The information below relates to interpreting the assessment criteria grids (on pages 19-24) of the IGCSE English Language (Specification A) (4EA0) specification.

Individual talk

'Individual' implies a solo effort of some kind, a contribution in which the listeners' attention is centred on the student and in which the work is personally created. However, it does not necessarily mean that the material is entirely self-generated, provided that the contribution itself is self-contained. For instance, it might be an outcome from group work, typically when a student is given the role of representative, with the task of reporting back the findings of a smaller group discussion to a larger group. This would entail not just reading notes out but structure, development and attention to appropriate register for task and audience.

For any talk to merit inclusion in this category it would need to be sustained and a contribution of some significance. This should not necessarily be defined by time but by key features like the depth of detail or the extent to which ideas are expanded. A task should have a natural end rather than an arbitrary time limit. It need not be uninterrupted, but could be facilitated by questions or by comments. It does not need to be a set piece; it could be a developed personal contribution to group work. The individual student, however, must for a period of time be the centre of the listeners' attention.

The second paragraph in the 'general criteria' column (assessment criteria) provides the key descriptor for this; a hierarchy of skills is presented from merely showing 'a limited awareness of the listeners' for the lower bands, through to 'managing listeners' attention through sophisticated styles of delivery' for the highest bands. Also, the nature of the audience is important, for example the need 'to adapt to different audiences'; thus a mix of formal and informal contexts for a talk might provide opportunities for students to enhance attainment.

With regards to the 'specific criteria', an individual talk should be used to fulfil the first column of triplets, headed 'explain, describe, narrate'. The first bullet point in each band of this column refers to the quality of the language used. An ability to deal with questions and/or interruptions could be a key discriminator, so the final bullet point, which relates to this, might be especially helpful. The nature of the subject matter will also help to define achievement, especially to access band 7 – which requires 'challenging subject matter' – and higher bands.

Typical tasks might include some of the following:

- A talk on an area of interest – the more challenging the topic, the more likely the student is to access the higher grades. So a talk on a personal hobby might be less demanding than developing an idea. This might involve an informal context, for example explaining to a friend the pros and cons of a new mobile phone, or a formal context, for example explaining the benefits of an IGCSE type course to prospective students and their parents at an open evening. This could be extended to very demanding contexts, for instance giving a presentation as part of a school assembly or delivering a speech for a public speaking competition.
- Group representative roles in group work, which require reporting back to the class. This might involve presenting the views of the group after a discussion, possibly involving problem solving or summarising the ideas of the group.

- Main speeches in debates. These might be relatively brief in terms of time – a matter of a few minutes – but such speeches are very significant in the context of the task.

Examples of possible debating motions:

- this house believes that living in the country is better than living in town
- this house believes that mobile phones should be banned from schools.

The most successful topics are often those linked to issues of current interest.

- An individual presentation, for example giving a review (of a film, book, sporting event or musical event, etc) to the rest of the class or as part of a simulated radio/TV programme.
- Explanations of a specific process – for instance the rules of a game, or the route of a journey. These more concrete tasks may be helpful for students who lack confidence or specific interests.
- A talk based on a controversial subject would allow more able students to explain and present a strong point of view, thus providing access to the higher grades, whereas explaining the pros and cons of some aspect of life near to their own experience would benefit weaker students.

Pair work

Pair work may have similarities to small group work, but has the distinctive characteristic of providing direct alternation between two participants, who must therefore focus directly on listening and speaking to a single partner in order to complete a specified task. Use of pairs lends itself to a variety of possible interactions, of which the following are suggestions for possible activities, although they are not intended to be comprehensive or exhaustive. Pair work may be set up either as a formal activity, in which the pair has to prepare something for presentation (eg, to the teacher or the rest of the class), or it may be more informal, with the two working together as a preliminary to an activity involving a larger number of students.

Typical tasks:

These may include

- Working through the medium of a worksheet on a poem (eg, from the Anthology) to **discuss** its meaning, purpose, style or effects or a prose text, looking at theme, plot or character. This may include use of highlighting, colour coding or other annotation carried out normally by one of the pair but using the suggestions of both.
- A persuasive exercise in which one of the pair is attempting to **persuade** the other of a point of view or an action to take
- An instructional exercise in which one partner has to **explain** to the other how to carry out a task – for example, giving directions or assembling/using a product
- Planning and delivering a joint presentation to **discuss** or **explain** a topic, which might include preparation of a PowerPoint

- Comparing and **discussing** each other's thoughts about a topic – for example, early childhood recollections, or tastes in music or fashion
- One partner conducting an interview with the other, to **discuss** his or her views on a subject.

Group work

Group work shifts the focus of assessment from the solo performance to group interaction. Whilst the expression of a personal viewpoint is important in group work, its effectiveness will need to be gauged in the context of its impact and influence on the group and on the development of the discussion, or the task's purpose. Thus many skills are involved, including the ability to discuss, debate, argue a case, negotiate and work for a consensus view or solution. Being given a role as coordinator or chair for the group may stretch able students, but it is also possible to attain high marks without taking on a supervisory role.

The word 'group' should be interpreted broadly; its size could range from three to any number of students. The larger the group becomes, the more difficult it becomes to structure or manage the task, and the easier it is for less confident students to contribute little or nothing. Whilst there is no ideal number, groups of four or five students provide a good opportunity for everyone to contribute. The composition of the group is also vital; teachers will need to take into account social and academic factors to ensure that each group gels, and also to maximise the opportunities for all group members to make a contribution and provide genuine assessment opportunities.

For assessment purposes, the third paragraph of the 'general criteria' provides the key descriptor, and (as with individual contributions) there is a hierarchy of skills, relating to the ability to engage both with the purpose of the task and with other members of the group. At the lowest bands, students 'listen and make some contribution to discussion'; for mid-range bands, fuller participation is expected and more 'significant contributions', whilst at the highest bands students are expected to show an ability to 'use different ways to initiate, develop and shape discussion'.

The second of the 'specific criteria' columns, headed 'discuss, argue, persuade', provides the key definers for this kind of work. In the second column, there are three bullet points in the box for each grade, the first providing gradations in levels of contribution, ranging from the 'occasional' (Band 2) to the 'dynamic and influential' (Band 9). The Band 7 descriptor's reference to the management of collaborative tasks provides a useful benchmark; an ability to do this competently is a good indicator of higher-order skills. Similarly a Band 8 student should be able to both 'initiate' and 'sustain' discussion.

The second bullet point relates to the degree and effectiveness of the student's engagement with what is being discussed. At the lower bands the student merely responds generally, whilst at the mid-range bands they engage 'with others' ideas, recognising obvious assumptions and biases'. At the higher bands the response is required to be even more pro-active in its persuasiveness.

The third bullet point relates in the main to the quality and forcefulness of the expression. A key distinction in this respect is made at the Band 5/Band 6 borderline; a Band 5 student should be able to use language 'effectively to convey opinion', whereas the Band 6 student's command will give them the confidence to 'promote' a point of view.

Typical tasks might include some of the following.

- Problem-solving activities which encourage the group to explore different options and negotiate an outcome. This might involve work based on brainstorming ideas on a character or a theme in a literature text, or tasks which require a definite outcome and decision. For instance, what should be done with a sum of money raised for charity, or to resolve a school-based problem (What practical steps can be taken to improve the litter situation in the school?) This activity also provides an opportunity for individual reporting back to the class or teacher by the group spokesperson. An example is given at the end of this section.
- Discussions which require a group to prepare a presentation or report back to a third party may also be suitable, as they involve negotiation to achieve a specific outcome. For instance, a group might be asked to look at the presentation of a character or theme in an anthology text and report back the findings to the whole class. Or a group might be asked to draw up a programme of advice for new members of the school. Topics for consideration might include, tips for time management and dealing with homework; school rules and uniform; extra-curricular activities; coping with examination pressures; balancing academic work and leisure.
- Small-group discussions can be effective but require careful management. Ideally you need four or five students to a group to ensure the flow of discussion. The aim is that the discussion should be as spontaneous as possible. The topic needs to be fairly controversial and one to which teenagers can relate. Stimulus material is needed to provide a basis for ideas and a framework of questions to structure the discussion. One of the group needs to act as a chair or enabler; this student should be issued with the question sheet and asked to try to keep the discussion going by using the question sheet and their own ideas. Members of the group should ideally all face each other so that they interact with each other and not the assessor. The stimulus material should be removed so that the discussion is spontaneous. A target time of 12 minutes is about right, though this could be extended. Further outcomes could be a report by the chair of the group's ideas, or a formal classroom debate on the subject. An example is given at the end of this section.
- Class discussion, perhaps following a formal classroom debate. A debate will provide obvious opportunities for addressing the individual talk requirement, but sometimes this will develop into a spontaneous discussion where there will be opportunities for students to make 'useful contributions' (Band 4) and 'make an impact... through sensitive listening and by challenging and constructive contributions' (Band 7).

It is important, when assessing tasks with a component which requires reporting back, to distinguish between the discussion, which is group work, and the presentation by the group's representative, which should be considered as an individual talk.

Example tasks

Task 1: Small-group problem solving

The following is an example of a task that could provide opportunities for assessment of both group work and individual talk.

You will need groups of five students, one of whom will act as the chair.

The situation

The class has raised a small but significant amount of money to give to one charity. The group's task is to decide which one it should be.

The chair's task is to steer the group to a consensus view (if this is possible) and make the final decision. The four other members of the group should each choose a different charity to represent; the role of each is to argue the case to the others for giving the money to their charity.

Structure it like this:

1. The chair asks each committee member in turn to present the case for their choice of charity. This activity could be preceded by some research into the chosen charity.
2. Each member should speak for about two minutes, arguing the case for his or her choice of charity.
3. When the chair has listened to all the arguments, they should make a preliminary choice of charity, giving reasons (again about two minutes).
4. The chair will then ask, 'Do you agree?'
5. Presuming that not all members of the group accept this decision, a discussion follows, in which each member comments on the chair's decision, and the group considers the options fully, before (hopefully) coming to agreement. (Allow 10 minutes for this.)
6. The chair brings the discussion to an end. If a consensus has been arrived at, they should summarise the reasons for the choice. If consensus is impossible (it usually is!) the chair will need to stop the argument, make a decision and explain clearly to the group the reasons for the decision.
7. Allowing the chair to present the committee's findings and decision to the rest of the class could extend the task.

The discussion component (5) constitutes group work; assess each student's contribution using the specific criteria in the 'discuss, argue, persuade' (column 2). The presentations (2,3,6,7) may be assessed as individual talk; both columns of triplets may be needed in arriving at a mark.

Task 2: Pair work discussion and whole-class debate

Introductory stimulus sheet

Clones

Twenty years ago, a famous BBC children's television programme called 'Dr. Who' showed the intrepid Doctor being cloned. What happened was that the Doctor was put into a cabinet with a glass door, some buttons were pushed, and seconds later there was a duplicate Doctor in the adjacent cabinet. The Doctor had been cloned. It's a classic piece of science fiction – but the science fiction is rapidly becoming science fact.

Of course, instant duplicate copies of people is still fantasy, but the technique of producing biological copies of people that are **younger** than the original is a real possibility. The first breakthrough in cloning came in 1997 when a team of Scottish scientists astonished the world by announcing that they had successfully cloned an adult sheep. This was the first time that a mammal had been cloned.

In a process called 'nuclear transplantation' the scientist took an udder cell of a six-year-old ewe and transplanted the nucleus into an unfertilised egg of a second sheep, from which the original nucleus had been removed. This egg and the new cell were fused with electric pulses and the egg began to divide normally and developed into an embryo. Then it was implanted into a third sheep which gave birth to a lamb that was the genetically identical twin of the sheep from which the mammary cells were taken. Thus Dolly was born and the only physical difference between her and the first sheep was that Dolly was younger.

A similar method could be used to clone humans, but the process is not as easy as it sounds. It took nearly 300 sheep to produce Dolly. Scientists began by trying to fuse 277 adult cells with an equal number of eggs: this yielded only 29 embryos, which resulted in just 10 pregnant sheep, only one of which successfully gave birth, bringing Dolly into the world. Given these odds, it would take **dozens** of surrogate mothers just to give birth to **one** human clone.

Subsequent animal cloning attempts have had mixed results. A kitten has been cloned, but an attempt to clone an Indian bison – an endangered species – by inserting DNA from an adult bison's skin cells failed when the baby calf died after only two days. Also nobody knows how a clone will age. Dolly was cloned from a six-year-old clone and so the nucleus of all her cells was already six years old when she was born. How this will affect how long she lives is an unanswered question, but it has been reported that she is already suffering from arthritis.

People don't know what to think about cloning. Some take it lightly – one American website gathered names for a petition to clone Elvis Presley – whilst others take it very seriously. Overall opinions are deeply divided on whether human cloning should go ahead. Some scientists say that cloning offers many benefits, for instance by getting rid of hereditary diseases or helping infertile couples have babies, whilst others think that it should be banned and point to the dangers of creating 'designer babies' or a 'genetic underclass'.

Since the possible developments in cloning raises such questions, it's urgently important that they should be considered **now**. Already an American sect has claimed it cloned two babies, but produced no scientific proof. More seriously, a team led by an Italian doctor has announced its readiness and keenness to start cloning humans.

Acknowledgements to NFER and the Learning Network. Clones.

Questions for discussion

1. Would you like a clone made of you?
Give your reasons.
2. How do you think cloned children would think about themselves?
3. Do you think human cloning, or research into it, should be forbidden?
Give your reasons.
4. What are the arguments, if any, in favour of human cloning?
5. Do you think animal cloning should be allowed to continue?
Give your reasons.

Discussion and debate topic

'Human cloning, and research into it, should be banned.'

- This may be approached as a pair work task, in which two students discuss the topic and then present their views to a formal discussion.
- Alternatively, it may be treated as a formal debate topic. In this case, you will need two teams of three speakers, a proposer (or opposer), a seconder and a third speaker, each to speak in turn. The first two speakers should present the case for or against the motion. The next two speakers should develop their side's argument and should aim to deal with points raised by the previous speeches of the other team. These speeches should be significant enough to allow for assessment as individual talks. Then an opportunity should be given to the rest of the class to make a contribution to the debate before a vote is taken.

Task 3: Group work and individual talk assessment

This provides a relatively formal context in which students may be assessed for **both** individual talk **and** group work.

Groups of five or six are needed. One member of the group will also need to act as chairperson, or this role can be rotated through the group.

Each student should deliver a talk, lasting three to four minutes, on a topic of their own choice. Each talk is followed by a discussion (about three minutes) by the whole group of the issues raised by it.

Individual talk assessments will be based on the student's presentation of their topic, whilst the group work assessment will be based on each student's contribution to **all** the discussions.

Whilst this is a very efficient way of addressing the specification requirements, there are some dangers. A strict control of time will probably be necessary; the target should be to assess a group of six, in 45 minutes.

Topics will need to be chosen and presented to stimulate discussion, not questions and answers. Factual talks may constrict the opportunities for discussion and hence for assessment. Also (as in all oral work) students must be discouraged from **reading** their speeches. Brief notes are acceptable, but a talk which is basically an essay read aloud cannot be assessed for Speaking and Listening.

An advantage of this structure is that it allows students to demonstrate higher skills, like taking on the role of chair (the first bullet point of the Band 7 assessment criteria refers to the management of collaborative tasks), but a disadvantage is that it can be very time consuming.

Resources

Please note that while resources are correct at the time of publication, they may be updated or withdrawn from circulation. Website addresses may change at any time.

Anthology

Students will be given the *Edexcel Anthology for IGCSE and Certificate qualifications in English Language and Literature* which will be available to download free of charge from the Edexcel website.

Textbooks

There is useful support material for some aspects of the course in:

Addison R, Foster D, Taylor P – *Edexcel IGCSE English Language A and B Student Book* Published 2011 ISBN 9780435991265

Textbooks which provide practise in reading and writing skills – comprehension; writing in different forms – will also be suitable for this qualification.

Websites

The following websites provide useful teaching ideas on writing for different purposes.

www.bbc.co.uk/education/gcsebiteseize	GCSE revision site including resources for English
www.englishresources.org	Free teaching and revision sources
www.teachit.co.uk	Teaching and revision resources for teachers

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