



Examiners' Report Principal Examiner Feedback

November 2023

Pearson Edexcel International GCSE
In English (4EA1) Paper 03

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4EA1-03 Principal Moderator's Report November 2023

This was a small series compared to the summer, with most centres submitting folders for only one or two candidates seeking to improve their grade.

Administration

Though this was a small series, it would be useful perhaps to remind centres that they still need to upload their marks onto Gateway as well as upload their requested sample onto LWA. There is no need to upload all of your folders onto LWA - just the requested sample. However, centres are reminded of the need to include the folders with the highest and lowest mark in your cohort as well as the requested sample.

As we move to the new requirements for the summer of 2024, it would perhaps be useful for centres to check they have the correct Coursework Authentication Sheets to reflect the new mark scheme for summer 2024. In this November series, we have seen a number of centres with the incorrect cover sheet for the folders or no cover sheet at all bearing the signatures of the candidate and the assessor.

Thank you to all those centres who completed their cover sheets with the totals for their candidates and with their summative comments in place. This is the first thing the moderator sees and applies to their own record sheets before reading the work of the candidate.

Thank you also to those centres who uploaded the folder for each candidate as a **single pdf**. This is very much appreciated. We know how busy schools can be at this time of year with resits and mock examinations, but it can be useful to do a final double check on folders before uploading. We have had several centres uploading only one assignment and/or with missing pages. Please also ensure that the task/title for each assignment is clearly visible on each response so that moderators know precisely what is being assessed.

Assessment, annotation, and internal moderation

Most centres in this series had completed internal moderation carefully to support candidates working towards improved grades from the summer. I would reiterate previous advice however and suggest that where you have several folders to submit, it can be useful to read the whole sample of folders in rank order before submission. This can really help to fine tune the judgements made especially where different members of staff have assessed their own students' work and can aid fair judgements for all your candidates.

Whilst most assessors do annotate very carefully, it would be useful to remind centres that the audience for annotations on coursework is the moderator and not the candidate. Please do not overwrite or correct candidate's spelling and punctuation errors as tempting as that is with a pen in your hand! It is also useful to pinpoint precise skills when annotating rather than simply listing levels or AOs in the margin.

Several centres are moving towards annotating digitally. It is preferable that digital annotations are made using the Review Comments function on Word or the pdf commenting tools. Please do avoid embedding comments within the body of the candidate's work - this makes reading the work itself very difficult for the moderator.

In assessing Reading work, centres do seem to be confident with Level 3 work and very top Level 5 responses. However, we often see a lack of working through the descriptors for Level 4. We have seen a number of responses in this series which had been awarded 20 marks and deemed 'perceptive' rather than sustained and centres are reminded to evidence the Level 4 skills before moving candidates over the borderline into Level 5.

We often see far more annotation applied to Reading work than to Writing and I would suggest to centres that it is worth spending a little extra time pinpointing the skills on Writing. If we see severity anywhere, it is often on the AO5 element of candidates' work.

Task Setting: Assignment A

Whilst we have had a number of centres sticking to the ubiquitous 'Disabled' and 'Out, Out' pairing, we have seen more candidates this time pairing 'Disabled' with 'The Bright Lights of Sarajevo' and exploring the texts with a developed understanding and a critical eye.

We have seen a pleasing number of candidates tackling two prose texts: 'The Story of An Hour' and 'The Necklace' being the most popular combination looking at the presentation of women. We have seen some work featuring 'Still I Rise' but little to no work this time referencing 'An Unknown Girl', 'Night' or 'Whistle ...You'.

It is still worth referring some centres to the requirements of the specification in terms of AO2 and the advice given in previous reports about setting a task which directly references the analysis of language and structure in some way. Please do revisit the training materials online for more suggestions.

As we move towards the new requirements for summer 2024 it is also worth reminding centres to check those requirements carefully to avoid concerns in the summer.

Commentaries have overall been a little desultory - with some candidates clearly not having 'chosen' their texts at all. It seems this element of AO1 has rather fallen by the wayside in this, its final outing. There were some candidates who almost repeated their essay in the commentary and others who wrote at length about AO2.

Assignment B

The imaginative writing was, like the summer series, very much focused on narrative writing. We have seen a good range of ideas here and many mature and interesting pieces of writing as students were striving for higher grades. As ever, we did see several 'abandoned house' scenarios but overall, the writing is often handled well by candidates when they are given freer reign. Stories which referenced the theme of war or conflict in the poetry remain popular and can be sensitively handled. We have also seen writing in the fantasy genre, writing with interesting plot twists at the end and a number inspired by the 'During the night, the wind rose' opening.

Several candidates have constructed lengthy narratives this time - often significantly exceeding the word count (even submitting chapters) which makes comparability difficult

and is to be avoided. There is much merit in encouraging able candidates to be concise for their submission to enable them to hit the sharp subtlety of Level 5.

One noteworthy response this time was a continuation of the story of 'Significant Cigarettes' where the moderator could clearly see the text had been analysed like the Assignment A texts and then the style and techniques emulated. This seemed like a very good approach for the Level 4/5 Reading candidate who may not necessarily have a flair for creative writing.

