



Examiners' Report Principal Examiner Feedback

June 2025

Pearson Edexcel International GCSE
In English Language (4EA1) (Modular)
Unit 1: Non-fiction Texts and Transactional
Writing

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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 this report in conjunction with the report for the linear version of the paper, which includes sample responses.

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.

Section A: Non-fiction

This section, worth a total of 45 marks, tests reading skills and is based on an unseen passage (Qs1-3) and a text from the International GCSE English Anthology (Q4) with a total word count of approximately 2000 words. Q5 asks candidates to compare the two texts.

In this series, the unseen extract was adapted from *Dance Delight* by Emine Saner in which she writes about her meeting with Rose Ayling-Ellis, who is deaf. The Anthology text was the extract from *Young and Dyslexic? You've got it going on* by Benjamin Zephaniah in which he describes his experience of dyslexia.

Candidates are advised to spend about 1 hour and 30 minutes on this section.

Section B: Transactional Writing

This section, 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 the text for a speech giving thoughts on the statement 'We should make the most of every positive opportunity in life that is offered to us.' (Q6) or to write a letter to a newspaper expressing views on the benefits of feeling part of a community. (Q7).

The Assessment Objectives for this paper are:

AO1: Read and understand a variety of texts, selecting and interpreting information, ideas and perspectives (Q1, Q2, Q3)

AO2: Understand and analyse how writers use linguistic and structural devices to achieve their effects (Q4)

AO3: Explore links and connections between writers' ideas and perspectives, as well as how these are conveyed (Q5)

Section B: Writing

AO4: Communicate effectively and imaginatively. Adapting form, tone and register of writing for specific purposes and audiences (Q6 or Q7)

AO5: Write clearly, using a range of vocabulary and sentence structures, with appropriate paragraphing and accurate spelling, grammar and punctuation (Q6 or Q7)

This is an untiered specification and the choice of texts and questions set are such that all candidates are able to access the paper and to show their abilities in reading and writing. The vast majority of

candidates sitting the paper in this series responded very positively to all questions. The two texts worked very well together and offered plenty of points of comparison.

SECTION A

Question 1

This question, which tests the skills of selection and retrieval, is intended to serve as a straightforward way into the paper and build confidence on the part of the candidates, almost all of whom were able to gain the two marks available. The question directed candidates to lines 1-4 of the unseen text and asked them to select two words or phrases that describe how people reacted to Rose dancing in the park.

The important advice for this question is to look at the line references given and to select appropriate single words or short phrases from the passage.

The overwhelming majority of candidates scored maximum marks on this question, with 'clapped' and 'cheered' being the words selected most frequently.

There were only a very few candidates who did not achieve both marks and this was due to selecting words from outside the given lines or mis-reading the question and choosing words that describe Rose instead of the people, for example 'infectious happiness'.

Question 2

This question moves on from Q1 by directing candidates towards a larger section of the text. Nearly all candidates achieved the full four marks for this question, which requires them to select and interpret information. For this examination, the question instructed candidates to look at lines 17-28 and describe Rose's experience on the dance show.

There were many full-mark answers with candidates generally working through the given lines systematically and selecting valid points. Most answers focused on Rose overcoming the challenges she faced and the emotional impact this had on her. There was evidence that some candidates wrote far more than was needed and there was concern from examiners that too much time may have been spent on this low-tariff question.

Where candidates lost marks this was generally because they did not approach the question in the most efficient and effective way. A few referred to the whole text rather than the given lines and others copied extensively from the text rather than using 'own words' as required. Others made just one or two points; these were sometimes developed in detail but this did not gain more marks.

The most successful approach for this straightforward 'retrieval of information' question is to make at least four clear discrete points. If these are set out separately then it can help both the candidate and the examiner to see at a glance how many points have been made. It is important to remember that the question asks candidates to 'describe' and therefore, although it is not necessary to write at length, it is not acceptable to simply list very brief points. The response must be written in full and complete sentences that clearly demonstrate understanding and secure interpretation. It is important that the given lines are read closely and carefully.

Question 3

This is the final AO1 question; it is worth 5 marks and, like Q2, requires candidates to show their understanding of the text by selecting and interpreting ideas and information. For this examination, they were asked to look again at lines 29-40 and explain what we learn about Rose's time at school.

In Q3, candidates are told that they 'may support' their points 'with **brief** quotations' and the vast majority did so to good effect. Examiners noted that many candidates scored full marks on this question and most demonstrated a secure understanding of what was required.

Successful candidates worked through the set section of the text identifying key points; there were very few who looked at information that was not in the relevant lines but, as with Q2, some made an insufficient number of valid points or repeated the same point. Some candidates lost marks by stating erroneously that Rose had no help in school and/or that she wished she could hear, indicating that their reading of the lines had not been sufficiently careful.

The best approach to this question is to use a balance of short quotations, incorporate some own words that show interpretation and to make at least five clear and discrete points. If these are set out separately, it can be useful to both candidate and examiner. Including an extra point may help to ensure full marks.

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, Benjamin Zephaniah, uses language and structure in the extract from *Young and dyslexic? You've got it going on* to convey his views of being dyslexic.

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

A wide range of responses was seen on this question with most candidates showing a sound understanding of the text, suggesting that they were familiar with it.

Less successful responses often wrote long, unnecessary introductions that simply summarised the passage or paraphrased some of Zephaniah's messages. Some candidates did not progress beyond the first few lines of the extract and spent a disproportionate amount of time on the first short paragraph. Other responses at this level demonstrated a secure understanding of Zephaniah's views but did not refer to the language and structure used to convey them.

Candidates who produced stronger responses were often adept at identifying and offering some analysis of structural techniques employed throughout the text, such as parallelism, triplets, repetition. There were also some candidates who offered interesting assessments about how the use of short paragraphs might make the writing more appealing and accessible to a dyslexic reader. Rather surprisingly, these candidates were not always as assured when it came to language devices. For example, very few picked up on the metaphorical aspect of 'designers and architects'.

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. It was clear that a good number of candidates did just that as one examiner noted that there were 'lots of good responses with plenty of detail, well-developed comparisons and insightful comments about the unseen text'.

The majority of responses focused on comparing the protagonists' different childhoods, their struggles to overcome the challenges faced and how both were seen as inspirational figures and role models to their respective communities. There was generally a very strong understanding of the purposes of the two texts and some good insights into the different effects created by the first-person account as compared to the third-person journalistic report. Points were usually supported with appropriate quotations and the stronger answers offered thoughtful interpretation.

Less successful answers often spent too long on one or two points such as the use of pronouns or inclusion of anecdotes. One examiner stated that 'a few candidates underperformed as they didn't make enough comparisons in spite of a good knowledge of both texts; in such instances there were paragraphs of writing on one text, followed by paragraphs about the second with a brief summative conclusion that finally offered a comparison'. In some instances, candidates phrased a point as a comparison but then only wrote about one text or included points about each text that did not actually link together.

The report for the linear version of this paper provides more information about approaches to this question.

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 giving thoughts on the statement 'We should make the most of every positive opportunity in life that is offered to us.'

This was the more popular of the two writing questions and one examiner recorded that they marked 'a considerable number of engaging Level 4 responses'.

Lower-level responses were often quite brief; some of these lacked a clear sense of audience and were a series of statements about opportunities with a slightly persuasive element. There were a few that demonstrated a rather limited understanding of what a positive opportunity might consist of. Examples given such as throwing away a winning lottery ticket were not particularly helpful in advancing an argument about making the most of opportunities.

Stronger responses used the question's bullet points as an effective scaffold for the speech and included a range of rhetorical devices such as direct address and rhetorical questions that suggested a familiarity with the requirements of the form. At this level, 'opportunities' often revolved around education, the chance to travel or try out for a team. Candidates recognised that many of these opportunities were often linked to good fortune and privilege and urged their listeners not to waste them. Sometimes the opportunities described were more humble and focused on seizing ways to help others.

Whilst the inclusion of anecdotes about missed opportunities did not always convey the motivational message that was presumably intended, one memorable response, rather than focusing on future opportunities as the majority did, asked the audience to imagine being in old age and reflecting on the missed chances of their youth that had 'slipped like sand through their fingers'.

Examiners reported that technical accuracy was generally quite good although vocabulary choices tended not to be very ambitious and there was a limited range of punctuation in evidence.

Question 7

This task required candidates to write a letter to a newspaper expressing views on the benefits of feeling part of a community.

Although the question was generally handled well with most candidates selecting an appropriate form and tone, there was quite a wide range of responses.

At the lower end, candidates were often impeded by a lack of technical accuracy, for example incorrect subject/verb agreement, inaccurate spelling (eg the plural form of community) and a limited vocabulary. There were a few candidates who misunderstood the word 'community'; one interpreted it as 'company' with ideas centring around work and salary and another read the word as 'communication'. This obviously hindered their ability to show a secure understanding of what was required.

Stronger responses offered many different and, at times insightful, examples of communities ranging from those we might choose (sports clubs, book groups, neighbourhoods) to those related to identity such as race and religion. A few referred to communities whose members shared challenges in life and linked them to ideas within the reading texts. Some successful answers covered the possible negative effects of being in a community and considered malicious or subversive communities that young people could be lured into joining.

The majority of letters were clearly structured and, as with Q6, most candidates wrote with a sound degree of accuracy.

Based on their performance in this paper, candidates are offered the following advice:

- Be aware of the different assessment objectives for each question.
- Highlight the relevant lines in the text for Questions 1-3 to ensure that your answers come from the correct part.
- Answer Q2 in your own words as far as possible; do not copy out large parts of the text. Aim to make four clear and distinct points. They can be set out separately but must be written in full and complete sentences.
- You should make five clear points for Q3; brief quotations can be used to support these points but quotations without explanation are not sufficient. Points can be set out separately but must be in full and complete sentences and offer some interpretation.
- Do not waste time on a general introduction or summative conclusion in Q4 – every sentence should be earning marks. Consider the effects of language and structure features within the context of the given extract. Ensure that you focus on the question and avoid simply giving an overview; highlighting key words in the question can help.
- Make a range of comparative points in Q5. Rather than simply compare the ideas or events within the texts, try to link similar elements such as content, theme, tone, purpose, narrative voice, language and support points with relevant quotations or textual references. Ensure that references are balanced across both texts by making each paragraph a point of comparison.
- Take time to make a brief plan for the higher tariff questions (5 and 6 or 7) and use it.
- Consider 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 you can engage the reader right at the start and consider how you will end. Try to allow time to read through your answer and eliminate avoidable errors.
- Read all instructions carefully. Consider the marks allocated to each question and plan your time accordingly so that you are able to attempt every question. Try not to spend too much time on the low-tariff questions.
- Take great care with handwriting so that it is legible.