



Examiners' Report Principal Examiner Feedback

June 2025

Pearson Edexcel International GCSE
In English Language (4EA1)
Paper 03: Poetry and Prose Texts and
Imaginative Writing (Non-Examined
Assessment)

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1. Administration

This was a large summer series with just over 360 centres globally opting for the Component 3 Non-Examined Assessment. Overall, the presentation of candidate folders was of a high standard. Authentication sheets were generally completed with all the required administrative details and signatures. There was a small number of centres using an older version of the coversheet which did not have the updated AI declaration statements. Please ensure that the current authentication sheet is used for submissions and where necessary any use of AI is correctly referenced.

We are a small team of moderators on this component and it is always greatly appreciated when authentication sheets and both assignments are uploaded as one document with the candidate number included as part of the document title. We understand that it is an incredibly busy time of year for centres, but it is requested that centres run a final check of samples to ensure that pages are in the correct order with annotations clearly scanned and legible and authentication sheets are completed with signatures.

Thank you to all of the centres who submitted the highest and lowest marked candidate folders from their cohort alongside the requested sample. It is concerning that there was still a significant number of centres, that had to be contacted to request the upload of these folders. It is a requirement that if not included in the generated sample the centre must include the highest and lowest marked folder in their upload and this is stated on the LWT system. Please ensure, especially for larger centres that enough time is allowed for the system to fully upload folders onto LWT.

Thank you to all centres this series that were contacted for various reasons for their responsiveness. Along with requests for highest and lowest folders, the moderation team found that there were a number of clerical errors in the submission of marks on Gateway: these often did not correspond with the marks on the authentication sheets. Please can centres ensure that the marks entered on Gateway match the centre's final post-internal moderation marks.

In the rare case of additional samples being requested, centres are asked to ensure that their cohort's folders are ready to be submitted and accessible for submission if required in the case of a request being made outside of the centre's term dates. Due to the nature of the international qualification, centre term dates and external moderation period dates do not necessarily align.

2. Annotations and Internal Moderation Processes

Centre annotations and internal moderation comments were found across the majority of the samples seen, although frequently AOs were listed with no reference to the level descriptors. This is a somewhat redundant exercise as the external moderator needs to understand the centre's thought processes in reaching the awarded mark. Similarly, where marks were changed an explanatory comment from the second marker gives the moderator an understanding of why a change was made. It was pleasing to see that the majority of centres with more than one assessor had conducted an internal moderation process, although some were more thorough than others.

Where centres opted to complete summative comments at the end of assignments rather than in the spaces provided on the authentication sheets, it is requested that these comments are legible and reference the appropriate level descriptors. It is, however, considered best practice to complete the coversheets with final post-internal moderation comments which correspond to the final awarded marks. Comments should be addressed to the external moderator rather than the candidate and as these are final drafts there is no requirement to identify where improvements could be made by the candidate.

3. Assignment A

This is the second summer series where candidates have been required to write about three texts including at least one poetry and one prose text. Centres have embraced this change and it was pleasing to see a number of responses where candidates explored two prose texts as part of their text selections. *Disabled* remained a popular choice for the poetry as well as *Out, Out - -*, *Still I Rise* and *The Bright Lights of Sarajevo*. *The Story of an Hour* and *The Necklace* were popular choices for the prose followed by *Significant Cigarettes* and *Whistle and I'll Come to You*. It was also pleasing to see that a small proportion of candidates chose to write about *Night* which has rarely been a text choice in previous series.

Task titles should be present at the start of every essay and make explicit reference to the use of language and structure. The recommended structure of 'Explore how the writers use language and structure to explore the theme of...' keeps the candidates focused and narrowing it down to one theme was the most successful approach. Popular and successful tasks included representations of women, identity, loss, suffering, freedom and power (or lack thereof). We saw a number of responses where tasks were not particularly robust in their design, such as the exploration of strong emotions or the presentation of characters across the texts. With a

recommended word count of 1200 words these broad tasks often left candidates floundering and, in some circumstances, candidates concentrated entirely on the task picking out references directly referring to the topic rather than showing the ability to interpret the whole text within the response. Analysis of language and structure was therefore either missed or referred to in generalities such as, “the poet uses language to show loss...” with no exploration or references to show how this was created.

It was noted that some centres were still asking candidates to compare texts which is not a requirement. More able candidates may find it easier to move back and forth between the texts, sometimes drawing comparison to further develop ideas and interpretations, but this is not an expectation. Many successful responses often dealt with each text individually in relation to the task before moving onto the next text.

AO1 was a particular strength this series but sometimes to the detriment of AO2. Moderators saw responses that showed very good knowledge and understanding of the texts and their ideas. These responses often offered clear linguistic analysis, but analysis of structure was either omitted or significantly weaker. For AO2 level 3 there is a requirement for candidates to cover aspects of language AND structure across the three texts. Candidates who had knowledge of literary terminology were able to focus in on their ideas, writing with precision and starting to access the higher levels which look for discriminating analysis. Contextual and biographical information in limited amounts can be useful in supporting a candidate’s analysis but on its own it is not rewarded in the mark scheme. For prose texts which are extracts from longer novels, such as *Significant Cigarettes* and *Whistle and I’ll Come to You*, candidates are rewarded for their analysis and discussion of ideas presented in the extract rather than ideas from the wider work.

4. Assignment B

There was a marked improvement overall for the standard of imaginative writing compared to previous years, with a wide range of tasks seen across the submissions. War, gothic and dystopian settings remained a popular choice and these often allowed candidates to develop detailed sensory descriptions. Some centres made effective use of stimulus materials such as photographs or artwork, whilst others used the anthology texts as inspiration. Whatever the prompt or choice, centres are asked to ensure that Assignment B responses have a clearly defined task stated as a title. This can help both the candidate and moderator understand if the response is meeting the expectations of the intended audience.

Responses that suggested that candidates had been explicitly taught structural devices such as dual narratives, cyclical structures and shifts in perspective often allowed candidates to create more subtle pieces of writing. The most successful responses were those where candidates had clearly chosen the best word or sentence for the intended purpose rather than forcing evidence of a particular skill. Responses where overly complex sentence structures or lists of adjectives were shoe-horned into the narrative led to pieces becoming 'overwritten' and not entirely successful.

Many centres, it seemed, encouraged candidates to write to the recommended word count of 700 words, keeping ideas focused and the writing precise and accurate. Typically, where responses were much longer there was a dip in quality. A focus on proofreading skills, particularly as candidates can redraft for this component, would have been beneficial for a significant minority of submissions.