

Examiners' Report/
Principal Examiner Feedback

Summer 2014

Pearson Edexcel International Lower
Secondary Curriculum in English Year 9
(LEH01)
Paper 01

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Introduction

Overall the exam was accessible. Centres will need to teach candidates how to respond successfully to some of these tasks but there was some evidence of candidate engagement.

Better candidates were able to engage fully with the texts and respond appropriately. In their writing they produced lively responses which were well controlled and accurate. Weaker candidates sometimes struggled to understand the passages. Their writing lacked coherence and the use of idiomatic English.

There were some questions left unanswered. Sometimes this was the later ones suggesting candidates had run out of time. This limited candidates' overall achievement.

Section A (Questions 1-24) Reading.

Questions 1-13 were fairly straightforward questions testing the candidates' ability to read and retrieve relevant information from the texts. The majority of the candidates were able to identify the correct response to Questions 1-3 although some found Question 4 more challenging with only some candidates identifying the correct adverb: there were a number of candidates who were able to pick an adverb, but not an adverb relating to time. Some candidates used the whole sentence in response to Question 2 instead of a short phrase which was allowed this time but centres should teach candidates how to select a short phrase. On the whole Question 5 was answered correctly. Very few candidates were able to answer Question 6 successfully and many did not attempt it. Many candidates were able to answer Question 7 but some had a problem providing one word only – where a sentence or over-long phrase was used, this was not allowed. Question 8 was generally correctly answered and so was Question 9. Questions 10 and 11 were more challenging for a lot of students. Responses to Question 10 showed that some candidates were able to provide a clear point and support but a significant number had difficulty providing a clear point about Nico. A number of candidates were able to identify the contrast in response to Question 11 but many wrote about Nico rather than the writer. Some candidates were able to clearly explain the word 'erased' for question 12, but many lost the mark by using 'erased' in their explanation. Better candidates were able to offer a valid explanation. Question 13 responses suggested candidates did not read the instructions to tick 2 boxes as a number of candidates only ticked one.

Question 14: There were some attempts at comparison but some candidates simply identified features of both texts with limited attempts at comparison. Some summarised the texts and some simply compared the topics rather than how the writers presented the content. Many candidates simply re-told the content rather than identifying techniques employed by the writers. Candidates should be told that simply using 'while' or other words of comparison and then not actually comparing the texts is not a successful way of responding. It was, however, pleasing to see in more successful responses the evidence that candidates had been taught how to respond to this type of question.

Questions 15 – 23 produced some correct responses but there were some questions that were more challenging. Question 15 responses were similar to

those of Question 12 in that candidates too often used the word 'blanketed' in their explanation. Some candidates struggled to use their own words in response to Question 16 and simply paraphrased the given text. In response to Question 17 candidates seemed to be able to identify similes but the majority could not explain the effect successfully. Question 18 was generally correct. A number of candidates did not correctly identify the meaning of 'dwindled' in response to Question 19. Question 20 was often answered correctly, although some candidates only identified one piece of evidence. Question 21- very few identified the second point given on the mark scheme. Question 22 and 23 were mostly correctly answered.

Question 24 : not all candidates attempted this question. There was much copying and unsubstantiated quotation as well as re-telling with little analysis. However a couple of examiners commented that there seemed to be an understanding of authorial intent. The most common point identified by candidates was the use of repetition.

Candidates must read the questions carefully and respond appropriately. In response to the longer reading questions (in this exam, Questions 14 and 24) it is essential that candidates know that re-telling the events of a text is not an appropriate response. Centres need to continue to work with candidates to make sure they have a clear understanding of valid ways of responding to texts.

Section B (Questions 25 – 28) Grammar and Punctuation.

Question 25 was sometimes answered correctly. Those who did not do so commonly used too many commas or did not know what a colon was.

Question 26 had a good number of correct responses. Common errors were to confuse apostrophes with inverted commas or to use apostrophes on too many words, especially those ending in 's'.

Some candidates were able to use the correct prepositions in response to Question 27 but some candidates used 'this' and 'next' for the first gap and 'among' for the second gap.

Question 28 proved challenging for a lot of candidates. Question 28a provided very few correct responses. Many candidates had problems with constructing a grammatically correct sentence using the given clause. It was clear that the majority of candidates did not understand the term 'relative clause' and where they understood the instruction in 28b) they often struggled to use appropriate punctuation or had problems with grammar. Very few candidates correctly identified the three errors in 28c) and most were able to identify and correct 1 or 2 errors. The one that posed the most difficulty was 'clearly'. Some candidates seemed to interpret the task as being 're-write the sentences'.

Again candidates must read the questions carefully and respond accordingly. Centres need to work with candidates to ensure they have a secure grasp of the rules and conventions of grammar and punctuation.

Section C (Question 29) Writing.

This question is a writing task and candidates are assessed on their skills in writing appropriately and accurately in a range of forms and with an awareness of audience and purpose.

It was rare to see evidence of candidates planning their response to this question.

Form, Communication and Purpose.

The majority were able to make some response to the question although many did not achieve higher than Level 5. Better responses were able to develop their ideas and cover the bullet points. Better responses were carefully crafted, technically accurate, and with a wide and effective range of vocabulary and sentence structures. All candidates seemed to understand what a competition was, although there were some unusual interpretations of the question including a battle of wills between a father and son, and some discursive essays on why competition is good for us. Some candidates didn't allow themselves a chance to build up much tension by selecting art or cooking competitions. Examiners commented that quite a large number of candidates did not use paragraphs.

Weaker responses tended to be pedestrian and the weakest were not able to maintain a coherent account of the event. Some candidates used ideas and phrases from 'The Kite Runner' or re-told the events. Some examiners commented they did not see many good responses to this question. Some provided very brief responses or no response at all.

Centres need to ensure candidates have a secure understanding of writing techniques and the ability to develop a coherent personal response.

Spelling, Punctuation and Grammar.

Many candidates demonstrated accuracy across their chosen range of spelling and punctuation however in some responses the range of sentence structures was not varied sufficiently. Spelling was fairly accurate. One examiner commented on weak punctuation. Language controls were not always secure and candidates had problems with grammar, sentence structure and idiomatic English.

Centres need to focus on developing accurate and effective grammatical structuring and idiomatic English to enable candidates to express themselves clearly.

Summary

Most successful candidates:

- read the texts with engagement
- selected relevant points in response to the reading questions
- used their own words in response to questions that required them
- engaged the reader with creative writing that was well structured and developed
- used ambitious vocabulary
- wrote with accuracy in spelling, punctuation and grammar.

Least successful candidates:

- did not engage fully with the texts
- did not find enough relevant points in response to the reading questions
- did not attempt to use their own words in response to questions that required them
- were not able to sustain and develop ideas in their creative writing
- did not demonstrate accuracy in spelling, punctuation and grammar.

