



Examiners' Report

Principal Examiner Feedback

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Pearson Edexcel International GCSE
In English Language (Specification A)
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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

A01:

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

A02:

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

Section B: Writing

A04:

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

A05:

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

This was only the second time that the paper was available in a modular format, and there was a small entry. 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 prose extract from the Anthology in the examination. Some were aware of the broad ideas and themes in the extract.

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 prose extract
- the successful use of the bullet points within the question
- 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 extract and focus their discussion on how the theme of loss is presented. Less successful responses did not move past the first section of the prose extract and the reference to Lev's need for a cigarette.

There was a variety of responses across most levels, and regardless of level, the majority of responses largely followed the requirement of the mark scheme. Points on language and structure were less securely made across the responses, with more instances of underdeveloped feature-spotting, or where AO2 was not considered at all.

AO1

AO1 requires candidates to read and understand a variety of texts, selecting and interpreting information, ideas and perspectives. The level of understanding of the text from the Anthology is assessed in the first bullet point, and the selection and interpretation of information, ideas and perspectives in the text in the second bullet point.

All candidates had at least some knowledge of the prose extract. Some candidates decided to write an introductory paragraph outlining the story and this did help to focus responses on key elements of this longer extract, as it meant they showed awareness of the loss of the necklace and the effect this loss had. Many candidates spent far too long on the opening section of the story, so failed to mention the theme of loss. Some candidates also forgot the focus of the question, which was loss, although there were some implied comments in the material included.

AO2

For AO2, candidates are required to demonstrate that they can understand and analyse how writers use linguistic and structural devices to achieve their effects. There needs to be understanding of the language and structure used in the text, and the level of skill is also a discriminator. *Explain* is a mid-level skill, *comment* a

lower level skill and *explore/analyse* higher-level skills, which gives students opportunities to achieve across the range.

The least successful responses did not cover AO2 at all, but it was possible to reward some implied language consideration in the quotations selected and where a comment such as 'description is used' / 'this emphasises' was made. Other less successful responses offered a list of features, sometimes with evidence.

The more successful responses presented thorough investigations into the prose extract and made several valid comments supported by textual references. They understood why certain language techniques were used to portray the events and how they affected the story.

Writing

The Writing questions on this paper match the Writing questions on the Linear paper and there was no discernible difference in performance.

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. There were responses seen in this section across the full range of levels.

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 use vocabulary and syntax strategically.

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 (for example, 'The Painting') 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 'I was on the road home'.

Examiners felt that, overall, there were some incredibly imaginative responses with a great range of ideas used creatively. One noted 'There were some very inventive pieces using wide vocabulary and clear layouts with paragraphing.'

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

This question was the least popular of the three. There were a wide variety of approaches here, from concrete to abstract, for example finding themselves or friendship. Less successful responses were those that were unfinished - even promising ones.

There were some inspired by events in the prose extract, i.e. a necklace or other piece of jewellery.

Question 3: Write a story with the title 'The Road Home'.

This question was the second most popular of the three this series and provided some quite moving responses with concrete journeys home and also abstract ones.

More successful responses had focus on the purpose, moving through the narrative to a full-length explanation of a journey.

Less successful responses failed to give a reasonable conclusion to the story, leaving it on a cliff-hanger (a common way of dealing with this in an examination context).

Mainly the responses were narrative, although some included more of a description. Some adopted a tone which was intended to influence the reader. A number of candidates seemed to have ignored the title and then tacked it on at the end - this is not always very successful.

Question 4: Look at the images provided. Write a story that begins 'I slowly opened the box.'

This was the most popular question on the modular paper for this section. The images proved to be useful stimulus material. Responses here varied in quality. Most candidates tried hard to craft the piece with varying sentence structures and vocabulary. Sometimes there was a tendency to keep writing when it would have been better to end, it added nothing and almost detracted from the piece.

Less successful candidates gave a small story using one or two paragraphs where a box is found, opened and contained nothing. There was limited or no attempt to expand on the story.

Some responses used a different approach than with Question 2 as the box had already been found and candidates wrote about valuable items inside the box.

Summary

Based on their performance on the 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.
- When there is a longer prose extract to be used, consider what the key points are linked to the question you are being asked.
- Make you are strategically covering the whole prose extract from beginning to end, relevant to the question, 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 text you have studied or read. The selection needs to be relevant to the question you are being asked, in this case the presentation of society.
- 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.

