



Examiners' Report Principal Examiner Feedback

June 2025

Pearson Edexcel International GCSE
In English Language (4WEA2)
UNIT 02 Poetry and Prose Texts and
Imaginative Writing

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Introduction

This report will provide exemplification of candidates' work, together with tips and comments, for the modular version of 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 second summer series of the modular version of the paper. The entries remain quite small (209), and 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.

As Principal Examiner for this paper it was a privilege to read such accomplished work and to see the engagement, interest and significant hard work in the responses candidates had completed.

The responses of candidates had some positive features. Examiners were impressed by:

- evidence that many candidates had understood and engaged with the content of and ideas in the poem
- the successful, integrated use of the bullet points within the question in order to scaffold responses
- coverage of the assessment objectives required for this paper
- the range of ideas and creativity for AO4
- the attempt to vary vocabulary and punctuation for AO5
- writing that showed at least appropriate tone, style and register for audience and purpose.

Less successful responses:

- demonstrated a lack of knowledge of the poem and / or lack of awareness of the ideas in the poem specifically relevant to the question
- failed to reference the question, with candidates simply writing something about the poem or writer very broadly
- rigidly followed the bullet points in the question so that language and structure points were almost an ‘add-on’ at the end - there are 18 marks available for this assessment objective
- had an insecure grasp of language and structure with a lack of understanding of how these were used, feature-spotting or confusion of terms
- had limited comment on language and structure and relied heavily on description of the poem or paraphrasing of it for Question 1
- failed to support points using appropriate textual evidence, used over-long quotations or tried to use the same quotations to support both AO1 and AO2. This is only acceptable where the points made are different
- lacked organisation in their writing
- lacked accurate spelling and secure control of punctuation and grammar in imaginative writing.

It was clear that candidates had been able to find at least some information about how the writer presented discrimination. Some candidates could, at the very least, comment on language and structural features. Imaginative writing was often interesting, engaging and enthusiastic and had a clear sense of purpose and audience in the voice and ideas used.

Question 1

AO1: 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 in the AO1 mark scheme, and the selection and interpretation of information, ideas and perspectives in the text in the second bullet point. Overall, candidates clearly engaged with the overall ideas in the poem. The bullet points in the question were followed by the vast majority of candidates and helped them to demonstrate selection and understanding of, for example, the narrator's thoughts and feelings and how discrimination in history is presented.

Responses that were less successful tended to comment very broadly on what was being said in the poem. They were able to show some understanding of the poem, but the understanding and focus was uneven. In these less successful responses there was limited selection and interpretation of information and ideas.

The responses at the mid-level were at least able to identify some of the key areas of the poem which showed discrimination, although there was sometimes an imbalance where the focus was on identifying basic / valid ideas and information from the poem that had a vague link to discrimination rather than being appropriate, apt or persuasive for the higher levels in the AO1 mark scheme.

The most successful responses were able to select the relevant ideas from the poem relating to the presentation of discrimination in a detailed but succinct manner. These responses tended to cover the full poem and offered detailed points, for example about hardship, pride, determination, stereotyping, persistence and segregation.

AO2 Understand and analyse how writers use linguistic and structural devices to achieve their effects.

There are 18 marks available for this assessment objective and in some cases there was too much focus on AO1, with a few comments on language and structure added on at the end. The quotations used to support these points must also stand independently of those used to illustrate AO1 points, as they cannot be credited twice for the same point.

There needs to be more than just identification (Level 1). There should be at least some understanding of the language and structure used in the text, and the level of skill is a good discriminator. *Explain* is a mid-level skill, *comment* a lower-level skill and *explore/analyse* higher-level skills, which gives candidates opportunities to achieve across the range.

The less successful responses often made reference to language and structure as a brief add-on at the end of the answer. Candidates here often identified and named devices, but did not demonstrate the skill or understanding to discuss their use, and did not link these to the question. At this level responses were characterised by writing without any explanations - candidates here were good at finding both

language and structure features, but not as confident at explaining them. The responses were much more at a descriptive level, with limited and underdeveloped evidence.

Mid-level responses were at least commenting on both language and structure. At this level candidates were commenting on and explaining language and structure, with appropriate and relevant references. These responses were able to pick out features in the poem, but often there was little developed explanation of the effect of these features. The majority of fairly successful responses were able to comment clearly on, for example, repetition, rule of three, use of questions, metaphor and emotive language.

The most successful responses were making points about both language and structure consistently, confidently and succinctly. These responses explored and analysed language and structure, with detailed and discriminating references. At the higher levels candidates were able to explore less obvious features, such as the tone of the poem and the change in verb tense. The examples of language and structure used in the most successful responses were much more considered and selected, showing a perceptive understanding of how details selected affect readers, for example references to tone.

Examiner Comments:

Writing

Examiners felt that the writing questions ‘worked well, allowing candidates to produce some lovely creative pieces’. It is worth noting that examiners always enjoy reading the writing responses, with one saying ‘Imagination and creativity were strong features of many responses’.

At the less successful end of the mark scheme candidates tended to offer a basic response. They always had 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. Pleasingly, there were few responses that only achieved Level 1 and where they did this was mostly because these candidates hardly wrote anything, offering a basic response, or the sentences did not make sense at all.

In the mid-level of the mark scheme candidates 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 at this mid level to set out a stronger description in the start and then focus more on plot 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 or metaphor, use of short sentences, questions and exclamations for effect. The level of AO6 at this level was appropriate but overall formulaic, where it appeared that candidates had been advised to include plenty of adjectives, adverbs or similes in their writing without considering their purpose.

In the most successful responses, candidates tended to have subtle use of tone, style and register, managing ideas and stylistic or rhetorical devices to suit audience and purpose. In these responses candidates tended to manage, but not always manipulate, ideas and information, with a range of structural and grammatical features and paragraphing. The successful responses had some creative ideas and conscious, successful crafting, with some selective vocabulary used for specific effect rather than just to demonstrate knowledge of particular multi-syllabic words.

The assessment objectives for these tasks effectively discriminated the quality of responses. Advice to centres would be to encourage candidates to avoid thinking they need to write a whole novel or even short extract 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 point. In Level 3, they may have connected ideas but not developed them.
- the success of tone, style and register in AO4.
- 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.

Varying sentence structure and punctuation were areas 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. The less successful responses were formulaic, showing a lack of organisation and often demonstrating a lack of planning and direction. Advice to candidates is to be ambitious in the structure, vocabulary and range of ideas and try to be creative and original. There was some excellent description and evidence of crafting at all levels.

In terms of register it was clear that the majority of the candidates knew how to write an imaginative piece, however there were a few that produced responses more like an essay or that did not relate to the question being answered (as this is the purpose of the piece and the audience for the piece, this is essential - responses that are pre-prepared to try and fit the question are rarely successful).

As with Summer 2024, a key issue was 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 a celebration'. A story about trauma, sadness and drama is unlikely to be a story about 'The Celebration' and is not broadly appropriate for the purpose.

Examiners noted that lack of control could let candidates down and that control of language was also a problem at times.

Some comments from examiners include:

- 'There was lots of evidence of crafting'
- '...useful deliberate use of varied sentence structures'
- 'Some candidates had careful selection of sentence starters and short sentences on a single line'
- 'Most included description for effect, some of it really effective'
- 'Most tried to vary vocabulary with some strategic use'
- 'Some used effective alliteration, repetition and rule of 3'
- 'Most were developed pieces with a clear beginning, middle and end'
- 'There were still lots of cliffhangers, some more effective than others'.

Question 2: Write about a time when you, or someone you know, had a visitor.

This question was the least popular this summer, with only 42 responses on the modular paper. For details on this question, please see the comments on the linear paper report.

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

This question was completed by slightly more candidates than Question 2, with 69 answering on the modular paper. For details on this question, please see the comments on the linear paper report.

Question 4: Look at the images provided. Write a story that begins 'It was quiet in town that evening...'

This question was the most popular this summer, perhaps as it gave such a broad direction for candidates to take. 95 candidates answered on this question on the modular paper. For details on this question, please see the comments on the linear paper report.

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.

- 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 importance of traditional Indian culture.
- 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 how the poet presents discrimination.
- 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).