



Examiners' Report  
Principal Examiner Feedback

January 2022

Pearson Edexcel International GCSE  
In English Language (4EB1)  
Paper 01

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## **Introduction**

The texts about places to stay were accessible across the full range of abilities and examiners commented that candidates were able to engage with the tasks and respond appropriately. Some examiners commented that candidates found the fiction text – *Hotel du Lac* – more challenging, but other examiners commented that candidates responded positively to both texts.

There was evidence of some good teaching and learning in preparation for this examination in the responses seen and some candidates seemed well prepared on the whole. However, examiners did comment that a significant number of responses to Question 3 and Question 6 did not focus on the writers' techniques and their intended effects, instead describing the content of the texts. While examiners saw some good responses across all the questions, several examiners commented that there were fewer higher-level responses than in previous series, despite the accessibility of the texts, perhaps reflecting the continuing disruption to education caused by the pandemic.

Better candidates were able to engage fully with both texts and their responses sometimes demonstrated exploration and analysis. Their writing responses were engaging and effective. They were well controlled and accurate.

Weaker candidates sometimes struggled to understand the passages and the questions. Their writing was often brief or lacked coherence and had weak language controls.

There were some candidates who made references to the pictures in their responses to Question 3, Question 6 and Question 7. This is not a valid way to respond to texts as the pictures are not language or structural devices chosen for effect by the writers. A small number of candidates did not attempt Question 7, suggesting that they may have had problems with timing.

There were a few candidates who copied out all, or considerable parts, of the extracts in response to Question 8 although examiners commented that this was less prevalent this series. This is not a successful way to respond as candidates are required to produce their own work and show the ability to adapt the original texts for a different audience and purpose.

There was some evidence of planning and proofreading which is to be encouraged. Some examiners commented that candidates did not always plan responses to Sections B and C and plans might have benefitted them.

Candidates should be encouraged to plan their response in the answer booklet rather than on separate additional sheets.

## **Section A (Questions 1-7)**

This consists of two short retrieval questions and a question on the writer's use of language and structure to create effects on each text and a question requiring candidates to compare the two texts.

### **Question 1**

This is a straightforward question on Text One which does not require candidates to use their own words.

The majority of candidates responded correctly, identifying missing attractions such as: 'sauna', 'telephones' and 'music'. Rare incorrect responses referred to 'scenic guided tours', which did not answer the question, or incorrectly identified that there was no terrace or bar.

Candidates must ensure they read the text and the question carefully, ensuring they select material from the correct section of the text.

### **Question 2**

This is a straightforward question on Text One which does not require candidates to use their own words.

The majority of candidates responded correctly. Candidates provided correct examples of positive points about the hotel and its location, most commonly: 'the scenery', 'the view', 'cars could be hired', or 'the climate was pleasant'. Occasionally candidates offered responses that were too vague e.g. 'its location' or 'the resources of the town were not expensive' which is a misreading.

Candidates must ensure they read the question and the text carefully, ensuring they select material from the correct section of the text.

### **Question 3**

This question requires the candidate to explore how the writer uses language and structure to describe the Hotel du Lac.

Examiners commented that they did not see many higher-level responses. A small number of candidates thought that the passage was negative throughout or the writer was trying to persuade people to visit. Most candidates demonstrated some understanding of some of the techniques employed by the writer. They were able to identify features such as listing, the use of descriptive language and repetition. They used mostly appropriate examples to support their points but they did not always explain how these features helped the writer to describe the hotel. Examiners commented that the explanations sometimes consisted of simply giving generalised statements such as, 'this connected to the reader' (but not how) and 'this was very engaging to the reader' but with no explanation of how it was engaging.

Some candidates had unusual interpretations of the text, suggesting that the hotel was mysterious or ominous in some way. Some valid points could be made but the whole text does not support this interpretation. Successful candidates were able to explore language and use appropriate references to support points made. They showed a thorough understanding of language techniques and a thorough exploration of the effects of the various features such as the effects of

the use of tricolons, asyndetic listing and the contrasting positive and negative language applied to the Hotel du Lac and the hotels preferred by younger tourists. These candidates were able to develop points and show understanding of language through focusing on the specific effect of words and devices. They were able to use correct terminology to identify language features e.g. 'all household noises had to be silenced; no vacuuming was heard; no carts of dirty linen were glimpsed' (tricolon). Some successful candidates were able to identify the personification of the hotel and comment on its effect.

Less successful candidates produced responses that were content based and lacked focus on the writer's techniques. They wrote about 'what' the writer said rather than 'how' she presented her description of the Hotel du Lac. There was also evidence of 'feature spotting' where candidates identify (correctly) particular techniques used by the writer but do not link them to the description of the hotel or explain their effectiveness. Weaker responses contained lots of quotations from the text, often quite lengthy, which were left unexplained. Expressions were used such as 'she explained', 'she presented', 'she lists', but these were followed up by references to content, not to 'how' the writer achieved effects. Some weaker candidates re-told the text. Some did use quotations but these were used to support a narrative response, essentially explaining the content of the text. The weakest responses were simply summaries or direct copies of the text.

Centres need to remind candidates that this question asks **how** the writer achieves their effects not **what** they say.

#### **Question 4**

This is a straightforward question on Text Two which does not require candidates to use their own words.

Most candidates responded successfully, however a small number of candidates used the wrong part of the text. The most common correct responses were: '...its basement nightclub open until 4 am' and 'it promised little sleep'. The common incorrect responses which used the wrong part of the text were: 'bedbugs, and 'broken locks'.

Centres need to make sure that candidates read the question carefully and select their points from the correct part of the text.

#### **Question 5**

This is a straightforward question on Text Two which does not require candidates to use their own words.

Most candidates answered correctly. However there were a few incorrect responses such as: 'her room was on the fourth floor', which does not describe the room but where it is, or 'the writer was perplexed as to whether the room was bad or good', which is too vague.

Centres need to make sure that candidates read the question carefully.

## Question 6

The question asks the candidate how the writer presents her expectations and experiences of the Hans Brinker Hotel. Most examiners commented that candidates' performance on this question was similar to Question 3 but some examiners thought candidates found this text slightly easier to respond to. Most candidates were able to demonstrate some understanding of the writer's techniques and how these were used to present her expectations and experiences. They were able to select appropriate features of the text to write about such as the use of listing, alliteration and rhetorical questions, and make some relevant comments on the effects of these features.

Better candidates were thorough and supported their points with appropriate quotations, whilst exploring the effects on the reader. They explored how language and structural devices were used to present the writer's experiences and expectations and engaged with the informal tone of the piece, the use of first person throughout, the colloquial language and the humour and considered the effects of these features. Sometimes candidates were able to show thorough understanding of the language and structural devices used but then they failed to analyse the references that they used.

Less successful candidates produced responses that were content-based and lacked focus on the writer's techniques. They wrote about 'what' the writer said rather than 'how' she presented her expectations and experiences. Expressions were used such as 'she explained', 'she presented', 'she lists', but these were followed up by references to content, not to 'how' the writer achieved effects. Weaker candidates often identified a small range of features supported with lengthy quotations and simple comments. There was evidence of 'feature spotting' where candidates identify (correctly) particular language features but do not explain them. Weaker candidates tended to re-tell the content. Occasionally there was misunderstanding caused by only referring to the preconceptions of the hotel rather than the whole text. The weakest candidates simply copied out all or sections of the text with no comments of their own.

As with Question 3, centres need to remind candidates that this question asks **how** the writer achieves their effects not **what** they say.

## Question 7

This question requires candidates to compare how the writers convey their ideas and perspectives about places to stay.

Examiners noted that they did not see many higher-level responses to this question but the majority of candidates were able to identify and discuss basic comparisons and a few produced well-thought-out comparisons of the extracts. Some examiners commented that candidates did not support their comparisons with relevant textual references.

Examiners observed that an improvement from previous series was most responses did deal with both texts throughout their responses, rather than each text individually and then a brief comparative comment at the end. However some candidates are still writing about each text individually and then writing a comparative comment at the end. Examiners commented that these responses

were not as successful as those candidates whose responses were comparative throughout.

Most candidates were able to identify some relevant comparisons and use some valid references from the texts as support but they did not always develop their responses sufficiently. Comparative points that were made covered the different purposes of the texts (narrative and informative) and that Text One is fiction whereas Text Two is non-fiction. They also compared features of the texts such as the different forms (novel and review) and also the use of formal and informal language. There were some candidates who made good comparative points but offered no support for their points. Examiners commented that a significant number of candidates compared the hotels (i.e. the content) rather than how the writers presented ideas and perspectives about places to stay. Some attempted to compare the texts as if they were both reviews and/or both persuasive, unfortunately missing the different purposes of the texts.

Better candidates explored the similarities and differences of the two texts, comparing a range of ideas and perspectives and supporting these throughout with evidence. Better candidates were able to make a wide range of comparisons. They did not make general or obvious comparisons but focused on the writers' perspectives and intentions in writing each text. They were able to focus upon the methods used by both writers, with many considering the use of first-person form, description, authorial opinions, tone and humour. Language points that were compared included use of listing, contrast, positive and negative language and formal and informal language. The comparisons they used were balanced and carefully selected references were developed. They were able to structure their responses comparatively by taking the various features of the texts and comparing and contrasting them throughout.

Weaker candidates either did not compare or made few limited comparative comments. They wrote about one text and then the other without making comparisons or had a brief comparison at the beginning or end of their response. Sometimes the texts were only linked by a single phrase, e.g. 'Whereas in Text Two...' or candidates identified a feature in one text and simply commented that the other text did not have this particular feature. Weaker responses lacked supporting references and only made obvious comparisons about content. The weakest simply summarised the texts or parts of them with no comparisons at all. There were several cases of candidates using lists of comparisons, sometimes on charts or tables, with no real explanation or expansion of ideas. Some were even presented as bullet point lists. These may have been plans for unfinished responses. Some responses were very brief for a 15-mark question. There were also a number of blank responses. These issues may suggest problems with timing.

Centres will need to continue to work with candidates to make sure they have a clear understanding of valid ways of responding to texts. This should include how to analyse how writers use language and structure to achieve their effects and how to write comparative responses.

## **Section B (Question 8)**

There was evidence of some 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. Plans should be in the answer booklet rather than on an additional sheet. Examiners commented that candidates who planned their responses seemed to respond in a more focused manner.

Examiners commented that most candidates engaged with this task and some produced lively and convincing responses. Most candidates understood the requirement of the task and were able to use the appropriate register for a website contribution. The most successful responses had a good sense of audience and purpose and included personal touches, humour and rhetorical questions to engage the audience.

### **AO1**

The majority of candidates used the bullet points provided in the question to provide the content of their talk and some were able to make appropriate use of their own experiences to develop their points.

Most candidates were able to select and interpret the relevant information from both texts and were able to include details from at least two of the bullet points and many were able to cover all three bullet points. The biggest issue was the misreading of the first bullet point and writing about the different types of places people could stay, rather than the different types of people who stay in hotels. However some examiners commented that many candidates made at least some reference to different types of people. Most candidates drew their ideas from both texts equally with Text One providing some positive ideas and Text Two the negatives. Some were able to make appropriate use of their own experiences.

Better candidates used a wide range of appropriate points of information from both texts, supported with perceptive comments. They covered all the bullet points in detail, selecting the most relevant points from the texts and developing their ideas. A few used their own ideas very successfully. Better candidates were able to use all three bullet points, taking ideas from the texts and extending and personalising these, to produce convincing and persuasive contributions. Better candidates linked the different types of hotels with the types of people who go to hotels, pointing out that the Hotel du Lac would be perfect for people looking for a quieter holiday and that the Hans Brinker Hotel would be perfect for people looking for a lively experience.

Weaker candidates were sometimes able to select and interpret a small number of relevant points but their responses were often short and therefore did not include many details. Often, they only focused on one bullet point, generally the second or third. They sometimes described hotels that they had stayed in without really focusing on the bullet points.

Examiners commented that there were fewer candidates who lifted information from the texts or who used very close re-wording in this series.



#### **AO4**

Most candidates were able to adapt the material for the audience and purpose. Most responses were able to communicate clearly with their audience and were able to write in an appropriately informal tone and style for a website contribution. They made use of features like direct address and rhetorical questions to engage the audience. However some examiners commented some responses that communicated clearly were too formal for a website contribution and sometimes appeared to be essays. Some candidates used the given bullet points as sub-headings which helped them to address all aspects of the task. Better candidates were able to create a lively and engaging style that suggested they had a well-developed understanding of the required approach. Some were quite entertaining using a strong personal voice and humour. Better candidates were able to use personal experiences confidently and appropriately to relate to the audience. Their register was sustained throughout their responses.

Weaker candidates communicated at a basic level and had problems sustaining the required register throughout their response. Some weaker candidates did not convey any sense that this was supposed to be a website contribution, writing in a style that resembled a speech, a letter, an article or an essay. Some wrote very little or seemed to have run out of time.

#### **AO5**

There were some examples of successful responses with good levels of accuracy. Most candidates were able to use spelling, punctuation and grammar appropriately to deliver their message. They were able to communicate clearly with reasonably accurate sentence structures and a range of vocabulary. Spelling was often correct and many candidates tried hard to use a range of sentence structures and punctuation for effect. Most employed some paragraphing, sometimes using the given bullet points to help them. However some examiners commented that expression, grammar and punctuation were not always secure.

Better candidates used a varied range of correctly spelt vocabulary with some ambition and had a wide range of appropriate punctuation including the correct use of the colon, semi colon, exclamation marks and question marks as well as the usual full stops, commas and capital letters. They used a range of different sentence structures to help them create particular effects. These responses employed accurate paragraphing which could be for effect. There was often evidence of proofreading.

Weaker candidates sometimes struggled to communicate their ideas and their language controls were not always secure, especially grammar. Some examiners commented that weaker candidates had problems with grammar and expression, despite good spelling and punctuation. Other examiners noted that punctuation was an issue with candidates writing long, one sentence paragraphs or using very little sentence punctuation.

Common errors commented on by examiners were: missing basic sentence punctuation; the use of very long, unstructured sentences; comma splicing; missing or misused apostrophes; problems with homophones; misspelling of basic vocabulary; not capitalising 'I' for the personal pronoun; missing capital

letters at the beginning of sentences as well as random capital letters within sentences; verb tenses and other grammatical errors.

Centres should continue to work to ensure candidates have a clear idea of how to adapt ideas from texts and how to write appropriately and accurately for different audiences and purposes.

### **Section C (Questions 9, 10 and 11)**

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

Some examiners commented positively on evidence that candidates had proofread their work but other examiners observed that candidates would have benefitted from proofreading their work more carefully.

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

### **Question 9**

Examiners did not see many responses to this question.

### **AO4**

Some examiners commented positively on candidates' responses to this question and it was clear that many candidates who chose this question had been prepared to write in a persuasive and argumentative style. However other examiners thought that some candidates struggled to develop and sustain a response.

Most candidates were able to write in the appropriate discursive style. Ideas were usually well sign posted and the reader was appropriately addressed, with a range of ideas about whether travel broadens the mind. They were able to communicate their ideas successfully and understood the nature of discursive writing. Many were able to draw on their own experience of travelling and some offered examples where travel had broadened the minds of famous travellers such as Scott and Raleigh and the various discoveries that have been made by travellers. The benefits of discovering new languages, cultures, food, music and clothes were all included as ideas. Examiners commented that nearly all candidates thought that travel did broaden the mind.

Better candidates adopted a persuasive and argumentative tone and had clearly been prepared to write this kind of response. They wrote in an engaging and lively manner, offering strong arguments with some balance where they considered both sides of the discussion before completing with a strong conclusion. They were able to link travel to not just having a jolly time, but to understanding different cultures, so it contributed to community cohesion. Some argued convincingly that travel contributed to climate change, an unnecessary indulgence with the internet being a better substitute. Some examiners commented that they saw a few very impressive responses.

Weaker candidates had problems with both maintaining a clear argument and structuring their responses. They made some attempt to answer and address the statement but these responses were often unstructured or narrative, listing the candidate's travel experiences. Weaker candidates sometimes struggled to find enough ideas and these responses became repetitive or were brief.

Centres need to ensure that candidates who choose this option are well prepared in argumentative, discursive and rhetorical techniques and are able to develop and sustain their ideas effectively.

### **Question 10**

Question 10 was the most popular question.

### **AO4**

Some examiners commented positively on the quality of some of the responses to the title 'The Invitation'.

Candidates interpreted this question in a wide range of ways. The popular invitations were to parties (welcome and unwelcome), weddings, award ceremonies, interviews, to join (sports) teams or to take part in a competition. A number of candidates successfully used personal experiences to inform their narrative. Occasionally candidates were over-ambitious, producing extremely long responses with complicated plotlines. Often candidates chose to reveal the invitation at the end of their writing and, whilst in some cases this appeared to be deliberate, examiners commented that sometimes it seemed to be an afterthought. There were some fairly suspenseful ones where it became apparent that the invitation wasn't what it seemed and it was clear that the narrator was getting into a dangerous situation. Often this was handled well with the danger being suggested, rather than spelt out in gruesome detail. Examiners did comment on the number of unnecessarily gruesome and gory stories. It was felt that these were perhaps influenced by themes on contemporary television, films and computer games, in particular *Squid Game*. These unpleasant plots sometimes struggled to maintain focus on the title. They were plot heavy and derivative, and it was often hard to follow the track of what was happening.

Most candidates were able to communicate with clarity, with an appropriate sense of purpose and some apt use of form, tone and register. They were able to develop their narrative successfully with an appropriate tone and some character development. They were able to present a clear plot, in a suitable register and use direct speech competently.

Better candidates were able to write well-crafted stories which were often lively and entertaining. They were not over-adventurous but were written with clarity and a sense of purpose. They often presented stories obviously based on their own lives, and these were the ones who showed narrative flair, handling their plots with some skill and avoiding crude simplicity in characterisation. The best responses were tightly plotted and covered a limited timescale.

Weaker candidates lacked development of ideas or the ability to maintain a narrative or tended to write simplistic narratives without any great awareness of form, tone and register. They struggled with clarity, with over-complicated or

muddled storylines and weak endings that were not closely related to the events that had unfolded. They used plots from films and computer games which were barely adapted for purpose. Their responses were often lengthy with repetitive and unfocused plot ideas. Sometimes the invitation was added at the end of the story with little signposting making the response to the title tenuous. Examiners commented that candidates were rarely well-served by writing very long responses.

Centres need to ensure candidates have a secure understanding of narrative techniques and the ability to develop a coherent personal response without relying on plots from other sources.

## **Question 11**

### **AO4**

Some candidates produced well-written responses that were fully focused on the task of describing a time they stayed away from home.

There were accounts of first nights at boarding school, school trips away from home, camping trips with a group of friends, a first holiday without their families or staying over at a friend's house. A few (mature) candidates wrote about business trips away from their spouses and children. There were also some written from the perspective of soldiers on deployment which offered the opportunity to explore feelings in detail.

Most candidates were able to express and order information and describe some of their thoughts and feelings about a time they stayed away from home. Some examiners commented that there was a tendency to narrative responses to this descriptive task, however it was felt that most responses included enough reference to thoughts and feelings, even if there was a narrative element used to explain why the candidate had been away from home.

Better candidates wrote in a perceptive and insightful manner, sharply focused on engaging the reader. They developed their responses using wide-ranging and apt vocabulary and through detailed description of their thoughts and feelings. Their tone was convincing and there was a clear focus and avoidance of repetition. Some used key childhood experiences and candidates who answered thus often wrote effectively and affectingly of what were evidently strong and redolent memories. Examiners commented that better candidates described their feelings more comprehensively and there were vivid, engaging descriptions of thoughts and feelings.

Weaker responses were often pedestrian, undeveloped or unclear. These responses often drifted into narrative or showed a limited descriptive ability. They described places and events rather than thoughts and feelings or wrote a narrative with little description, sometimes with much dialogue, about staying away from home for the first time. Clarity was often an issue with these responses. This limited their achievement.

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.

## **AO5 Comments across Section C (Questions 9, 10 and 11)**

(The comments for AO5 on Section C are similar to the comments on AO5 for Section B).

Most candidates were able to express and order information and ideas with some correctly spelt vocabulary, some control of punctuation and some accurate paragraphing. Most candidates were able to communicate successfully even if there were errors.

Better responses were accurate using a wider range of grammatical constructions, punctuation and vocabulary. They were able to shape their writing, using an increasingly wide vocabulary, with spelling invariably correct and punctuation used for effect. The very best offered cohesion, an increasingly complex vocabulary and the use of punctuation to craft their responses. Weaker candidates had difficulty communicating clearly. Less successful responses often did not paragraph at all and used basic sentence structures which became quite repetitive. Weaker candidates had numerous errors of spelling, punctuation and grammar.

There was some evidence of good spelling and reasonably accurate punctuation but most examiners commented on the number of candidates who had problems with grammar and expression such as problems with tenses and sentence structure, including missing words. Some examiners also commented on the use of over-ambitious vocabulary which was not effective or appropriate. Some examiners noted that the use of paragraphing was an issue for some candidates. These problems limited the effectiveness of the communication.

Common errors commented on by examiners were: missing basic sentence punctuation; comma splicing; missing or misused apostrophes; problems with homophones; misspelling of basic vocabulary; not capitalising 'I' for the personal pronoun; missing capital letters at the beginning of sentences as well as random capital letters within sentences; grammatical errors such as problems with sentence structures; subject-verb agreement and verb tenses.

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

### **Summary**

Most successful candidates:

- read the texts with insight and engagement
- were able to explore language and structure and show how these are used by writers to achieve effects in response to Questions 3 and 6
- were able to select a wide range of comparisons and explore the writers' ideas and perspectives in response to Question 7
- were able to select and adapt relevant information from the texts for Question 8
- wrote clearly with a good sense of audience and purpose in an appropriate register in response to Question 8

- engaged the reader with creative writing that was clearly expressed, well developed and controlled (Questions 9, 10 and 11)
- 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 identify language and structure or made little comment on how these are used by writers to achieve effects in response to Questions 3 and 6
- were not able to compare the texts or offered very limited comparisons in response to Question 7
- sometimes narrated the texts in response to Questions 3, 6 and 7
- were not able to select and adapt relevant information for Question 8
- did not write in an appropriate register in response to Question 8
- sometimes copied from the original texts in response to Question 8
- were not able to sustain and develop ideas clearly in response to Section C (Questions 9, 10 and 11)
- did not demonstrate accuracy in spelling, punctuation and grammar.