



Examiners' Report Principal Examiner Feedback

June 2025

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

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The examination paper covered in this report is the modular version of Paper 1R 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 *The Fearless Flyer* by Donna McCluskie in which she describes her meeting with helicopter pilot Quentin Smith. Smith is one of the two explorers whose rescue after their helicopter crashes is the subject of the Anthology text, the article *Explorers or boys messing about? Either way, taxpayer gets rescue bill* by Steven Morris.

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 a letter to your local government suggesting how the money raised from taxes should be spent (Q6) or to write the text of a speech for an audience of parents/carers giving views about the statement: 'Young people spend all their time indoors and should be encouraged to take part in outdoor activities.' (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 1-3 of the unseen text and asked them to select two words or phrases that describe Drake Passage.

The important advice for this question is to look at the line references given and to select single words or short phrases from the passage. There were five possible answers and all were chosen at some point.

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 such as 'unpredictable' or 'ink-black water' or mis-reading the passage and thinking Drake Passage was a person and so giving 'Englishman' as an answer.

Question 2

This question moves on from Q1 by directing candidates towards a larger section of the text and requires them to select and interpret information. For this examination the question asked candidates to look at lines 8-22 and describe the experiences of the two men.

The question proved to be very accessible and most responses scored three or four marks. As with the linear paper, most candidates were able to identify several valid points about the experiences of the men. It was helpful when candidates made distinct points, separating them by dropping a line rather than writing as a continuous piece. Candidates sometimes dropped a mark as they had not included enough, or they tended to re-write the passage with little attempt to explain their points.

Candidates should be reminded to try and use their own words as far as possible. Where candidates do not meet the requirements of AO1 it is largely because they are not covering enough material, or that they are simply copying from the source text. It was noted that a number of candidates who sat this paper onscreen included some analysis of language which is not a requirement and cannot be rewarded.

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 41--53 and explain Quentin Smith's memories of the incident.

In Q3, candidates are told that they 'may support' their points 'with **brief** quotations' and most responses seemed to be able to find relevant points to make and supported them with evidence. Most candidates achieved at least four marks with many gaining five marks. Candidates tended to work systematically through the text identifying points and this worked well. Where candidates were less successful, it was usually because they had not covered enough points, or they had copied the source text almost word for word. Again, some onscreen candidates included language analysis, which is not an AO1 requirement.

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, Steven Morris, uses language and structure in the extract from *Explorers or boys messing about? Either way, taxpayer gets rescue bill* to influence the reader's opinion of the incident.

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.

The majority of candidates achieved marks within Levels 3 and 4. As ever, what distinguished responses was the ability to say something both specific and linguistically pertinent about the examples from the text selected. Almost all candidates included points about the rhetorical question in the title and the juxtaposition of explorers and boys, explaining how this set the tone for the piece, and many recognised the 'cartoonish' idea of the words 'plunged' and 'plucked.'

Less successful responses tended to explain what was happening in the text with little specifically about the use of language or structure, instead making general points about the events described. Some candidates identified a technique, gave a quotation and followed it with a comment about meaning. Whilst these were often quite lengthy responses, a generic statement such as 'this interests the reader' could apply to any piece of writing and does not show sufficient understanding of the effect/impact of the language or structural feature within the text in question. 'Comment' is a Level 2 criterion and to move beyond this candidates need to develop their explanation and analysis in more detail.

Stronger candidates comprehensively covered the text, synthesising material to make relevant points. They had a sharper focus and were able to develop their analysis in detail. Top responses would, for example link the theatrical language of 'farce', 'drama' and 'tragedy' and were sensitive to grammar, including sentence type and length plus effect, and the complexities and nuances of powerful imagery.

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.

The unseen passage worked very well with the Anthology text with the unusual dimension that both featured Quentin Smith and gave differing views of the same incident and people involved. Despite the information given that Text One was about the author's 'meeting with Quentin Smith (who is one of the two explorers featured in Text Two', some candidates appeared uncertain as to whether or not the incident described was the same one, and a few seemed surprised to see that a man named 'Q' was in both events. It is, therefore, very important to read the introductory words in italics below the text title.

Where candidates did not achieve very highly, they tended to make surface level comments and provided identification of simple similarities/differences (eg both featured helicopter crashes, both involved a man named Q, in both crashes men had to be rescued). Even when quite a number of links between the texts were made, the lack of explanation limited the mark that could be awarded. However, most candidates did enough to secure a mark at least within Level 3, and all seemed able to draw references across both texts, focusing on the similarity of the event but the different attitude towards it, indicating that for the most part, they had been well-prepared for the demands of the question. Candidates did well when they looked at the alternative perspectives and underpinned their points with analysis of tone and language.

Nearly all candidates acknowledged that Donna McCluskie was clearly supportive of Smith whilst Morris was highly critical. Although few candidates achieved a mark within Level 5, there were some who hit the requirements for Level 4 with more nuanced answers. Many of these considered the varying linguistic effects of each text and different tones, the contrasting viewpoints of each narrative voice and their consequent impact on the reader, well supported by close, balanced references from both texts.

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

Q6, with its task to write a letter about how money raised from taxes could be spent, was the less popular of the two writing questions and examiners found that on the whole it was not quite as well executed as Q7. Whilst paying tax may be something that most candidates do not yet do, they were all familiar with the term 'tax-payer' which occurs in the title and body of Text Two and the bullet points of the question clearly directed them towards appropriate content. As a result, nobody misunderstood the task.

A few candidates struggled to come up with ideas but many secure responses covered some interesting ideas, especially when candidates grappled with a governing body's irresponsibility in spending taxes and the desperate need for more facilities in their local area. The vast majority of candidates used an appropriate tone, and understood how to format the letter. One examiner noted that 'many candidates seemed to base their response on their local area and this contributed to a sense of authenticity in their writing.'

Where candidates employed a range of rhetorical devices, and a wide repertoire of more complex vocabulary they tended to do well. There were some good examples of planning.

Question 7

This was the more popular of the two writing questions. One examiner reported being impressed by how many candidates were able to develop a convincing and enthusiastic line of argument, sustain it with relevant evidence and use their speech to promote the benefits of outdoor activities, taking them away from social media and a sedentary lifestyle. Clearly, this is a topic which resonated with the exam-takers as many passionate arguments, often from personal conviction, were presented with compelling evidence. Very few wrote superficial, brief or unconvincing responses, while at the top end one examiner reported that some answers that they marked 'could have been used as models of rhetoric'.

Candidates who were less secure in this question tended to make some rather vague statements at the start, and lacked an argument; these candidates relied on personal anecdote but did little to move beyond this and ideas were not developed effectively.

General feedback on the writing questions

Examiners reported that handwriting, spelling and paragraphing remain issues and candidates should be reminded that if their work cannot be read, it cannot be marked.

Candidates should avoid writing 'u' for 'you' and colloquialisms such as 'gonna' or 'wanna' which would only have a place within direct speech.

There was some evidence that a small number of candidates had memorised pre-prepared phrases or short sentences to use in their writing. This is not good practice as it leads to a lack of spontaneity and originality and such lines were often 'shoe-horned' inappropriately into the response.

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.

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