

Examiners' Report/
Principal Examiner Feedback

Summer 2015

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

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Publications Code PL042408

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General Overview

Overall the exam was accessible. Centres will need to continue 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, accuracy 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 1-29) Reading

Questions 1-12 were fairly straightforward, testing the candidates' ability to read and retrieve relevant information from the non-fiction texts. The majority of the candidates were able to identify the correct response to Questions 1 and 2. A number of candidates offered a paraphrase in response to Question 3, which was not the correct response because the question required them to copy out the sentence from the text. Some candidates did not use the correct punctuation in this response. Quite a few candidates were unable to identify the correct clause in response to Question 4 with some candidates underlining whole sentences or any word(s) that seemed to relate to females. Many candidates were successful in responding to Question 5. Examiners commented that a surprising number of candidates were able to correctly identify 'mitigate' in response to Question 6. Many candidates chose 'A' incorrectly in responding to Question 7. This may be because they thought the question was asking what the paragraph was about rather than how it differed from the previous paragraphs. Question 8 was generally responded to correctly. There were a number of incorrect responses to Questions 9 and 10, which suggests centres need to do more work with candidates on the purpose and effect of a writer's language choices. A number of candidates did not read Question 11 carefully or did not understand how they were supposed to respond. Some clearly did not understand the word 'accessible'. Some candidates used the right information but then used it to explain all the positive things you could do with the elephant sanctuary, which lost them valuable marks. Most candidates were able to respond correctly to Question 12, although a number of candidates did not clearly explain the first three lines.

For Question 13 there were some attempts at comparison, but many candidates simply identified features of both texts with limited attempts at comparison. Many candidates simply re-told the content rather than

identifying techniques employed by the writers. Some summarised the texts and some simply narrated the content rather than comparing how the writers presented the content. Candidates should be told that simply using 'whereas' or other words of comparison and then not actually comparing the texts is not a successful way of responding. The majority of candidates simply discussed the two texts separately. Not many candidates were able to compare 'how' the writers presented their ideas. 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 14 – 29 on the fiction text produced some correct responses but there were some questions that were more challenging. Questions 14 -17 were generally answered correctly, although one examiner commented that there were a number of incorrect responses to Question 14. In response to Question 17 some candidates did not focus on how the showman treated the elephant, which led to the explanation of the 'short sharp stick' rather than the action of 'jabbing'. Not many candidates were able to identify the two correct adjectives for Question 18 – the common error was 'heavy'. Questions 19 – 24 were generally answered successfully although some candidates gave more than one word in response to Question 24. Question 25 caused a few problems and quite a number of candidates had difficulty with this question – apparently not clearly understanding what was required. Questions 26 and 27 were generally answered correctly although, again, sometimes more than one word was offered in response to Question 27. Although quite a few candidates were able to identify the sympathy and sadness felt by the reader for Question 28, several examiners commented that this question was not well done with candidates not clearly understanding the focus should be on the effect on the reader.

For Question 29 quite a few candidates identified the gentleness of the elephant towards Tad and the friendship, but many candidates were still not able to show an understanding of authorial intent or to develop suitable and sufficiently detailed responses. Not all candidates attempted this question.

Candidates must read the questions carefully and respond appropriately. In response to the longer reading questions (in this exam, Questions 13 and 29) it is essential that candidates know that re-telling the content 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 30 – 34) Grammar and Punctuation

Questions 30, 31 and 32a were generally correct with examiners commenting that candidates generally understood punctuation. Regarding Question 32b candidates continue to have problems with choosing appropriate prepositions. Many candidates struggled with Question 33 and

clearly do not understand what a clause is, and some candidates did not use punctuation despite the instruction. Question 34 was generally well answered but some candidates lost marks by rewriting the sentences rather than correcting the errors.

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 35) 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. Some responses were engaging and quite well-written but there were some candidates who had clearly not read the question and simply wrote a story with the correct title but that had limited connections to the text. Better responses were able to develop their ideas creatively. Better candidates focused on the relationship between Tad and the elephant while building up tension and excitement or described the setting and the mixed emotions of Tad, who was venturing into the unknown. However, there were several candidates who hadn't read the instructions carefully and simply produced a story called 'Tad's Adventure' that did not use tension or leave the piece at an exciting or dramatic point. Weaker responses tended to be pedestrian and the weakest were not able to maintain a coherent narrative. Some of the less successful candidates tried to squeeze an entire narrative into two pages, which led to errors and a lack of real description. Examiners commented that quite a large number of candidates did not use paragraphs. 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.

Some 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. Some examiners 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.

Most successful candidates:

- read the texts with engagement
- read the questions carefully
- selected relevant points in response to the reading questions
- engaged the reader with creative writing that was clearly expressed, 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 read the questions carefully or did not understand them
- did not find enough relevant points in response to the reading questions
- were not able to sustain and develop ideas in their creative writing
- did not demonstrate accuracy in spelling, punctuation and grammar.

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