



Examiners' Report
Principal Examiner Feedback
Summer 2024

Pearson Edexcel International GCSE
English Language (Specification A)
(4WEA2_01)

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Introduction

This report will provide exemplification of candidates' work, together with tips and comments, for the modular Paper 2 of the International GCSE Specification A in English Language. The paper consists of three components: Unit 1: Non-fiction and Transactional Writing- 60% (examination); Unit 2: Poetry and Prose Texts and Imaginative Writing- 40% (this examination) OR Unit 3: Poetry and Prose Texts and Imaginative Writing- 40% (non-examination assessment). Candidates may also be entered for the optional Spoken Language Endorsement (non-examination assessment). Unit 2 for Poetry and Prose Texts and Imaginative Writing is assessed through an examination lasting one hour and thirty minutes. The total number of marks available is 60. The reading and writing sections on this paper are loosely linked by the theme of the text from the Anthology which appears on the examination paper.

This focus of this component is:

Section A – Poetry and Prose Texts: study and analyse selections from a range of fictional poetry and prose texts.

Candidates should study the poetry and prose provided in Part 2 of the *Pearson Edexcel International GCSE English Anthology* in preparation for responding to a given extract in the examination.

The specification identifies that candidates:

‘Should be able to read substantial pieces of writing (extended texts) that make significant demands on them in terms of content, structure and the quality of language. Throughout the qualification, candidates should develop the skills of inference and analysis.’

Candidates are advised to allocate 45 minutes to Section A, and there will be one essay question on a poetry or prose text from Part 2 of the *Pearson Edexcel International GCSE English Anthology*, which will be made available in a booklet in the examination if it is a longer extract or will be in the Question Paper in the case of a poem.

Candidates will answer the question in this section and 30 marks are available. There are three bullet points to prompt the response and the third bullet always asks candidates to consider language and structure.

Section B – Imaginative Writing: explore and develop imaginative writing skills.

Candidates are advised to allocate 45 minutes to Section B. There are three writing tasks, to some extent linked by theme to the reading extract. Candidates pick one question to respond to and the response is worth 30 marks. The format of the tasks remains the same for each series – Question 1 follows the format ‘Write about a time when you, or someone you know...’, Question 2 follows the format ‘Write a story with the title...’ and Question 3 offers two images as a prompt for a response which is always ‘Write a story that begins...’ or ‘Write a story that ends...’.

The Assessment Objectives for this paper are:

Section A: Reading

AO1:

- read and understand a variety of texts, selecting and interpreting information, ideas and perspectives.

AO2:

- understand and analyse how writers use linguistic and structural devices to achieve their effects.

Section B: Writing

AO4:

- communicate effectively and imaginatively, adapting form, tone and register of writing for specific purposes and audiences.

AO5:

- write clearly, using a range of vocabulary and sentence structures, with appropriate paragraphing and accurate spelling, grammar and punctuation.

This was the first time that the paper was available in a modular format, and there was a very small entry (36). It is therefore recommended that this report be read in conjunction with the report on the Linear paper 4EA1/02.

It was clear that candidates were all able to respond to the poem from the Anthology in the examination. They had been taught the context of and background to the poem.

Overall candidates had been prepared well and had at different levels developed the skills required to answer the question.

It was also clear that candidates used what they had studied in their reading to feed into their imaginative writing, which inspired them. As the specification identifies, the main aims for our candidates in this paper are:

- read critically and use knowledge gained from wide reading to inform and improve their own writing
- write effectively and coherently using Standard English appropriately
- use grammar correctly, punctuate and spell accurately
- acquire and apply a wide vocabulary alongside knowledge and understanding of grammatical terminology, and linguistic conventions for reading, writing and spoken language.

Candidates had, pleasingly, been given the opportunity to practise their writing techniques and planning and proofreading skills.

The responses of candidates had positive features. There were responses that demonstrated:

- evidence that candidates had understood the content of and ideas in the poem
- the successful use of the bullet points within the question
- the references to context in response to the poem
- the range of vocabulary for AO5
- writing that showed creative ideas and suitable tone, style and register for audience and purpose.

Question 1

The majority of candidates appeared to be able to engage with the poem and focus their discussion on how strong feelings were created in the poem, linked to themes of war, love, hardship, determination, optimism, death and destruction, for example. There were only two responses rewarded in Level 1 for Question 1, which was pleasing to see. Many responses to Question 1 had features of Level 4 and above (around a third) and the majority were Level 3 and above (30 of the 36 entries).

Writing

The Writing questions on this paper match the Writing questions on the Linear paper – please see this report for more detail.

As always, examiners noted that these imaginative writing pieces were often really enjoyable to read, with an impressive amount and quality produced under timed conditions.

The least successful responses were basic responses, with straightforward use of tone, style and register, with audience and purpose not always clear. At this level candidates tended to express but not always connect ideas and information, with limited use of structural and grammatical features and paragraphing. There were few responses that only achieved Level 1 – this was mostly because these candidates hardly wrote anything, offering a basic response.

The mid-level responses tended to at least have straightforward and at best appropriate use of tone, style and register, selecting material and stylistic or rhetorical devices to suit audience and purpose. At this level candidates tended to connect, but not always develop, ideas and information, with some structural and grammatical features and paragraphing. There was a tendency in the majority of responses marked in this range to set out a stronger description in the start of the story and then focus more on quickly moving the plot on towards the end where planning had let the candidates down. In some cases, the writing lacked development to move higher into the mark scheme for AO4. At this level the use of vocabulary and syntax tended to be appropriate but repetitive and at times limited to vague simile/metaphor, use of short sentences, questions and exclamations for effect. The level of AO6 at this borderline was appropriate but overall formulaic, where it appeared that candidates had been advised to include plenty of descriptive techniques in their writing- whether they were appropriate or not.

In the best responses, candidates tended to at least have successful and at best touches of subtle use of tone, style and register, managing ideas and stylistic or rhetorical devices to suit audience and purpose. These responses tended to manage, but not always manipulate, ideas and information, with a range of structural and grammatical features and paragraphing. Responses at this level had some creative ideas and used devices such as a build-up of tension, humour and withholding information to the end as a technique. The most successful tended to have some selective vocabulary used for specific effect rather than just to demonstrate knowledge of particular multi-syllabic words. In general, examiners felt many candidates seemed to be thoughtful about the way they opened stories, keeping the reader guessing and engaged in the early stages of a story.

The assessment objectives for these tasks effectively discriminated the quality of responses. As always, advice to centres would be to encourage candidates to avoid thinking they need to write a whole novel or even short story in the time available – they need to have a clear organisation and direction in mind, and to perhaps not ‘over-season’ the pieces with vocabulary and syntax.

The main areas that discriminated these responses were:

- whether candidates could meet both parts of the first part of bullet one in the mark scheme for AO5 – for example they often expressed ideas to achieve in Level 2, but these ideas lacked the order for the second part of that bullet. In Level 3, they may have connected ideas but not developed them.
- the success of tone, style and register in AO4.
- whether candidates had really considered the assessment objective requirement to write for ‘specific purposes and audiences’. This means answering **the question given** in an appropriate way, rather than using a past paper response prepared and trying to add the title in. This approach of preparing responses may not often achieve successful communication of purpose
- the spelling of basic vocabulary in AO5.
- the accuracy of punctuation and use of varied punctuation in AO5.
- the use of a range of sentence structures for AO5.

As in previous series, sentence structure was clearly an area centres had focussed on: varying the way sentences begin; more use of subordinate clauses to begin complex sentences; effective use of one-word sentences and one-sentence paragraphs to demonstrate conscious crafting. Some candidates attempted to use ambitious vocabulary while some seemed to steer away from ambitious vocabulary in order to maintain accuracy. A key message to centres is to focus on crafting and organisation whatever the nature of the task. This was a common weakness running through all but the very best responses. The less successful responses showed a lack of organisation and demonstrated a lack of planning and direction.

In terms of register it was clear that the majority of the candidates knew how to write an imaginative piece, however there were some that produced responses that were more like an essay. Some key issues were the achievement of the purpose of the writing, especially when candidates had created what appeared pre-prepared responses which just had a statement bolted on at the end to link it to the title, for example ‘This was no longer my perfect place’. A

story about trauma, sadness and drama is unlikely to be a story about 'A Perfect Place' and is not broadly appropriate for the purpose. Examiners noted that candidates need to manage their time better, as even responses that started off strong appeared unfinished or rushed at the end.

Examiners felt that, overall, there were some incredibly imaginative responses with a great range of ideas used creatively. One noted 'The vast majority were very pleasurable to read. It was clear a lot of thought went into the crafting of the responses, especially in some very well-chosen vocabulary and the requirements of the reader.'

Question 2: Write about a time when you, or someone you know, decorated something.

There were only 6 responses to this question, and all were in Level 3, demonstrating that candidates in this question were able to communicate clearly, with a clear sense of purpose and audience and appropriate use of form, tone and register. Candidates did develop and connect appropriate information and ideas, structural and grammatical features and paragraphing made the meaning clear and a varied vocabulary was used.

Question 3: Write a story with the title 'A Perfect Place'.

This question was the most popular of the three this series, with 23 responses.

There were very varied responses, but, as on the Linear paper, some that were (ironically or not) very negative and therefore did not really meet the purpose of the title.

There was a range of performance on this question, with responses in Levels 2, 3 and 4 for both Assessment Objectives.

Question 4: Look at the images provided. Write a story that begins 'Our eyes suddenly met'.

As with Question 2, evidence is limited with only 7 responses to this question. It was, however, successfully answered, with marks awarded in Levels 4 and 5 across those 7 responses.

Summary

Based on their performance on the paper and the Linear paper, candidates are offered the following advice:

- Ensure you have studied the poetry and prose texts in the Anthology fully and use the examination time to remind yourself of the text, not re-read it.
- Even where the text is a short poem, consider what the key points are linked to the question you are being asked.
- Make you are covering the whole poem from beginning to end in order to meet AO1 in the higher levels.

- Read the question carefully and make sure you are answering **this** question, not telling the examiner what you know about the poem you have studied. The selection needs to be relevant to the question you are being asked, in this case the presentation of strong feelings.
- For AO2 (language and structure), make sure you are offering ideas about how language and structure are used. Many of you were able to give examples, but sometimes you did not offer a comment about the example was used.
- For AO2 try to cover points on both language and structure, commenting on the different techniques that have been used by the writer and how they link to the overall topic of the question, in this case the presentation of strong feelings.
- When you are writing, always think about your reader, what information and ideas you want to develop and how you want the reader to react at different parts of your writing; then choose the best words, phrases or techniques available to you to achieve those effects. Think about 'how do you want your reader to feel?' and 'how will you achieve this?' to encourage more conscious crafting of writing.
- Listen to your teacher's advice and make sure to plan- some responses felt as if they had little purpose or understanding of how they were going to conclude.
- Think carefully about starts and ends. Think about how you will begin to write so that it is engaging for your reader from the very start. As you begin to write, know where you will end. This will help you to write in a manner that is cohesive and coherent for your reader.
- Take care throughout with accuracy: spelling, punctuation and grammar
- In writing, focus on crafting and organisation whatever the nature of the task.
- Be ambitious in your structure, vocabulary and range of ideas and try to be creative and original.
- Always respond to the questions set, not a question you have prepared – this rarely leads to effective responses as the response needs to be appropriate and at least clearly linked to the purpose (i.e. the title).

