

Examiners' Report/
Principal Examiner Feedback

Summer 2016

Pearson Edexcel International GCSE
in English Language B (4EB0)
Paper 01

Edexcel and BTEC Qualifications

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

Pearson: helping people progress, everywhere

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

Summer 2016

Publications Code 4EB0_01_1606_ER

All the material in this publication is copyright

© Pearson Education Ltd 2016

Introduction

The texts were accessible across the full range of abilities and enabled candidates to respond appropriately. Some examiners commented on the topical nature of the texts and the engagement that the candidates showed.

Better candidates were able to engage fully with both texts and respond with sensitivity and fluency. In their writing they produced lively and confident responses which were well controlled and accurate. Weaker candidates sometimes struggled to understand the passages. Their writing lacked coherence and the use of idiomatic English.

Most examiners commented that a significant number of candidates do not use own words in the questions that ask for them. It is essential that candidates should try to use their own words in order to be successful in responding to these questions.

There are still candidates who copy out all or considerable chunks of the extracts in response to Question 11. This can never be a successful way to respond as the candidate is required to produce their own work and show the ability to adapt the original texts for a different audience and purpose. Similarly responses to Question 12 should be original and not prepared essays or re-worked plots from novels, games or films.

Some responses to Question 11 and 12 lacked paragraphing, not just the weaker ones. Candidates must understand that the lack of effective paragraphing will limit the success of the response.

There was evidence of some good teaching and learning in the responses to this exam and examiners commented that many candidates seemed well prepared on the whole.

Section A (Questions 1-10)

This consists of mainly short answer questions that require candidates to locate and retrieve relevant information. Some questions required candidates to use their own words. Question 10 is longer requiring candidates to give a personal response and justify it with references to the text. There were some very good answers to questions 1-9 but many candidates continued to have difficulty with the requirement for own words thus limiting their performance. Questions 1, 3, 5 & 8 generally produced successful responses although examiners did comment that a few candidates lost marks because they referred to the wrong part of the text in their responses and Question 8 seemed to provide a few candidates with problems in selecting appropriate material. Examiners commented that responses to questions requiring candidates to use their own words (2, 4, 6

& 7) quite often had direct lifting from the texts. This seemed to be a continuing problem, with some candidates using quotations from the texts in quotation marks which is not a successful way to respond to this type of question. Examiners commented that candidates tended to use key words and phrases exactly as written in the extracts. However some examiners commented positively on candidates' attempts to use their own words. Centres need to work with candidates to develop their vocabulary and reinforce that candidates must attempt to produce responses to these questions using their own words.

Question 9 - a significant number of candidates did not use their own words for their points despite the rubric which meant they could not achieve any marks. A number of candidates used quotation marks for their points suggesting they do not understand the requirement to use own words. Similarly a number of candidates produced paraphrases of their chosen support as their point – often too close to the text to be rewarded. However the majority of candidates were able to identify relevant points and provide support for them. The majority made the more obvious points about the value of social networking and the problems faced by teenagers. When candidates had made an appropriate point in their own words they were generally able to choose appropriate support and therefore score full marks. However there were some examples of random supporting quotations which had nothing to do with the point made. Some examiners commented that a few candidates did not seem to understand what is required in response to this question. Centres need to continue to work with candidates to ensure they understand that they must use their own words for the point made and then provide a quotation that supports the point.

Question 10 provided varied responses with most candidates able to make some sort of choice but only the more able could provide developed ideas and close reference to the texts that the task required. There was no obvious preference between the texts, but there was frequently evidence of genuine engagement and enthusiasm about the subject matter. There were some clear responses to this task showing that candidates had been well prepared for this question and had a secure understanding of what is required. If candidates are able to offer two clear reasons why they have chosen a text and support them with two clear references (quotations or developed explanation) and a clear reason for not picking the other text with appropriate support they will produce a successful response. Better responses had clearly identified reasons and appropriate support for their choices. There were some candidates who only responded on their chosen text which limited their achievement. Weaker responses tended to paraphrase the texts, retelling the passages. Some weaker candidates found it easy to highlight which text they preferred but struggled to explain the reasons why and made their choice based on the difficulty of the vocabulary or that they thought one of the texts was boring or made very

general points which could be written about any text e.g. 'it is a good read'. These problems suggest that some candidates have not been prepared for this task and unfortunately this limited candidates' achievement. Some examiners commented that the responses to this question have improved over recent series. Centres will need to continue to work with candidates to make sure they have a clear understanding of valid ways of responding to texts.

Section B (Question 11)

There was evidence of good teaching and learning in the responses to this section.

There was some evidence of planning which was pleasing. The most useful plans were relatively short but allowed candidates to focus and organise their ideas effectively. Unfortunately long plans and re-drafting wasted time and often affected the final response as it was rushed. Plans should be in the answer booklet rather than on an additional sheet.

Most candidates understood the requirement of the task and were able to use the appropriate register for a speech to peers. It was generally felt candidates engaged with this task and some produced lively and convincing responses. The topic of the environment seemed to engage the majority of the candidates. There were some responses that did not use the ideas from the texts as a focus for their responses but better candidates were able to integrate ideas from the texts with their own points very effectively. Others did not cover the three bullet points in sufficient detail (the second one on why people may be concerned was most commonly missed). To gain high marks, candidates should cover a good range of points in detail. Some relied too heavily on the text and quoted or copied sections into their speech, impacting on the style of the speech. Some examiners commented that there was often evidence of real engagement with audience and purpose and some candidates wrote passionately and powerfully on this topic. Examiners commented positively on the range of techniques used successfully by candidates such as direct address and use of rhetorical questions. Many candidates were able to adopt an appropriate register and there was clear evidence of an understanding of purpose, audience and format required. However some candidates had problems sustaining the required register throughout their response. Examiners commented that some candidates only acknowledged the register at the beginning and ending of their response, rather than maintain it through the whole response. Some candidates did not use the conventions of speech and their responses were more like essays than speeches. A few candidates wrote letters. Examiners commented that some candidates directly lifted content from the original texts which affected the overall quality of the response but

some felt that this was less than in previous series. Language controls were not always secure, especially grammar, and some responses lacked paragraphing. The three bullet points provide a rudimentary structure which should help students to use basic paragraphing. Centres need to remind candidates that lack of accurate paragraphing will limit their achievement. Centres should continue to work to ensure candidates have a clear idea of how to adapt ideas from texts and how to write appropriately for different audiences and purposes.

Section C (Question 12)

12b was the most popular question.

There was evidence of some good preparation and teaching in this section.

There was evidence of planning which is to be encouraged. However the use of very long plans or draft essays is to be discouraged as they are not a good use of time. Candidates should be encouraged to plan their response in the answer booklet rather than on separate additional sheets.

Examiners, as always, commented on how much they enjoyed reading the responses in this section.

Question 12a produced some well written responses with ambitious vocabulary and clear and developed arguments. There was evidence of genuine engagement with the topic of teamwork in some of the responses. Many candidates focused on why we need team work. Better responses explored the pros and cons of team work and this allowed them to produce more fully developed responses. There were very appropriate references to football teams, Alan Sugar, Apple and Bill Gates. There were a few good responses where candidates wrote from their own experiences of teamwork, and some more sophisticated responses where they considered the world of business. Other candidates discussed the value of group work in schools and colleges. Weaker candidates had problems with both maintaining a clear argument and structuring their responses. Better responses were fully controlled with accurate spelling, punctuation and grammar, however the weaker responses had poor language controls and weak paragraphing. Centres need to ensure that candidates who choose this option are well prepared in argumentative, discursive and rhetorical techniques and are able to develop their ideas effectively.

Question 12b: The title 'The Power Cut' produced some original ideas with a wide range of interpretations. A full range of responses was seen. Many candidates handled this task with enthusiasm and the ability to develop a well-constructed short story was often very impressive. Some examiners commented that some of the ideas were a little far-fetched. Some

candidates were too ambitious and used either too much information or an over-complicated plot. A few responses seemed to have had little to do with the title. There were some successful first person narrator tales which enabled the panic affecting the mind-set of the protagonist to be explored. A number of candidates interpreted the title differently, for example one response which told the story of a battle, with the losing side having its power 'cut' or removed. Better candidates created a sense of tension or humour, and made a conscious effort to include descriptive techniques rather than simply linking together a series of events. There was some evidence of prepared essays and also the use of films, games and books for plot lines especially on murders, ghosts or zombies. There were some responses that ended with 'and then I woke up and it was all a dream' which is never a successful ending to a narrative. Better responses were able to create tension and use effective description and dialogue with good technical accuracy. Weaker responses lacked development of ideas or the ability to maintain a narrative together with poor language controls. Centres need to ensure candidates have a secure understanding of narrative techniques and the ability to develop a coherent personal response.

Question 12c produced some well written responses that were fully focused on the task of describing the area where they lived. Examiners commented with enthusiasm about the quality of some of the responses and that the information provided about the areas candidates live was fascinating. Descriptions were often vivid and used a range of engaging and clear vocabulary. Others were very brief and there were also some ironic ones painting a bleak picture of the place they were describing. Some candidates wrote passionately about their homes and neighbourhoods, appreciating the aspects that were its distinctiveness and character, such as the diversity, facilities, sense of community and working together. Sense descriptions were occasionally used exceptionally well. A few candidates attempted to use an extremely extended vocabulary, but sometimes this felt awkward and forced. Better responses were detailed and lively with fully developed ideas. Weaker candidates tended to produce responses that tended to be pedestrian and lacked detail or were merely lists of features of their area. Better responses had full control of spelling, punctuation and grammar. Weaker candidates had poor language controls and weak paragraphing. Centres need to ensure candidates are aware of the techniques they can use in descriptive writing and also ensure candidates develop a varied vocabulary which they can use appropriately.

Quality of Written Communication (QWC)

This is assessed in Questions 11 and 12.

Better responses were accurate using a wide range of grammatical constructions, punctuation and vocabulary.

As in previous series, there was evidence of good spelling and reasonably accurate punctuation but most examiners commented on candidates who had problems with grammar and expression. Some of this was unidiomatic English but there were also problems with tenses and sentence structure. These problems limited the effectiveness of the communication.

Centres need to focus on developing accurate and effective grammatical structuring and idiomatic English to enable candidates to express themselves clearly and access the higher mark bands.

Summary

Most successful candidates:

- read the texts with insight and engagement
- selected relevant points in response to the reading questions
- used their own words in response to questions that required them
- wrote clearly with a good sense of audience and purpose in an appropriate register in response to Question 11
- were able to select and adapt relevant information for Question 11
- engaged the reader with creative writing that was clearly expressed, well developed and controlled (Question 12)
- used ambitious vocabulary
- wrote with accuracy in spelling, punctuation and grammar.

Least successful candidates:

- did not engage fully with the texts
- were not able to find enough relevant points in response to the reading questions
- did not attempt to use their own words in response to questions that required them

- did not write in an appropriate register in response to Question 11
- were not able to select and adapt relevant information for Question 11
- sometimes copied from the original texts in response to Question 11
- were not able to sustain and develop ideas clearly in response to Section C (Question 12)
- sometimes used prepared essays or copied plots from films, games and novels in response to Section C (Question 12)
- did not demonstrate accuracy in spelling, punctuation and grammar.

Grade Boundaries

Grade boundaries for this, and all other papers, can be found on the website on this link:

<http://www.edexcel.com/iwantto/Pages/grade-boundaries.aspx>

