



GCE A Level Examiners' Report

Subject: English Language

Level: GCE A Level

Summer 2024

Introduction

Our Principal examiners' report provides valuable feedback on the recent assessment series. It has been written by our Principal Examiners and Principal Moderators after the completion of marking and moderation, and details how candidates have performed in each component.

This report opens with a summary of candidates' performance, including the assessment objectives/skills/topics/themes being tested, and highlights the characteristics of successful performance and where performance could be improved. It then looks in detail at each unit, pinpointing aspects that proved challenging to some candidates and suggesting some reasons as to why that might be.¹

The information found in this report provides valuable insight for practitioners to support their teaching and learning activity. We would also encourage practitioners to share this document – in its entirety or in part – with their learners to help with exam preparation, to understand how to avoid pitfalls and to add to their revision toolbox.

Further support

Document	Description	Link
Professional Learning / CPD	Eduqas offers an extensive programme of online and face-to-face Professional Learning events. Access interactive feedback, review example candidate responses, gain practical ideas for the classroom and put questions to our dedicated team by registering for one of our events here.	https://www.eduqas.co.uk/home/professional-learning/
Past papers	Access the bank of past papers for this qualification, including the most recent assessments. Please note that we do not make past papers available on the public website until 12 months after the examination.	Portal by WJEC or on the Eduqas subject page
Grade boundary information	Grade boundaries are the minimum number of marks needed to achieve each grade. For linear specifications, a single grade is awarded for the subject, rather than for each component that contributes towards the overall grade. Grade boundaries are published on results day.	For unitised specifications click here: Results and Grade Boundaries and PRS (eduqas.co.uk)

¹ Please note that where overall performance on a question/question part was considered good, with no particular areas to highlight, these questions have not been included in the report.

Exam Results Analysis	Eduqas provides information to examination centres via the WJEC Portal. This is restricted to centre staff only. Access is granted to centre staff by the Examinations Officer at the centre.	Portal by WJEC
Classroom Resources	Access our extensive range of FREE classroom resources, including blended learning materials, exam walk-throughs and knowledge organisers to support teaching and learning.	https://resources.edugas.co.uk/
Bank of Professional Learning materials	Access our bank of Professional Learning materials from previous events from our secure website and additional pre-recorded materials available in the public domain.	Portal by WJEC or on the Eduqas subject page.
Become an examiner with WJEC.	We are always looking to recruit new examiners or moderators. These opportunities can provide you with valuable insight into the assessment process, enhance your skill set, increase your understanding of your subject and inform your teaching.	Become an Examiner Eduqas

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Executive Summary

COMPONENT 1: LANGUAGE CONCEPTS AND ISSUES

Performance was consistent with previous series. Candidates were able to access the full range of marks available for this paper, including some candidates who were able to achieve close to full marks. It was pleasing to see that the culture of embedding connections for AO4 in Section A was evident. In more successful responses, discussion was anchored by use of relevant speaker strategies, such as turn taking or the use of interrogatives or declaratives. Selection of textual evidence was often precise and purposeful.

There was less evidence in Section B than in previous series of pre-prepared responses. It was also clear that most candidates maintained focus on the selected question, whilst others may benefit from being reminded that they cannot be rewarded for points made if their examples do not represent the mode specified in the question. As there is a natural overlap between many concepts and issues pertaining to language use, higher-scoring candidates distilled their analysis making it relevant to the respective question.

COMPONENT 2: LANGUAGE CHANGE OVER TIME

Overall, the demand of the paper was equivalent to that of previous series. Candidates were well prepared for the genres of speeches and Tweets / 'X' posts and produced some thoughtful and engaging responses. On the whole, previous series' issues with time management in terms of completing the whole paper continued to decline, with fewer undeveloped/incomplete responses seen.

In Section A, the number of candidates making points based purely on language change in the essay question, Question 2, continues to decline, although a few still did write paragraphs purely on EME orthography, for example, which is to be avoided as this is already covered. At the heart of the most successful essay responses was a clear sense of argument, carefully structured within precise and focused paragraphs introduced by well-written topic sentences. Understanding the contexts of the speeches and how these defined the language choices was crucial to success. Less successful responses tended towards more general discussion of the texts, sometimes slightly consumed by historical discussion, rather than linguistic analysis.

In Section B, high-performing responses selected from across the corpus, showed confident conceptual knowledge of C21st English as a means to explore the issue of informalisation, and used the contextual information as a springboard to the close analysis of meaning. Less successful responses tended to select from a narrower range from the corpus, often taking a chronological approach. There were occasions when general ideas around attitudes to language change were used rather than close engagement with the corpus.

For both sections of this paper, candidates should be advised to consider the application of theory judiciously and to carefully read the contextual information provided.

COMPONENT 3: CREATIVE AND CRITICAL LANGUAGE

Candidates responded with creativity, flair and skill to the set tasks for both routes through the paper, which seemed to be equally accessible to candidates of all levels of ability, with Question 2 seeming to be the slightly more popular option. There was evidence that candidates had considered carefully the specifics of the tasks, with few having approached the exam with pre-prepared ideas. Some of the less successful responses to all tasks were characterised by ignoring the directions of the set task or stimulus texts.

Time management was effective and allowed for completion of the commentary. These continue to be thoughtful about language choices made; less successful candidates tended to limit discussion to identification of word classes with little meaningful discussion. There is work to be done in ensuring candidates are concise and purposeful in their selection of evidence from their own writing.

COMPONENT 4: LANGUAGE AND IDENTITY

Candidates were well-prepared and the work produced was in line with the expectations of the specification. Folders represented the hard work of both teachers and students, and this was evident across all work submitted. The titles were generally well-thought-out, and candidates explored some very interesting aspects from within their chosen topic area. There were still too many investigations where the word 'identity' did not feature in the investigation title and some with very implicit reference to this focus.

Paying careful attention to the advice given through the centre's moderator report is strongly recommended, as these contain helpful advice and guidance on the best ways to support candidates and on strengths and aspects that can be developed from the submissions of individual centres.

Areas for improvement	Classroom resources	Brief description of resource
Applying core linguistic terminology	Knowledge organisers	A collection of sample knowledge organisers on open class words, phrases, and spoken. These could be used for revision or as a starting point for creating your own knowledge organisers.
Practising past questions and time management	Exam walk throughs	These Exam Walk-Through resources for each examined component offer practical hints and tips on how to effectively approach questions in the examination paper. Using questions from past exam papers, the PPT with audio help and audio script in the notes will walk students through a mock examination paper, aiding revision and the practice useful exam techniques.
Answer the question set by developing pertinent arguments	A level Component 1: Language and situation - crafting an essay using wider examples	This blended learning resource contains interactive self-study content covering A level Component 1: Language and situation - crafting an essay using wider examples. The resource is designed to complement traditional face to face teaching with an online learning pack that allows students to learn at their own pace
Commentaries	Original writing and commentary	Practical teaching ideas to stimulate learners' own creative writing and commentaries
Professional Learning / CPD	On demand courses Materials from previous events	Past Professional Learning resources are available on demand.

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COMPONENT 1: LANGUAGE CONCEPTS AND ISSUES

Overview of the Component

This unit contains two sections: Section A, Analysis of Spoken Language, and Section B, Language Issues. Section A assesses AO1 (methods of analysis, use of terminology, and coherent expression and discussion); AO2 (critical understanding of concepts and issues); and AO4 (connections). Section B assesses AO1 (methods of analysis, use of terminology, and coherent expression and discussion); AO2 (critical understanding of concepts and issues); and AO3 (analysis of the contexts of production and reception of 21st century English).

In Section A, candidates were asked to analyse the participants' use of spoken language in two exit interviews for television competition programmes. In Text A, host Tom Allen interviews Lewis Allen, the latest contestant to be fired on television programme *The Apprentice*. In Text B, host Rylan Clark interviews Dev Griffin and his professional dance partner Dianne Buswell following their exit from the show *Strictly Come Dancing*. Candidates were asked to analyse and evaluate how the spoken language of each of these texts exemplifies interactions in exit interviews with contestants in television competition programmes. The question tested the candidates' ability to analyse language using appropriate terminology, to evaluate how the contextual factors (such as, the roles of host and guests) have shaped meaning, and to explore meaningful connections across the texts (for example, the dynamics between hosts and guests, and the interactions between hosts and guests).

In Section B, candidates were asked to apply appropriate methods of language analysis and terminology, demonstrate understanding of relevant concepts and issues, consider contextual factors and language features associated with the construction of meaning, and provide supporting examples when tackling one of three options. Question 2 was an extract dating from 1914, conveying attitudes to English dialects and varieties. Using this extract as a starting point, candidates had to analyse and evaluate different attitudes to Standard English. Question 3 was an extract conveying the notion of politeness in Iranian/Persian culture as a 'verbal dance' between speakers. Here, candidates had to focus their analysis and evaluation on the importance of politeness in spoken interactions. Finally, Question 4 was an extract from a memo written by a president and CEO to their employees. Here, candidates had to use the extract as a starting point in analysing and evaluating the ways in which written language is used to manipulate attitudes and behaviours.

Whilst the paper presented some challenges, on the whole, candidates were able to access the full range of marks available, including some candidates who were able to achieve close to full marks. It was pleasing to see that the culture of embedding connections for AO4 in Section A was evident in the work produced by candidates in many centres. Furthermore, for Section B there was less evidence that students had been drilled in advance with ready-made responses which simply did not meet the full requirements of the specific task they had been given, and which were used by the student to set down everything they had been taught about a particular topic. A couple of points are worth noting about candidate responses. Firstly, candidates should be reminded that if the question is focused on the spoken mode (here, question 3) or the written mode (here, question 4), they cannot be credited for points made if their examples do not represent the mode specified in the question. In addition, though there is a natural overlap between many concepts and issues pertaining to language use in this section (for example, between Standard and Non-Standard English and power, or between politeness and power), candidates must distil their analysis and focus it on the respective question, rather than shoehorning knowledge that is not relevant to their argument under Standard English, power or politeness respectively.

On the whole performance was consistent with previous series, as responses exemplified the full range of marks. In Section A, there was an increasing use of relevant core linguistic terms as well as spoken terms when candidates examined the interactions between hosts and guests, as well as a clear focus on genre conventions. On the whole, in Section B, there was again some variety of scenarios for AO3, although it remains evident that particular scenarios had been taught in class, because all or most candidates in the centre had used the same ones. As was the case last year, centres are reminded that it would be useful for candidates to be enabled to bring their own examples, in addition to teacher-supplied ones.

Comments on individual questions/sections

Section A

In Section A, candidates, overall, demonstrated a solid grasp of the key language constituents, with many establishing sensible and even purposeful connections in the dynamics between the speakers in the two conversations.

Connections were strongly considered, on the whole, with candidates teasing out connections in the roles played by the respective hosts in the two interviews; Tom Allen's comedic persona versus Rylan Clark's more conventional commiseratory approach. Candidates were also able to knowledgeably examine the respective attitudes conveyed by the guests in the two texts, comparing the understated self-mocking use of language by Lewis Allen in Text A to the resigned yet grateful tone of language used by Griffin and Buswell in Text B.

In more successful responses, discussion was anchored by use of relevant speaker strategies, such as turn taking or the use of interrogatives or declaratives. Selection of textual evidence was often precise and purposeful. A balanced selection of linguistic features typical of spoken language and more general linguistic features was demonstrated. Clear links were established between language features and the dynamics of the specific conversations.

In less successful responses, candidates simply made general points about the conversations, ignoring specific speakers' strategies. There was also some misreading of Text A, where some candidates were not as alert to the use of comedy and humour. Text A was, therefore, relatively more challenging and differentiated strong candidates from the less successful ones. As usual, centres should discourage candidates from focusing on only a narrow range of textual evidence and avoiding feature spotting.

Section B

Candidates appeared to apportion their time well, spending enough time to tackle Section B. Generally, there was a solid understanding of concepts, issues and theories relevant to the three situations presented.

Encouragingly, in Section B, more candidates anchored their discussion within specific examples of scenarios exemplifying issues from the texts. For example, in Question 4 many candidates examined how language used in public signage or in legislative documentation effectively manipulates attitudes and behaviours. In addition, a number of candidates related attitudes to Standard English to historical and current cultural trends, such as the rising popularity of Multicultural London English (MLE).

Overall, successful analysis teased out specific aspects of factors affecting the construction of meaning, for example, writers' strategies in establishing authority in Question 4.

Furthermore, a feature of successful candidate responses was some imagination in the use of scenarios, such as some candidates' reference to Standard and Non-Standard language used pertaining to 'roadman' English.

In unsuccessful responses, candidates produced vague discussions that were not anchored in any scenario, leading to generic and generalised responses. This year more than last year, less successful responses focused on the incorrect mode, that is discussing spoken power interactions for Question 4, which was focused on the written mode. Centres are reminded to encourage candidates to be individual and creative in their deployment of personally chosen scenarios based on their own observations of language use in the world around them.

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COMPONENT 2: LANGUAGE CHANGE OVER TIME

Overview of the Component

Candidates were clearly very well prepared for this year's genres of speeches and Tweets (or 'X' posts, as many were very keen to point out!) which produced some thoughtful and engaging responses. On the whole, previous series' issues with time management in terms of completing the whole paper continued to decline, with fewer undeveloped or incomplete responses seen. The level of contextual detail in many responses continues to impress, particularly when this was married to a forensic level of linguistic analysis through the precise application of the language levels. As referenced in last year's report, the number of candidates making points based purely on language change in Question 2 continues to decline, although a few still did write paragraphs purely on EME orthography, for example, which is to be avoided as this is already covered in Questions 1(a) and (b) and adds little to the analysis of the texts. While there was less reference to other twenty-first century genres in Question 3, some candidates, making reference to their own language use on Twitter, discussed it more in terms of personal messaging, rather than posting publicly; this approach added little value to the response.

To pick up a thread from last year's report, candidates should be advised to consider the application of theory judiciously. For example, while Face theory was a helpful tool to interpret all of the Queens' speeches in terms of how they managed the relationships with their respective audiences, the suggestion that Text A and Text B provided evidence of synthetic personalisation through the use of direct address second person pronoun 'you' was less convincing when the audiences were present at the speeches' delivery (particularly when, in EME, 'you' was used to mark plurality) than it was for Text C where the speech was recorded and broadcast.

Another point worthy of reiteration from last year's report is the reminder that contextual material should be read carefully: it was crucial to the effective contrasting of Question 2's texts that Text A and B were delivered to parliament, whereas Text C had a much wider public audience, for example. Likewise, recognising that the song title 'Peru' was a reference to the Nigerian musician Peruzzi was particularly helpful in understanding the different international posts in response to the original.

Comments on individual questions/sections

Section A: Language Change Over Time

Four equally weighted assessment objectives are covered in Section A, with AO1 linked to the short questions and AO2, AO3 and AO4 linked to the extended response. In Question 2, marks are awarded for each separate assessment objective.

Q.1. Short questions

- (a) This question tests knowledge of word class and archaic spelling patterns. There are 3 marks for identifying the basic word class, and 3 marks for an appropriate explanation for the orthographical variation in each case.

Most candidates handled this question well, correctly identifying the word classes and spelling patterns. Some points to note: 'neuer' (PDE 'never') is very specifically an adverb (word class – as per the question's parameters) rather than an adverbial (phrase type); 'wil' (PDE 'will') needed reference, in the explanation, to single/singling or lack of double/doubling of consonants. Please encourage candidates to learn how to spell 'consonant' correctly!

- (b) This question tests the candidate's knowledge of word classes, language variation over time and language change concepts. There are 2 marks for identifying the form, and 2 marks for two distinct points relating to language change. Candidates cannot be rewarded for repeating the same point (for example, a lack of standardisation) for each example.

This question was also largely well answered: 'sexly' caused a little confusion, perhaps due to the 'ly' suffix which meant that it was misidentified by some candidates as an adverb, rather than an adjective. This is perhaps a good time for a reminder that candidates should always take the time to identify the grammatical context of the example selected (helped by the line references) in the text. Where they had done so, they would have seen that it attributively describes the abstract noun 'weaknesse' and could, therefore, only have been an adjective.

- (c) This question tests the candidate's knowledge of word classes and archaic grammatical features. There are 2 marks for identifying form, and 2 marks for an appropriate explanation of the linguistic variation in each case.

It was pleasing to see that the majority of candidates were well-prepared in order to provide the tense of the verb 'hath' in order to differentiate between the lesser demand of word class for 1(a) and (b). The majority of candidates who recognised 'my subjects good' as a possessive noun phrase managed this example well, but there were a substantial number who did not, making incorrect reference to syntax instead. This feature can appear in either 1(c) or be available in 1(d).

- (d) This question tests the candidate's ability to identify and describe EME grammatical structures and punctuation features. There are 3 marks for identifying distinctive EME usage and 3 marks for selecting and describing an appropriate example. Responses needed to be analytical rather than observational, with clear evidence of language study. Candidates should again be reminded that references to EME spelling are not relevant in part (d): unfortunately, this was seen a little more this year than last. Many candidates successfully identified random capitalisation and provided word class to accompany the example; it is worth mentioning here that the term common noun (to contrast to proper noun) is perhaps at its most valuable across the whole course for making this point. Everywhere else concrete/abstract/proper/collective are more helpful for analysis. Many candidates also had success through the identification and accurate labelling of the ampersand '&' in place of the coordinating conjunction 'and', while many others used the example of the reflexive pronoun 'my selfe' that had not at that time been compounded (specific reference to both compounding and reflexive pronoun were required for both marks). Less successful here was general reference to long/multi-clausal/complex/compound-complex sentences without identification and quotation of specific clause types.

Characteristics of successful responses (as last year):

- Concise and focused.
- Accurate application of linguistic terms.
- Clear knowledge of EME features.
- Well selected, labelled examples for (d) explained in sufficient detail.

Areas for improvement (as last year):

- Checking internal context of examples for word class within the text, particularly on (a) and (b).
- Tenses for verb forms for (c).
- No spelling references for (d).
- Accurate identification of clause types for (d) when discussing sentence types.

Q.2 Essay

This question tests the candidate's ability to analyse and evaluate the content and meaning of the texts in context, to establish meaningful connections between the texts, and to apply knowledge of relevant concepts and issues in order to explore the writers' language choices.

Candidates needed to consider three Queens' speeches written and delivered at different times. It was pleasing to read many informed, thoughtful responses; the strongest of which demonstrated a clear understanding of the texts and their similarities and differences, supported by frequent reference to relevant contexts/concepts used to explore issues relating to language change over time. At the heart of the most successful responses was a clear sense of argument, carefully structured within precise and focused paragraphs introduced by well-written topic sentences. Clarity with regards to the situation in which the speeches were made and how this defined the language choices was crucial to success.

Less successful responses tended towards more general discussion of the texts, sometimes slightly consumed by historical discussion, rather than linguistic analysis. A few specific points to note:

- the word 'juxtapose' used synonymously with more precise ones, such as 'contrast': this is inaccurate
- 'phrase' used loosely to refer to a string of words: it should only be used in a grammatical sense e.g. 'noun phrase', 'adjectival phrase' etc.
- frequently, when endeavouring to explain the Queens' emotional states, candidates were using 'gratefulness' and 'humbleness' instead of the correct 'gratitude' and 'humility': work on candidates' analytical vocabulary will inevitably develop the quality of their work.

AO2 (20 marks)

Candidates were rewarded for discussion of conceptual material, such as the rhetorical nature of language central to the genre of speeches, the relationship between speaker and audience, levels of formality, and the purposes of the texts. This provided the opportunity for the exploration of issues, like speaker identity, social class, power, gender and the influence of religion. This was all at its most successful when linked specifically to analytical discussion of the language of the texts via well-selected, concise and accurate embedded quotation.

AO3 (20 marks)

The strongest responses are invariably those which demonstrate a confident understanding of all three texts, informed by close analysis of how meaning is shaped by language choices. Many candidates commented productively on the waning power of the monarchy as the key contextual thread which ran through the texts over time, along with other helpful steers from the rubric, such as the point during the Queens' respective reigns that influenced their material and tonal approach. Similarly, recognition of the influence of contemporary events (Elizabeth I's unpopularity, Victoria's reference to the slave trade, Covid for Elizabeth II) provided fruitful contextual material for many candidates.

Despite my previous comments on the use of 'relatable'/'relatability' in the last few reports, the use of these words as a contextual 'shortcut' shows no sign of abating, unfortunately. Although it might be true, for example, that Elizabeth II makes efforts to present herself to have shared similar negative experiences as some of her audience, to describe her as 'relatable' - and to leave it at that – misses out on the opportunity to explore the complex dynamics between text producer and audience, and evaluation of the manner in which this relationship is managed. I appreciate that the words are 'out there', so to speak, and sometimes in places that we might consider to have intellectual integrity (for example, the broadsheet media), they are nevertheless fundamentally unacademic in register.

AO4 (20 marks)

This year's texts proved how productive comparison can be not just an end in itself, but the means to facilitate genuinely insightful analysis of texts. For example, it could not fairly be said that Elizabeth II's speech was informal by any reasonable measurement, but by comparing the levels of formality across the three texts, and providing well-chosen evidence (Text C's verb 'squeeze', contrasted with Text B's abstract noun 'assiduity', for instance), it was certainly possible to make a case for a lowering of formality over time. Different approaches to the comparative requirement of the essay are entirely permissible, but the strongest responses compared in overview and conclusion, and frequently between. As mentioned last year, the strongest links are drawn through meaning, rather than linguistic feature.

Also rewarded under AO4 is the application of linguistic terminology: at its best, this is drawn from across the language levels, demonstrates wide-ranging and confident knowledge, and genuinely adds value to the response, rather than being used to underpin a feature-spotting approach.

Characteristics of successful responses:

- well-shaped essays that clearly address the question and are specific to the content of the texts: a good sense of the texts should be available from reading the essay alone
- a clear, purposeful comparative overview that establishes the essay's direction of travel and demonstrates clear understanding
- effective topic sentences that delineate the content/focus of the paragraph
- well-chosen textual evidence engaged with closely
- productive and frequent comparisons between texts that offer genuine insight and add value to analysis
- conceptual knowledge used to access exploration of textual issues
- evaluation of the impact of language within its contextual reception
- wide-ranging and precise linguistic terminology from across the language levels.

Areas for improvement:

- the context rubric should not be copied out verbatim/broadly paraphrased as an overview
- analysis of meaning in context is important: evidence should not be quoted out of the context in which it is used in the texts, nor should it be used selectively to force a point not supported by the rest of the text
- quoting, and labelling with terminology, should be embedded, concise and precise: quotations should neither start sentences or conclude paragraphs
- a wider range of terms, beyond word classes and sentence moods (for example, phrase/clause level analysis, rhetorical figures), is to be encouraged
- technical accuracy and fluency of written expression.

Section B: English in the Twenty-First Century

Three assessment objectives are covered in Section B: AO1, AO2 and AO3. The marks for these are not equally weighted. Since AO3 is worth double, it is important that candidates spend sufficient time exploring context and the construction of meaning (AO3). In Question 3, marks were awarded for each separate assessment objective.

Q.3 Essay

This question tests the candidates' ability to analyse language using accurate terminology and an appropriate style, to evaluate the construction of meaning in context, and to apply knowledge of relevant concepts and issues in order to explore the writers' language choices.

Candidates needed to consider a corpus of eight tweets, the first of which was a promotional tweet from musician Ed Sheeran, the remainder responses to this. The strongest responses selected from across the corpus, showed confident conceptual knowledge of twenty-first century English as a means to explore the issue of informalisation, and used the contextual information provided regarding the posters' identities as a springboard to the close analysis of meaning in the texts. Effective groupings of texts according to attitudes expressed or poster identity facilitated concise and focused discussion.

Less successful responses tended to select from a narrower range from the corpus, often taking a chronological approach that tended to elicit repetitions. Discussion was often dominated by lots of material on the emojis, rather than the language of the texts themselves. There were occasions when general ideas around attitudes to language change, including lengthy pre-learned quotations from the likes of David Crystal and Jean Aitchison, rather than close engagement with the corpus, were included, sometimes with linguistic analysis of these quotations. This is obviously not recommended: the corpus itself must be at the heart of the response. A couple of specific points to note:

- the use of the term 'exclamative' instead of the correct 'exclamatory' to describe sentence mood seems to be on the increase again
- examples from outside of the corpus must be of the medium set in the question.

AO1 (10 marks)

Candidates were required to demonstrate the ability to apply a range of terminology, both specific to Twitter, and in demonstration of their general linguistic knowledge. Methods of analysis were also considered here, with regard to the appropriate critical structure of the response. Technical accuracy was also assessed here.

AO2 (10 marks)

Conceptual understanding of medium, genre, purpose and audience were assessed here, in addition to the exploration of issues such as informalisation, power/status, and identity. Where candidates chose to apply theories, such as politeness or descriptivism/prescriptivism, it was important that this was done with specific analytical reference to the corpus of data rather than presented in a general sense. The selection and deployment of textual evidence was also assessed here: responses which made reference to text by number without quotation were less effective.

AO3 (20 marks)

This AO required candidates to explore meaning within the context of their production, using the material provided regarding the general context of the song as the stimulus for the tweets, alongside the information concerning the individual posters' identities. Consideration of the relationship between those contextual factors and the language choices related to them was key to success under this AO, alongside evaluation of the impact of the tweets.

Characteristics of successful responses:

- Effective structure shaping well organised, fluent and accurate response.
- Wide range of knowledge demonstrated through accurately applied terminology.
- Confident conceptual awareness linked to productive exploration of issues.
- Thoughtful links drawn between contexts and meanings.

Areas for improvement:

- Examples should be drawn from across the corpus rather than focusing on a limited selection.
- Over-emphasis on paralinguistic features (e.g. emojis) at the expense of analysis of language features should be avoided.
- Wider context examples must be relevant to the question and add something to the argument.
- Theoretical material should be linked to analysis of the corpus.

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COMPONENT 3: CREATIVE AND CRITICAL LANGUAGE

Overview of the Component

This paper contains two pathways, each of which require candidates to utilise the stimulus to produce two pieces of creative writing (ranging from 250-350 words), and a commentary, analysing and evaluating their own language use. Each creative task is assessed on AO5 only, with a maximum number of 30 marks per creative task available. AO5 assesses candidates' ability to write engagingly for a range of different audiences, purposes, and genres, covering both fiction and non-fiction genres. This means that candidates are expected to write in Standard English, with accurate spelling, punctuation, paragraphing and grammar. The commentary task is only assessed on AO3, with a maximum of 20 marks available. AO3 assesses candidates' ability to discuss how they have used language and shaped it to suit contextual factors, including audience, purpose and genre, as well as comment on the effect of their linguistic and stylistic choices, and how these contribute to the construction of meaning. There is an expectation that candidates apply accurate and appropriate linguistic terminology in their commentaries and cite relevant examples in support.

The stimulus text for Question 1 is an extract from a dramatic monologue featuring in a play. Esther, a teenage girl, has become impatient with the stupidity of everyday life as she sees it. Question 1a asks candidates to write an extract from a novel in which an act of stupidity affects the main character(s). Candidates can invent and add details, but they can also use details included in the stimulus to create a convincing novel extract. Question 1b asks candidates to write an opinion piece for a national newspaper about frustrating or annoying things in twenty-first century life. Again, candidates can use the stimulus for inspiration, but they can also come up with their own ideas. Following the two pieces of creative writing, 1c required candidates to write a commentary analysing and evaluating their own language use in one of their creative pieces. The stimulus for Question 2 is an extract from a restaurant chain's website advertising their private event catering service. Question 2a asks candidates to write an extract from a short story set in a restaurant. Here, candidates can use ideas from the stimulus, but equally, candidates can come up with their own ideas. Question 2b asks candidates to write an online review of a restaurant for a website such as TripAdvisor. The review should provide evaluative judgements on the food, the quality of the service and the ambience. Twenty-first century English features can be credited here, due to the nature of the task, though these must be clearly intentionally crafted. Following the two pieces of creative writing, 2c required candidates to write a commentary analysing and evaluating their own language use in one of their creative pieces.

As with previous years, candidates appeared well prepared to make a prompt and apt choice between the two questions this year, with very few false starts or rubric infringements. Candidates responded with creativity, flair and skill to the set tasks for both routes through the paper, which seemed to be equally accessible to candidates of all levels of ability, with Question 2 seeming to be the slightly more popular option. There was evidence that candidates had considered carefully the specifics of the tasks, with few having approached the exam with pre-prepared ideas. The stimulus material was clearly understood by the majority of candidates. It was used appropriately as a reference or jumping off point by most, and encouragingly very few candidates copied whole sentences, which is always self-penalising. Nearly all managed their time effectively to allow for the commentary. These continue to be thoughtful about language choices made, which would seem to reflect an increased focus on this in class. There is still work to be done in ensuring candidates are concise and purposeful in their selection of evidence from their own writing for the commentary.

Comments on individual questions/sections

Question 1 Task A

Candidates approached the task of writing a novel extract with confidence, many creating credible and effective examples of a genre of their own choice. The majority of candidates selected details from the stimulus and used these effectively, such as references to restaurant service or modern banking methods to develop characterisation and voice. As this was an extract from a large piece of fiction, effective approaches were underpinned by an act of stupidity, yet were effective in crafting an unconcluded plot or situation, which alluded to a much larger world of the novel from which the extract was purporting to be taken.

Characteristics of successful responses:

- adopting a distinctive voice
- appropriate use of narrative features such as setting, dialogue and characterisation
- a convincing and sustained use of elements of the chosen genre.

Characteristics of less successful responses

- not understanding the stimulus text and ignoring the instruction to base the extract on an act of stupidity and its impact
- copying wholesale sections from Esther's monologue in the stimulus material
- crafting a fully concluded narrative, rather than an extract.

Question 1 Task B

Candidates approached the task of writing an opinion piece for a national newspaper with some convincing expertise. The majority of candidates adopted a disgruntled persona, and were able to call upon specific aspects of modern life which annoyed or frustrated that persona, for example, the limitations of contactless banking, or customer service interactions, as outlined in the stimulus material. Many candidates drew upon other frustrations with twenty-first century life, such as excessive use of mobile phones or the pernicious and pervasive impacts of social media.

Characteristics of successful responses:

- adopting a distinctive persona
- appropriate use of opinion writing features such as evaluative language, personal anecdotes and cultural references
- a convincing piece for a national newspaper.

Characteristics of less successful responses

- non-specific, vague or generic ideas
- not referring to specifically twenty-first century frustrations
- writing for local rather than national publications.

Question 2 Task A

Candidates approached the task of writing a narrative extract set in a restaurant with increasing expertise. Many candidates were successful in drawing inspiration from the stimulus, which outlined the food and service on offer at the Sticky Walnut bistro in Chester. As with 1a, this had to be an extract from a large piece of fiction; therefore, not all elements of plot or characterisation had to be concluded.

Characteristics of successful responses:

- adopting a distinctive voice of a member of the public, rather than a restaurant critic
- appropriate use of narrative features such as setting, dialogue and characterisation
- a convincing and sustained use of elements of the chosen genre.

Characteristics of less successful responses

- not understanding the stimulus text and ignoring the instruction to set the narrative in a restaurant
- copying wholesale sections from the stimulus material
- crafting a fully concluded narrative, rather than an extract.

Question 2 Task B

Candidates approached the task of writing an online review of a restaurant in the style of TripAdvisor with a convincing degree of fidelity to the types of writing produced on that platform or others like it. The majority of candidates adopted a persona (whether disgruntled or delighted) and were able to call upon specific aspects of the restaurant to evaluate, for example, the quality of the food, the efficiency of the service or the ambience of the venue.

Characteristics of successful responses:

- adopting a distinctive persona
- appropriate use of opinion writing features such as evaluative language, personal anecdotes and cultural references, including twenty-first century features
- a convincing piece for an international online platform.

Characteristics of less successful responses

- non-specific, vague or generic ideas
- not referring to the food
- writing like a restaurant critic rather than a member of the public.

Question 1 and 2: Task C

Candidates focused on one of their two creative pieces for comment. As was the case last year, some candidates did tend to give more attention to their creative pieces; this issue has been noted in previous reports on examination series. The most successful candidates were able to own and investigate the language choices they had made purposefully. Their use of terminology was well chosen and precise, and they were able to select and identify the key features which characterised and shaped their writing. They provided brief examples, integrating their discussion with effects created in their wider text at paragraph and whole text level, for example, the use of narrative voice in 1a, or the use of mood and setting in 2a.

The strongest candidates were able to purposefully examine the full range of the levels of language, for example, by detailing unusual syntactical features, pragmatic references and implied meaning (sometimes derived from close reading of stimulus materials), and the effects of lexical choices to construct meaning.

It should be noted that the most effective evaluation should be integrated within thorough analysis rather than being considered separately.

As noted previously, less successful candidates tended to limit discussion to identification of word classes with little meaningful discussion.

EDUQAS GCE A LEVEL ENGLISH LANGUAGE

GCE A level

Summer 2024

COMPONENT 4: LANGUAGE AND IDENTITY

Overview of the Component

This series, there was a great deal to be admired within the works submitted by centres and by candidates. Generally, candidates were well prepared, and the work produced was in line with expectations. Folders represented the hard work of both teachers and students, and this was evident across all work submitted. The Principal Moderator and all moderators would like to thank centres for all their work preparing and submitting the folders for moderation this year.

As in previous years, the importance of paying careful attention to the advice given through the moderator's reports is strongly recommended. These reports contain really helpful advice and guidance on the best ways to support candidates and on strengths and aspects that can be developed from the submissions of individual centres.

This Principal Moderator's report, alongside previous reports, also provides helpful advice and guidance to centres. It is strongly recommended that these reports should be used as a tool to support candidates as they approach their investigations and to guide them throughout the NEA process. It is also good practice to consult the Eduqas standardising material for Component 4 (available on the website) to draw information that can further support candidates. Centres are encouraged to make full use of all these documents before approaching the non-examination assessment component.

The NEA provides opportunities for candidates to conduct a language research investigation. It is designed to engage learners with the theme of language and identity. Learners are required to conduct an independent language investigation to develop their methods of language analysis through research, data collection and interpretation.

Candidates have the opportunity to focus their investigation on one of the following four aspects of study:

- (a) Language and self-representation
- (b) Language and gender
- (c) Language and culture
- (d) Language diversity.

This year, candidates applied their knowledge and understanding of the assessment objectives effectively and this was evident within a significant number of folders across the top bands. The bands are distinguished through careful evaluation of the application of the assessment objectives, but distinctions between the bands can be made through the indicators below:

Band 5: sophisticated, perceptive, detailed, confident
Band 4: effective, secure, focused, consistent
Band 3: competent, sensible, clear, relevant
Band 2: straightforward, valid, uneven, inconsistent
Band 1: limited, basic, inaccuracies

This component tests candidates' skills, knowledge and understanding across three Assessment Objectives (AOs):

AO1: Apply appropriate methods at language analysis using associated terminology and coherent written expression (30 marks)

AO2: Demonstrate critical understanding of language concepts and issues relevant to language use (20 marks)

AO3: Analyse and evaluate how contextual factors and language features are associated with the construction of meaning (20 marks)

As with previous years, centres have shown a clear understanding of the requirements across the three different strands of AO1, with AO1a focusing on appropriate methods of language analysis, AO1b focusing on associated terminology and apt selection of data, and AO1c focusing on coherent written expression and structure.

Candidates marked in the higher bands for AO1 produced well-structured folders and maintained an academic style (AO1a). Higher achieving folders in this assessment objective explored a wide range of carefully selected examples from their data, analysing across language levels, including detailed analysis at word, phrase, clause and sentence level (AO1b). The majority of folders in this series displayed coherent written expression which was academic and engaging (AO1c).

AO2 requires candidates to demonstrate critical understanding of language concepts and issues relevant to language use. Higher achieving folders demonstrated a critical and perceptive interpretation of their chosen identity topic. They were able to apply and discuss a range of theories and concepts in an intelligent manner. As with previous years, there was some reliance on dated theory in some submissions, however, this was greatly reduced from previous series. The Alliance, an outdated theory, is most often evident in investigations exploring Gender and Identity. While language and gender was still a popular topic for exploration this year, there were fewer candidates opting to investigate this topic.

AO3 focuses on the analysis and evaluation of how contextual factors such as age, gender, social class, ethnicity, situation, and so on, affect the production and reception of meaning. The highest-achieving folders displayed a confident understanding of a range of contextual factors which were closely linked to their data and to their area of study. There was some evidence of general contextual description in submissions this year and this was, at times, a feature in lower achieving folders.

Comments on individual questions/sections

The titles were generally well thought-out, and candidates explored some very interesting aspects from within their chosen topic area. However, as identified in the previous Principal Moderator's report, there were still too many investigations where the word 'identity' did not feature in the investigation title and some with very implicit reference to this focus. At times, candidates used terms such as stereotyping, ideology and representation instead of identity both in the titles and in the main body of their work. As a result of this lack of focus in the titles, the quality of analysis and evaluation of folders was hindered. This prevented some students from being able to access the higher Bands, where secure and perceptive interpretations of the topic and concepts/issues are required. Once again, centres are strongly encouraged to revisit the Eduqas guidance in respect of task setting, located on the Eduqas Portal.

As with previous years, the most effective titles posed a question which supported candidates to focus their study. The highest achieving folders then questioned and/or tested their own hypothesis in relation to identity. This effectively ensured a tight focus and helped candidates to remain on track and enabled candidates to produce sophisticated, well thought-out investigations. Centres are highly encouraged to use this approach as this helps candidates focus and supports the structure of the investigations.

At times, given the requirements of the NEA, the scope of investigations was too broad and this led to candidates being pulled in too many directions, resulting in investigations that lacked clarity. Investigations that were too broad tended to fall within two areas. The first, related to the focus of the investigation. For example, at times, candidates who chose to explore the identity of their chosen subject within the media were choosing too broad a field. Those who were more specific, for example, left wing newspapers, tabloid and so on were able to make more explicit comment on context and concepts, and were often better able to produce productive and meaningful analysis.

Secondly, some candidates confused their topic areas which again resulted in investigations that were too broad. For example, one candidate had gathered data on four pop singers, two male and two female, to explore the identity produced in newspapers. This investigation would have been more effective had the investigation been narrowed to just female or male artists and even focused on just one singer.

As with previous series, the majority of candidates chose the culture and gender aspects of study as the specific focus for their language investigation. However, this year we did see more candidates exploring diversity and significantly more attempting to explore self-representation. This was really encouraging to see, and candidates had really engaged with these topics. However, a number had confused self-representation as exploring the way that people in the media represent themselves, and therefore producing folders that were more closely in the topic area of culture and, at times, diversity. Candidates should be reminded when looking at self-representation that this is an exploration of how they use their own language to create their own identity or identities. Where candidates got this right, investigations tended to be thoughtful, perceptive and pleasure to read.

It was great to see that, in almost all centres, candidates had clearly made their own informed, independent decisions about what to investigate. Centres are encouraged to allow candidates to explore different aspects of study and most centres had effectively encouraged candidates to produce investigations that represented their areas of interest and, therefore, candidates' engagement with the task was evident in the vast majority of folders seen.

An example of an investigation which had real precision and focus was "An investigation into how Standard English usage differs from Black Country English usage and to what extent these differences reflect an individual's identity." This enabled the candidate to explore concepts and incorporate close analysis as it explored non-standard grammar and lexical difference.

Language and Gender

This was a popular aspect of study again this series. As in previous years, there was a range of very interesting primary data collected. Teachers' language use was a popular area here as was media representation in advertising, female journalists and sports. The higher achieving folders applied a sophisticated knowledge and understanding of language features from across language levels. Lower achieving folders were often characterised by sweeping generalisations with loose reference to more limited data sets. There were still some folders where candidates focused on more outdated gender theorists, such as Lakoff. Higher achieving candidates engaged effectively with other theories such as Butler's performativity models and Eckert and McConnell's communities of practice.

Examples of focused titles:

- Using relevant data, investigate and analyse how gender identity impacts Prime Ministers' language use in Prime Minister's Questions Time.
- Using relevant data, investigate and analyse how gender affects the newspapers' representation of Theresa May throughout her time as Prime Minister.

Examples of less focused titles:

- How do those in serving and retired military in civil service positions use language to convey their attitudes towards women.
- Using relevant data investigate and analyse gender stereotypes in Disney films.

Language and Culture

Again, Language and Culture was a popular aspect of language study chosen by candidates. A range of very interesting data, ranging across written and spoken modes, was collected covering politics, sporting communities and criminal identities. There was a number of studies exploring the language of serial killers. The language and identities of rappers are also being analysed by candidates with variable success. Centres are advised that song lyrics are often not the most effective data source. This type of investigation can be better if the lyrics are combined with interview or autobiography.

Analysis of a range of sophisticated language features covering grammar, morphology and semantics was a characteristic of high achieving folders. Centres are also reminded at this point to ensure that folders, particularly those exploring language and culture, have a focused approach. Lower achieving folders often lost direction or were limited to word level analysis with some references to sentence functions. Higher achieving folders engaged with speaker behaviour and identity issues and concepts, and many made good use of theory. There was strong, confident contextual awareness in the higher achieving folders.

Examples of closely focused titles:

Using relevant data, investigate how language within the media differs when discussing Kate, the Duchess of Cambridge, and Meghan, the Duchess of Sussex.

Examples of less focused titles:

- How are political ideologies manifested through media culture?
- Language conventions used in interviews by controversial celebrities to defend their opinions by gaining credit with viewers and discredit those who argue against them.

Language and Self-Representation

Encouragingly, there were more investigations focusing on this topic this year. Where this was done well, candidates produce intelligent and thoughtful investigations on this topic. One successful investigation explored the candidate's language and identity as a person with autism. Another explored language and identity related to being brought up in a bilingual home. The gathering of very useful data enabled these candidates to investigate how their language use reflects different aspects of their identity.

However, centres are encouraged to be mindful that, when looking at self-representation, this is an exploration how they use their own language to create their own identity or identities and not the way that people in the media represent themselves, as this was evident in some folders.

This series again provided examples of theories such as Goffman's/Brown and Levinson's face theory, Leech's 'Banter Principle' and Lakoff's politeness principles; these were explored well (AO2). Less successful explorations were evident with concepts, issues and theories at a more general level or where the concepts and issues led the investigations rather than a clear focus on identity, and this was also seen in some less successful language and gender investigations.

Examples of closely focused titles:

- Using relevant data, investigate and analyse how being brought up in a bilingual household changes my accent and dialect used in different groups to project a certain part of my identity.
- How do I adopt my language in order to convey the identities I wish to portray and to what extent does my autistic spectrum disorder play a part in these linguistic choices?

Examples of less focused titles:

- Investigate how I change my language in conversation with different people.
- How do I adopt my language to reflect what I want to portray?

Language and Diversity

There were a few more candidates selecting this area of study than in previous years. Higher achieving folders discussed a range of sophisticated language features from across language levels. Candidates engaged well with exploring accent dialect and often engaged meaningfully with the data.

Examples of closely focused titles:

- An investigation into the ways in which education influences the identity and proficiency of language of those who speak English as a second language.
- Investigate how speakers from southwest London show their identity through language and adapt their language in different situations.

Examples of less focused titles:

- Using relevant data investigate and analyse how global journalists and reporters adopt their language to discuss big news events.
- How is the language of Liverpudlians portrayed in the media.

Characteristics of successful pieces of work:

- Well focused titles referring specifically to both language and to the theme of identity.
- Well selected, high quality, rich data collected and analysed.
- A sophisticated range of accurate language terminology covering word, phrase, clause and sentence level analysis.
- Sophisticated engagement with concepts and issues and exploration of contemporary research.
- Intelligent and coherent lines of argument in relation to the title/question.
- Proofread, edited and accurate written expression.
- A well organised, academic style of writing.
- Language concepts, issues and theories carefully selected and discussed.
- Confident, subtle interpretations of how identity is constructed.
- Perceptive understanding of how data can be affected by different contextual factors.

Common misconceptions and recommendations:

- Some titles did not have 'language' and/or 'identity' in their titles. Both should be explicitly referenced in the title and analysed/evaluated throughout the investigation.
- Titles that were too broad and that pulled candidates in too many directions.
- Candidates should be reminded that self-representation is a study of their own language use.
- Candidates should be encouraged to explore language across all levels.
- Too often, gender investigations relied too heavily on Lakoff's deficit approach and/or other outdated theorists.
- At times, there was a greater focus on the topic area (gender, culture, etc) and not on identity. Clearly focused titles can help to avoid this.
- A range of language concepts and issues with underpinning theories should be analysed and discussed in direct relation to the data set.
- Candidates should aim for analysis and evaluation of data rather than description.

Task marking**Comments on approaches to internal marking**

Administration and presentation of samples was, as usual, very good. There were very few errors with submissions. In a small number of cases, there were some clerical errors in respect of the addition of the different assessment objectives for the total folder mark and discrepancies with the marks submitted, but it should be acknowledged that these errors were very rare.

The NEA checklist was used well this year and there were very few elements missed in preparing the sample for the moderator. This is appreciated by the moderators, and we request that this effective use of the checklist continues.

There were still some centres that presented work in plastic wallets or folders, and this can be a hinderance to the moderation process. Folders were presented to moderators in a variety of ways and centres are reminded that guidance on submitting folders can be found in the specification including the fact that the sample should be sent to the moderator in rank order.

Many folders displayed evidence of robust and effective internal moderation which was helpful for external moderators to ascertain how marks had been awarded. Some centres used assessment criteria grids by both the main assessor and as part of the internal standardising/moderating process. This demonstrated good, rigorous practice and was again helpful to establish how centres had made decisions with regard to the application of the marking criteria and assessment objectives.

The team of moderators and I would like to thank all the students and staff for their time and hard work in producing an A level English Language NEA submission which was a pleasure to moderate. We look forward to next year's submission.

Supporting you

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