



Examiners' Report

Principal Examiner Feedback

November 2024

Pearson Edexcel International GCSE
In English Language (4WEA1)
Unit 1: Non-fiction Texts and Transactional
Writing

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Introduction

The examination paper covered in this report is the modular version of Paper 1 of the International GCSE English Language A. It is advisable to read the more detailed report for the linear version in conjunction with this report.

Paper 1 Non-fiction Texts and Transactional Writing is assessed through an examination lasting 2 hours and 15 minutes with a total of 90 marks. The paper is organised into two sections each worth 45 marks.

Introduction

The examination paper covered in this report is Unit 1: Non-fiction and Transactional Writing which is sat by all candidates entered for the series.

The paper is organised into two parts.

Section A, worth a total of 45 marks, tests reading skills and is based on an unseen passage and a text from the International GCSE English Anthology with a total word count across the two extracts of approximately 2000 words. In this series, the unseen extract was adapted from *Stereotyping in Sport*, in which the writer, Natalie Morris, looks at the experiences of Amazin LeThi. The Anthology text was the extract from the speech *The Danger of a Single Story* in which Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie speaks about the power of storytelling. Candidates are advised to spend about 1 hour and 30 minutes on this section.

Section B, also worth a total of 45 marks, offers candidates a choice of two transactional writing tasks. A particular form will always be specified and for this series the two tasks were to write a speech about how schools should ensure students do not experience discrimination or a guide giving advice on how to achieve success as a team.

The unseen text worked successfully with the Anthology text, was accessible to students of all abilities and provided ample material for the comparison question.

Section A

Questions 1-3 are based on the unseen extract and are all assessed for **AO1**: Read and understand a variety of texts, selecting and interpreting information, ideas and perspectives.

Question 1

This question, which tests the skills of selection and retrieval, is intended to serve as a straightforward way into the paper and all candidates were able to select two apt words or phrases that describe Amazin LeThi. There were a number of possible points on the mark scheme; all were chosen but points one and two ('Vietnamese' and 'bodybuilder') were those mostly commonly chosen.

Question 2

This is a 4-mark question that requires candidates to interpret information, ideas and perspectives. For this examination they were asked to look at lines 13-24 and explain what we learn about Amazin LeThi's life as a child. The majority of candidates did understand what was required, selected relevant information and were awarded full marks.

Candidates need to follow the instruction '**In your own words**' and this did prove to be a stumbling block for some. It is not sufficient just to alter a verb ending or a pronoun and listing four quotations that relate to LeThi's experiences as a child is not going to gain marks.

The most successful approach employed by candidates was to make four clear and distinct points, ideally set out on separate lines. However, it is important to remember that the question asks candidates to 'explain' and therefore, although it is not necessary to write at length, it is not acceptable to simply list very brief points. The response should be written in full and complete sentences that clearly show understanding and secure interpretation.

Question 3

This is the final AO1 question; it is worth 5 marks and, like Question 2, requires candidates to show their understanding of the text by selecting and interpreting ideas, information and perspectives. For this examination, they were asked to look again at lines 31-42 and describe Amazin LeThi's experiences within the world of sport.

In Question 3, candidates are told that they 'may support' their points 'with **brief** quotations' and most did so to good effect; well over half of the candidates received full marks and most achieved at least 3 marks. A few candidates made reference to the whole text rather than the specified lines or went beyond the given lines to look at LeThi's later success.

The best answers gave brief statements, sometimes supported by appropriate quotations, paid attention to how many marks the question is worth and made five clear and discrete points, often set out clearly on separate lines.

Question 4

This question is on Text Two, the Anthology text, and is assessed for **AO2**: Understand and analyse how writers use linguistic and structural devices to achieve their effects. It is therefore a more challenging and discriminatory question and is worth 12 marks divided over five levels.

In this examination, candidates were asked how the writer, Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, uses language and structure to create interest in her ideas.

This piece contains a very wide range of features of language and structure as exemplified in the mark scheme, but examiners were advised that these are just examples of possible points that could be made and instructed that they must reward any valid points that candidates make that are securely rooted in the text. There does not need to be an equal number of points on language and structure, but both should be addressed.

At the lower levels points were merely feature spotting eg 'The writer uses a colon to explain her point'. Language techniques were not always correctly identified and there was limited

comment. 'Analyses' were often just re-presenting Adiche's own words eg 'The use of the conjunction 'but' shows the writer's mental shift.' Not every candidate directly addressed the rubric and some gave a general explanation rather than focusing on the methods used to interest and engage the reader. The majority of candidate were in the Level 3 range and, although there were some who achieved within the higher levels, it seemed that a number of candidates lacked a full understanding of this Anthology text and therefore found the question challenging. They tended to look at the anecdotes related by Adichie rather than the strong themes and message of the speech.

Question 5

This question provides the only assessment in the specification of **AO3**: Explore links and connections between writers' ideas and perspectives, as well as how these are conveyed.

This question is the most demanding of those in Section A and, with 22 marks distributed between five levels, carries almost half of the total marks available for reading so it is extremely important that candidates allow sufficient time for a developed response. Perhaps because of time constraints, there were a few candidates who did not attempt the question or who wrote very brief responses and thereby missed the opportunity to gain a significant number of marks. Careful time-management is crucial for success in this examination and candidates should factor in time to plan with care the points that they wish to make in order to ensure that they have a wide and balanced range.

On this paper Question 5 was similar to Question 4 in terms of attainment level and approaches. Answers ranged from Level 2 with obvious comparisons such as 'One is about an athlete, one is about a writer' to the occasional assurance of a secure Level 4 response; most candidates achieved a mark within Level 3. Comparative points included the differences in upbringing experienced by LeThi and Adichie, the degree of stereotyping/racism suffered and the texts' messages: one showing a role-model, demonstrating how it is possible to rise above racism, while the other makes us aware of the dangers of stereotyping based on ethnicity. Other points often considered were the narrative voices and the differing forms of the texts which led more successful candidates to compare language and structure. As with the previous question not all candidates directly responded to the rubric, comparing Adiche and Lethi rather than the ideas and perspectives of the two writers: for example, 'One was born in Vietnam, the other in Africa.'

Section B

Candidates are required to answer just one writing task but it carries half of the total marks available for the paper and so they must ensure that they allow sufficient time to plan and organise their response.

There are two assessment objectives for writing.

AO4: Communicate effectively and imaginatively, adapting form, tone and register of writing for specific purposes and audiences. (27 marks spread over five levels)

AO5: Write clearly, using a range of vocabulary and sentence structures, with appropriate paragraphing and accurate spelling, grammar and punctuation. (18 marks spread over five levels)

Question 6

This question asked candidates to write the text for a speech to be delivered to peers responding to the statement: 'Schools should do all that they can to ensure that no student faces discrimination.' It was the more commonly chosen question and most candidates achieved marks within Level 3 with a significant number moving into Level 4. Most candidates approached the speech form with assurance and used a range of rhetorical devices effectively to convey their ideas. The subject matter of the two source texts acted as a useful stimulus to some and candidates on the whole clearly explained why and how discrimination might occur in schools and considered how to combat this. Unfortunately, one or two candidates were over-reliant on the Adiche and Lethi texts employing too closely their ideas, experiences and sometimes even words. Successful candidates tackled serious issues in a lively and engaging tone and offered useful and appropriate strategies for avoiding discrimination in schools; the best of these responses developed and explored the ideas they raised and the suggestions that they offered.

Question 7

This task, instructing candidates to write a guide offering advice on how to achieve success as a team, was markedly less popular, perhaps because candidates did not feel so secure with the required form. Most did achieve within Level 3 but very few rose above this. The bullet points in the question itself helped scaffold responses and some candidates drew on their own experiences quite effectively. Sub-heading and strategic use of bullet points were employed by some candidates to generally good effect. Less successful answers were brief and ideas were undeveloped.

Concluding advice

Candidates should:

- be provided with plenty of opportunities to practise reading and responding to unseen passages under timed conditions
- answer Question 2 in their own words and aim to offer some interpretation
- demonstrate understanding of the text in Question 3 by offering some explanation in own words and not simply relying on quotations to make the points
- underline or highlight the key words of Question 4 so that answers are appropriately focused
- consider the effects of language and structure features within the context of the given extract in Question 4 rather than offering generic explanations
- make a range of comparative points in Question 5 and link elements such as content, theme, tone, purpose, narrative voice, language; points should be balanced across both texts
- give careful consideration to the given form and audience for the writing task and use these to inform register and tone
- try to use a wide vocabulary and varied sentence structures
- think carefully about how to engage the reader right at the start of a written response and consider how to end effectively

- allow time to proof-read their writing response in order to achieve the highest possible degree of accuracy
- read all instructions carefully; attempt every question and take great care with handwriting.

