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# Examiners' Report Principal Examiner Feedback

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Pearson Edexcel International GCSE  
In English Language (4EB1) Paper 1R

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## **Introduction**

There were a relatively small number of candidates this series.

The texts about technology were accessible across the full range of abilities and candidates were able to engage with the topics and tasks and respond appropriately.

More successful candidates were able to engage fully with both texts and respond thoughtfully and articulately. Their writing responses were often engaging and effective and were well controlled and accurate. Less successful candidates sometimes struggled to understand the passages and the questions. Their writing was often pedestrian or lacked coherence and had weak language controls.

## **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 retrieval question on Text One which does not require candidates to use their own words.

The majority of candidates correctly identified one of the difficulties that Eunice Sewaphe faced. The most popular difficulties were: 'no street address' and 'difficult to apply for a job'. A few candidates gave long responses often with three or four correct points. This wastes time on a low tariff question.

Candidates must ensure they read the text and the question carefully.

### **Question 2**

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

Most candidates successfully identified a way that the *what3words* app is helpful, commonly 'to aid drone delivery' or 'if a country has no universal address system'. Some responses were limited to one word which is not always the clearest way to respond and candidates should be encouraged to choose an appropriate phrase from

the given extract. There were also some candidates who responded using the wrong line references.

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

### Question 3

The question asks the candidate to explain how the writer presents the information about the *what3words* app and how it is useful.

Candidates demonstrated at least some understanding of the text and some awareness of the devices used to present ideas. Some candidates were able to select examples of techniques used and provide some appropriate references but they did not always explain how these features helped the writer to achieve his effects. Candidates commented on the use of lists, alliteration, the use of names and organisations and the use of numbers and statistics. Some candidates made generic comments such as 'it makes it more interesting' or 'it makes it more effective' which did not clearly explain how the writer has achieved her effects. Some candidates wrote lengthy responses but did not use any quotations to support their comments.

A small number of more successful candidates were able to engage with the writer's use of language and write confidently about the writer's methods with appropriate evidence. They maintained a focus on the techniques the writer used. They developed their points and began to explore how the writer presented the information rather than what the writer said. They sometimes referred to the tone and the use of the optimistic final sentence.

Less successful candidates produced responses that were almost entirely content based without much focus on the writer's techniques. These tended to focus on 'what' the writer said rather than 'how' the writer presented his ideas. In some responses many quotations were used but these supported a content-based narrative or summary response rather than focusing on the writer's techniques. Some candidates made the generic comment that there were several simple and complex sentences but failed to consider what that effect might be. There was also much evidence of 'feature spotting' where candidates identify (correctly) particular language features and sometimes give examples but do not explain their effectiveness.

Centres need to remind candidates that this question asks **how** the writer achieves his/her effects not **what** he/she says.

#### **Question 4**

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

Most candidates answered this correctly. Popular points identified were: 'transport efficiency', 'access to food' and 'access to healthcare'. It was noted that some candidates used their own words to respond to this question – this is acceptable but it is not a requirement of the task.

Candidates need to make sure they have read the question carefully.

#### **Question 5**

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

The majority of candidates answered this correctly. Common correct responses included 'hackers and scammers', 'can have a detrimental effect on our mental health' and 'a negative impact of self esteem'. There were not many incorrect responses but 'an insight into the waking lives of others in real time' was given by some candidates. This is not given as a problem of technology. It was noted that some candidates used their own words to respond to this question – this is acceptable but it is not a requirement of the task.

Candidates need to make sure they have read the question carefully.

#### **Question 6**

The question asks the candidate to explain how the writer presents his ideas about the ways technology has affected 21<sup>st</sup> century life.

Candidates' responses had similar qualities to the responses to Question 3 although examiners commented that responses were sometimes slightly more successful.

Most candidates were able to identify and explain what the writer was saying and sometimes the language used to express this although there was often a tendency to describe what the chosen examples said rather than how the language was used for effect. Most candidates were able to make some comment on the use of sub-headings, listing, statistics and direct address.

More successful candidates were able to explore the writer's use of language and structure using a variety of examples. They made valid points about the use of positive language, the effect of the use of direct address and the informal tone. A few commented effectively on the description of the mobile phone as a 'pocket-sized portal'.

As with Question 3, less successful candidates produced responses that were summaries of the content supported by quotations with limited references to the writer's techniques. Some candidates wrote a summary of the text but did not offer any comments on language or structure. Some candidates simply re-stated their chosen quotations. Sometimes candidates made generic comments such as 'it makes it more interesting' or 'it helps the reader to visualise' which do not clearly explain how the writer has achieved his effects. There was also evidence of 'feature spotting' where candidates identify (correctly) particular language features but do not explain them.

As with Question 3, centres need to remind candidates that this question asks **how** the writer achieves his/her effects not **what** he/she says.

### **Question 7**

This question requires candidates to compare how the writers present their ideas and perspectives about technology.

Most candidates were able to identify and discuss some basic comparisons and candidates made reference to both texts. Popular points of comparison were the level of formality in each text and that both texts are about technology. Some candidates wrote about each text separately with a comparative section at the end which did not allow them to fully develop the comparisons. More successful responses made points of comparison throughout linking the texts.

More successful candidates developed a balanced approach in comparing the texts. They developed a wider range of comparisons and explored the writers' ideas and perspectives. They were able to analyse similarities and differences and compare the language as well as the content. There were a number of candidates who offered valid comparisons but did not provide any kind of support or references to the texts. Some candidates used bullet points to identify relevant points but sometimes did not compare the points identified. These are not successful ways to respond to this question.

Weaker candidates often compared the content. Weaker candidates sometimes wrote about one text and then added some undeveloped points about the other text at the

end. Sometimes candidates identified a feature in one text and simply commented that the other text did not have this particular feature. The least successful candidates wrote very little.

Centres will need to continue to work with candidates to make sure they have a clear understanding of valid ways of responding to texts in Section A. 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 some 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. Plans should be in the answer booklet rather than on an additional sheet.

It was generally felt candidates engaged with this task and some produced lively and convincing responses. The most successful responses had a strong sense of audience and purpose and included personal touches and rhetorical language to engage the audience.

### **AO1**

It was clear that the majority of candidates knew about technology and they offered a range of examples of different types of technology, both from the texts and their own experience. Examples of different types of technology discussed included laptops, tablets and smart phones as well as Google maps and GPS, different kinds of apps including health and fitness related apps, social media and technology used in hospitals and businesses. The advantages of using technology often related to health and lifestyle as well as the convenience and access to information. Regular references were made to the pandemic and how technology had helped to overcome obstacles and helped to keep us safe and working. The disadvantages often mentioned were problems with online safety and social isolation.

Most candidates referred to the three bullet points and managed to cover a reasonable number of points.

More successful candidates used a systematic approach and fully developed the ideas from the texts or developed their own ideas based on their experiences. They offered a good number of relevant points and made well-focused comments about different

types of technology and what the advantages and disadvantages of using technology were.

Less successful responses directly lifted much material from the source texts or offered undeveloped ideas.

#### **A04**

Most candidates understood the requirement of the task and were able to use the appropriate register for a talk to peers and there was some clear evidence of an understanding of the purpose, audience and format. Sometimes the talks were too formal for the audience of their peers and some clearly expressed responses were not written as a talk but as an article.

More successful candidates used a range of rhetorical techniques, demonstrating a secure sense of purpose and the intended audience. These responses were lively and engaging. They sometimes used humour effectively.

Less successful candidates had problems sustaining the required register throughout their response. They sometimes wrote letters or showed limited awareness of their audience. Others were rather short with undeveloped ideas. Their writing often lacked clarity.

#### **A05**

Most candidates were able to write with clarity, organise their ideas and spell a range of vocabulary correctly. They were able to use basic punctuation accurately.

More successful candidates had full control of sentence structures and used them for effect. They were able to use a wide range of vocabulary and punctuation. Paragraphing was generally handled well.

Less successful candidates had problems with grammar, despite good spelling and punctuation. They did not use paragraphs which did not help with the organisation of their ideas.

Common errors were: missing out definite and indefinite articles; incorrect subject/verb agreement; comma splicing; weak sentence construction; lack of capital letters, especially for 'I' and sometimes at the start of 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 for different audiences and purposes. They should also be able to write with accurate grammar, spelling and punctuation.

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

Question 11 was the most popular question.

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.

Examiners commented that they enjoyed reading some of the responses in this section.

### **Question 9**

#### **AO4**

There was evidence that candidates who chose this option had been prepared to write in a persuasive and argumentative style.

Most candidates who chose this question appeared to understand the requirements of the task and attempted to present an argument. There were examples where candidates argued for and against but more often candidates agreed with the statement 'Social media has transformed the world we live in'. Some responses had interesting ideas but lack of structure and organisation limited the effectiveness of the writing.

Generally, the presence of social media was seen as a good thing. Candidates discussed ideas such as: social media helps people to keep in touch with friends and family; we no longer have to rely on newspapers or scheduled television news; social media is instant and examples were given such as the situation in Ukraine now being accessible to everyone at any time. Some did have reservations and referred to the addictive nature of social media, the problems of cyber bullying and the negative impact on self esteem and mental health.

More successful candidates produced organised responses with some well- developed ideas. They used a range of techniques to add interest and variety to their writing and made appropriate use of form, tone and register.

Weaker candidates offered points that were quite predictable and found it difficult to sustain an argument, often leading to repetition. Weaker candidates often presented muddled ideas or were very 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 their ideas effectively.

## **Question 10**

### **AO4**

There were some positive comments on the quality of some of the responses to the title 'A Brilliant Idea'.

There were different interpretations of 'A Brilliant Idea' from different perspectives. There was some fantasy writing, life stories, competitions or obtaining reward and some had a moral to them. A lot of candidates built up their story so that 'The Brilliant Idea' appeared at the end. The settings were varied and included foreign countries / exploration, war zones or more familiar home settings like a shopping centre or a beach. Often the brilliant idea came suddenly and as a moment of inspiration. Many of these narratives had positive outcomes which made a pleasant change from the gore and violence of some narratives.

Most candidates were able to write a narrative with some sense of plot and development of ideas. They were able to communicate with some clarity, with an appropriate sense of purpose and some appropriate use of form, tone and register. Some narratives were rather long-winded and convoluted where candidates had developed over-ambitious plots. Sometimes narratives had too much direct speech and this impeded the development and clarity of the plot.

More successful candidates planned their ideas well, focused on developing characters as well as plot, selecting details to create pace and sometimes tension.

Less successful candidates lacked development of ideas or the ability to maintain a narrative. They struggled at times with clarity, with muddled storylines and weak endings.

Centres need to ensure candidates have a secure understanding of narrative techniques and the ability to develop a coherent and cohesive personal response.

## **Question 11**

### **AO4**

Most candidates were able to identify a favourite place. There was an attempt to describe smells, sights and sounds with some references to the positive effects their chosen place had. Favourite places included countries, towns, tourist attractions, beaches, bedrooms and homes. The favourite place was sometimes an opportunity to escape and to be alone rather than a place to share with others.

More successful candidates described their chosen place in some detail. They used effective imagery to describe their favourite place. These responses focused on description using the senses and employed a range of appropriate adjectives.

Less successful candidates tended to produce responses that were pedestrian, used a limited range of vocabulary and lacked detail. Some less successful responses chose to describe a range of places instead of concentrating on one.

A number of the responses were factual or narrative and did not address the descriptive focus e.g. 'I would go to USA and do.....' 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 Questions 9, 10 and 11**

Spelling and punctuation were generally sound in many responses although there was not a very wide range or evidence of ambition in punctuation choices. There was some evidence of candidates attempting to use ambitious vocabulary inappropriately.

More successful responses showed control of a range of spelling, punctuation and grammar.

Less successful candidates had poor language controls and weak paragraphing.

There was evidence of reasonably accurate spelling and punctuation but 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.

Common errors were: missing out definite and indefinite articles; not maintaining the correct verb tense; incorrect subject/verb agreement; comma splicing; lack of capital letters, especially for 'I' and sometimes at the start of sentences.

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
- 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 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
- offered very limited comparisons or did not use references to support comparative points in response to Question 7
- sometimes narrated or copied the texts in response to Questions 3, 6 and 7
- did not write in an appropriate register in response to Question 8
- were not able to select and adapt relevant information for Question 8
- were not able to sustain and develop ideas clearly in responses to Section C (Questions 9, 10 and 11)
- did not demonstrate accuracy in spelling, punctuation and grammar.

