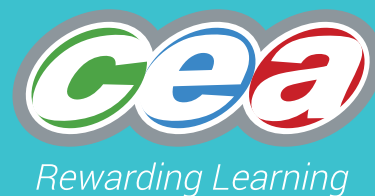


GCSE



**Chief Examiner's and  
Principal Moderator's Report  
English Language**

November Series 2022



## Foreword

This booklet outlines the performance of candidates in all aspects of this specification for the November 2022 series.

CCEA hopes that the Chief Examiner's and/or Principal Moderator's report(s) will be viewed as a helpful and constructive medium to further support teachers and the learning process.

This booklet forms part of the suite of support materials for the specification. Further materials are available from the specification's microsite on our website at [www.ccea.org.uk](http://www.ccea.org.uk).



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# GCSE English Language

## Chief Examiner's Report

### Subject Overview

In this November 2022 series it was apparent that, in general, the candidates effectively handled the tasks in both GEN11 and GEN41 units. There was evidence of a high teaching standard in preparation for the demands of these examination papers as demonstrated by many candidates' approaches in answering the questions and responding to the stimuli throughout the papers. Undoubtedly this reflects where past papers, mark schemes and Specimen Assessment Materials (SAMs) have been used purposefully to help prepare candidates. There was a significant proportion of the candidature, however, who seemed unfamiliar with the requirements of specific tasks; this may have been due to students in their first year of GCSE study having been entered for the November series with limited experience of the style and foci of some of the tasks.

Only a small percentage of candidates did not manage to complete the papers; this tended to be as a consequence of spending too long on Section A. A high percentage of candidates chose to use additional pages, often resulting in repetition and crucially a loss of focus. It is important to emphasise that the higher Competence Levels are accessible for accurate and concise responses across all sections of the papers. The adage 'quality over quantity' should still be reinforced.

It was noted by several examiners that candidates who evidenced their planning for Task 1 produced more organised and crafted responses. It would be useful to emphasise to future candidates the advantages of spending fifteen minutes thinking and planning their response.

Poor handwriting still posed problems for examiners who found it difficult to decipher candidates' responses. Although the front cover of each examination paper draws attention to the importance of legibility, it is worth reiterating this message about legibility to candidates in preparation for these two units.

Where candidates have made use of a scribe, it is a requirement that a scribe cover sheet is completed by the centre and submitted with the script, and this should include a clear indication of the option which accurately reflects how the approved application for a scribe was used. An increasing number of candidates accessed a word processor and similarly the centre must specify, through the scribe sheet, whether the spell check and grammar check were disabled or not. If this is not indicated, from the outset, the marking process will be delayed as the centre will be contacted to confirm the relevant scribe option. Please note that only one option per candidate should be selected. Since spelling, punctuation and grammar are discretely assessed in Section A of GCSE English Language (Units 1 and 4) through Assessment Objective 4 (iii), the inclusion of a spelling list, applicable to some other GCSE subjects, is not sufficient or necessary for GCSE English Language. Please see the CCEA Circular S/IF/36/19 (issued in May 2019 to all centres) for further clarification.

## Assessment Unit 1: Writing for Purpose and Audience and Reading to Access Non-Fiction and Media Texts

### Overview

The Examining Team felt that this paper provided all candidates with an opportunity to demonstrate their knowledge, understanding and skills and there was wide-ranging evidence of effective teaching and preparation. Confirmation from the scripts indicated that these were fair and successful papers and examiners reported that these papers were accessible and enabled candidates of differing abilities.

The writing task facilitated a range of varied and engaging responses. Most were able to write persuasively and articulate their views with confidence and enthusiasm.

The reading materials in Section B were also facilitative, pleasingly, for the entire ability range. The Examining Team would welcome increased demonstration of analysis and evaluation in Task 2.

Overall, it is important to remind candidates to read the questions carefully. My report will pick up on this in greater detail under each task, but it was most apparent in Task 3 (why taking the children to a restaurant was a bad idea) and in Task 5(b) and 5(d) where the focus needed to be on the effect on the reader.

In Unit 1 time management seemed less problematic than in previous series.

### Section A Writing for Purpose and Audience

#### Task 1

The Examining Team saw some inspiring responses to Task 1 where valid views were offered, allowing candidates to confidently demonstrate skill and knowledge. Examiners testified that many candidates wrote compellingly on topical issues such as the fear of missing out (FOMO), mental health concerns/social anxiety, the cost-of-living crisis, the Covid pandemic fallout and the importance of work/life balance, to name a few. Generally, candidates handled this task well using effective paragraphing and produced a well-structured piece which adhered to the specified form, audience and purpose, and the Assessment Objective.

It is worth reminding students to take the time to properly read and re-read what is being asked — a small number read *staying in* as *staying on at school*. Whilst there was no penalty applied to such responses as staying in school was a valid route to explore for this task, it may have caused anxiety to these students when they realised their mis-reading after the examination.

The format of a web article aimed at teenagers allowed the candidates to express their own views and most could relate to this teenage audience in a meaningful way. A few misinterpreted this and attempted to promote the website and some responses read more like a speech.

In the majority of answers there was some evidence of logical development and candidates incorporated incisive conclusions. As one candidate observed: 'So my message to all of you reading, go off this site and google what you're interested in — be that coding, running or German yodeling. Then go out (with your best yodeling voice) and do it. Don't miss out, go out!'



Pleasingly there were very few candidates opting to write on an unrelated subject, although there was a surfeit of implausible expert opinions which weakened both the argument and audience engagement.

Effective use of accurate grammar was noted by many examiners, although a few voiced concerns about the numbers struggling with basic spelling and punctuation. The perennial issues with homophones such ‘there/they’re/their’ and ‘your/you’re’ and inaccuracy in the use of speech marks proved problematic as did the encroachment of abbreviated ‘text message’ style writing with candidates either not recognising inappropriateness or simply being oblivious to their use of it.

## **Section B: Reading Non-Fiction and Media Texts**

### **Task 2**

The extract from Romesh Ranganathan’s book, where he describes his experiences of parenting, was very effective in engaging most candidates. It provided an opportunity to identify and comment on a range of techniques deployed by the writer – the vast majority noted the use of the one-word sentence (or question) ‘Full?’ and most recognised that this was used to illustrate the parent’s incredulity. It is evident that candidates have been given plenty of opportunities to attempt similar reading activities in preparation for the examination series. Examiners noted that a number of particularly impressive responses were seen, distinctive in their sophisticated analysis and fluency of evaluation. At the other end of achievement, candidates attempted to write persuasively and expressed their opinion on restaurants in the style of a review for TripAdvisor. It would perhaps be useful to remind candidates that, although this question immediately follows the writing section, Section B’s focus is on the assessment of their reading skills.

The Competence Level strand relating to reading and understanding the text and selecting appropriate material continues to be where candidates perform best. Most could identify relevant material and support this with an attempt to offer valid insights. A few candidates did not realise that the narrator was a male, despite the question asking about how the writer engaged his readers’ interest.

There were many instances where candidates offered some good commentary, however others relied on general comments, such as ‘...engages the reader’ and ‘...makes you want to read on’ thereby limiting the quality of the interpretation. Centres are reminded that candidates will not be able to access the higher Competence Levels without evidence of analysis and evaluation.

### **Task 3**

Most candidates were well prepared for this task and were able to find a reason (why) from each paragraph, explain this in their own words and select two relevant pieces of evidence. Candidates were clearly able to identify with the subject content – visiting a restaurant. Unfortunately, some ignored the given stimulus and instead offered a generic comment about why taking children to restaurants is a bad idea for Tasks 3a and 3b, failing to relate the answer to the passage provided.

Centres are reminded that this task does not require the candidates to provide a summary, but rather the task demands that they extract relevant information. Candidates fared less well in Task 3a in comparison to Task 3c — few identified the disagreement that had taken place, but conversely offered the evidence that related to it in Task 3b.

It is worth reminding candidates of the importance of reading the question carefully and that for Tasks 3b and 3d direct quotations from the text are sufficient as their supporting evidence. 'In your own words' is only relevant for Tasks 3a and 3c and with no attempt to explain or use their own words, there will not be access to the higher marks. Overall, Tasks 3b, 3c and 3c were very competently handled.

#### **Task 4**

This was generally managed quite well, and examiners felt that the text enabled candidates of a wide range of ability levels to provide fitting responses. The candidates were clear about the writer's intentions and were able to make effective and purposeful comments on why 'The Girl of Ink and Stars' would be an exciting novel to read. Many were also able to attempt some analysis and began to evaluate the effect on the reader. The four single-word sentences to open the text 'Friendship. Discovery. Myths. Magic.' were popular choices for comments with most candidates identifying that this piqued the reader's interest and indicated the probable genres represented within the novel. Similarly, many identified the simile 'the spellbinding world...will hold you like a labyrinth' but failed to indicate what the writer's intentions were.

Centres are reminded to encourage students to review their responses to ensure reference has been made to how language has been used. In some responses candidates recounted the plot with limited discussion of language. Examples of rich vocabulary, such as, 'steeped in mythology and shrouded in mystery' were ignored, resulting in a lack of meaningful interrogation of the language itself. Candidates should be encouraged to select relevant textual material, consider what the writer was attempting to do with this and comment on its overall success.

#### **Task 5**

This task has been designed to ensure accessibility and most candidates followed instructions and responded successfully, commenting on the silhouette and the contrasting colours.

However, there were still candidates who did not understand that they needed to be specific with the presentational device selected. Centres are reminded that simply using the terms 'colour' or 'image' is not creditworthy (a specific colour, e.g., blue, green, etc. can be rewarded). Most, however, went on to achieve well in their explanations.

On occasions the explanations did not focus sufficiently on the effect on the reader and were more related to a general overview of what the feature might suggest. Similarly, some chose to comment on features about which they had little to say. Other candidates tried to analyse too many features which meant their response lacked the required depth for higher marks.

Candidates who attempted analysis of multiple features, for example, the image of the girl, the grass and the butterflies were restricted about what could be said about any specific aspect — examiners will only credit the best explanation offered for one example.

The most important point to reinforce with candidates in Task 5 is the prudent choice of a presentational feature which will not be self-limiting. Candidates should consider if they will be able to provide meaningful comments about the feature they have selected and what effect this had on the reader.

## Assessment Unit 2 Speaking and Listening

### Internal Assessment Overview

In this series of moderation, it was pleasing to note that centres had completed the Unit requirements successfully.

Overall, the standard applied was accurate with teachers adhering closely to the Assessment Criteria in order to make fair and consistent judgements when awarding marks. There was a much clearer understanding of the need for challenge and interrogation when assessing candidates in Level 4 and Level 5 respectively. The focus on the teaching of these skills has proven to be very beneficial for students.

The discussions observed this series indicated that the role of Chairperson was better understood, with only a small number characterised by various dialogues between the Chairperson and individual group members.

Moderators have again commended staff for their commitment and professionalism in delivering this Unit. Candidates continue to engage in meaningful discussions, demonstrating positive developments in their skills of Speaking and Listening.

Centres are encouraged to access the subject page of the CCEA website where exemplar clips can be viewed and commentaries accessed. These can also be used to assist effective Internal Standardisation and teaching.

## Assessment Unit 3: Studying Spoken and Written Language

### Internal Assessment Overview

The members of the CCEA English Language Moderation Team agreed that the small number of centres that submitted Controlled Assessment for this series set suitable task titles. All task titles were appropriately theme-related and clearly satisfied the CCEA rubric requirements. However, candidates in some centres would have benefitted from the provision of appropriate support structures in the form of a series of assessment-criterion-referenced bullet points.

Stimulus material, for both Task 1 and Task 2, was selected to match the interests and abilities of most candidates.

### Administration Procedures

The Moderation team found that sampling on the mark helped facilitate the moderation process. However, centres are reminded that:

- Sample folders should be placed in rank order with the summative mark recorded on the outside of each folder.
- Each candidate's work should be placed in an individual folder.
- The Competence Level for each strand as well as the mark awarded must be recorded on each response.
- Every page of each candidate's Controlled Assessment should be clearly identified with the Centre Number and Candidate Number.

## Task 1 (The Study of Spoken Language)

To satisfy the CCEA rubric requirements for Task 1, candidates must respond to ‘real spoken language’ texts, that is, texts which involve real people (living or dead) in real situations. It was felt that a conscious effort had been made to ensure that the selected speeches were relevant and engaging for candidates and included ample opportunity for meaningful cross-referencing. The stimulus materials worked well when there was a range of linguistic and delivery techniques for candidates to explain, analyse and evaluate. Whilst candidates were not required to compare and contrast, teachers did base the task title on two texts which were linked in some way. As assessment is competence-based, it is important that candidates are explicitly taught how to explain, analyse and evaluate language choice and effect, linguistic techniques and their effects and delivery techniques and effects. Centres are also reminded that body language is not part of the Assessment Criteria for this task and such references cannot be credited. Candidates in some teaching groups are still being rewarded for references to facial expression and body language which cannot be supported at moderation.

Whilst some centres applied the Assessment Criteria accurately, there was generally a tendency towards leniency, especially at the top end of achievement. Some candidates were rewarded for simply referring to the speakers’ choice of language, linguistic techniques and delivery techniques. Some responses awarded Competence Level 4 or Competence Level 5 quoted the speakers’ choice of language and commented on it in a general way but did not analyse or evaluate the language, the linguistic or delivery technique being used in terms of the impact on the listener or audience. The advice from the Senior Moderating Team is that candidates should be taught at as early a stage as possible, the differences between explanation, analysis and evaluation.

In a few centres, there was evidence of an overly-led teacher approach to Task 1. In some teaching groups this resulted in the production of formulaic responses. In such cases, candidates used the same paragraph-by-paragraph structure and selected the same textual details and quotations to support or introduce very similar points. At Competence Level 4, candidates are expected to include: ‘analysis of a range of purposefully selected language choices and their intended effects’; ‘analysis of a range of purposefully selected linguistic techniques and their intended effects’ and ‘analysis of a range of purposefully selected delivery techniques and their purpose’. At Competence Level 5, candidates are expected to include: ‘evaluation of a range of skilfully selected language choices and their impact on the audience’; ‘evaluation of a range of skilfully selected linguistic techniques and their impact on the audience’ and ‘evaluation of a range of skilfully selected delivery techniques and their impact on the audience’. To satisfy these Assessment Criteria, candidates should be encouraged and enabled to build an individual and critical response. It is therefore essential that they independently select and examine appropriate textual details of their own choice.

Most centres included copies of the stimulus material for Task 1 for each of the sampled candidates.

**Please note that it is a requirement to forward to CCEA all photocopied materials that candidates have access to during the timed assessment.**

The CCEA Unit 3 Clarification Document, available on the GCSE English Language section of the CCEA website, includes contextualised examples of candidate responses for Task 1 across all five Competence Levels.

## Task 2 (The Study of Written Language: 10%)

In some cases, task titles were carefully planned and designed. However, some titles were not clearly assessment-criterion-referenced. Most candidates had selected and analysed appropriate detail in relation to the character or theme and maintained a clear focus on the terms of the question. Again, there was evidence of an overly-led teacher approach to Task 2. In some teaching groups, this resulted in the production of formulaic responses. In such cases, many candidates used the same paragraph-by-paragraph structure and selected the same textual details and quotations to support or introduce very similar points. At Competence Level 4, candidates are expected to show: ‘good understanding demonstrated through purposeful comments on the text(s); ‘a sustained interpretation of key elements of writer’s techniques with analysis of their intended effects’ and ‘purposefully selected material from within and/or across the text(s) used to develop a coherent response’. At Competence Level 5 candidates are expected to show: ‘excellent understanding demonstrated through perceptive comments about the text(s); ‘confident and perceptive interpretation of key elements of writer’s techniques with evaluation of the impact on the reader’ and ‘illustrative material effectively and skilfully used to support and present a confident and sustained response.’ To satisfy these Assessment Criteria, candidates should be encouraged and enabled to build an individual and critical response. It is therefore essential that they independently select and examine appropriate textual details of their own choice.

**Please note that it is a requirement to forward to CCEA all photocopied materials that candidates have access to during the timed assessment.** In cases where a full text is used as the stimulus, and candidates are not permitted to write on these during their assessment, there is no requirement to forward these to CCEA.

The CCEA Unit 3 Clarification Document, available on the GCSE English Language section of the CCEA website, includes contextualised examples of candidate responses for Task 2 across all five Competence Levels.

## Assessment Unit 4: Personal or Creative Writing and Reading Literary and Non-Fiction Texts

### Overview

It was clear from the responses that this was a fair and successful paper which offered scope to the wide range of ability levels and that most candidates were well prepared to meet its requirements and confidently approach each task.

On the whole candidates used their time well; however, there was some evidence that they ran out of time – centres, when discussing examination technique, may wish to remind students of the importance of planning and time management.

The language used in the stimulus texts was felt to be accessible to all ability levels while still providing the opportunity to access the higher Competence Levels. Successful candidates were more considered in analysing specific language effects, attributed to the correct techniques. Overall, the Examining Team agreed that the skills of understanding, analysing and evaluating the writer’s craft are areas where candidates would benefit from additional focus during their preparation period for this examination.

## **Section A: Personal or Creative Writing**

### **Task 1**

Responses to Task 1 were mainly very successful with the Personal Writing remaining very popular. There were instances of candidates writing in a persuasive manner for the Personal Writing response as well as pre-prepared responses which did not match the purpose of the task. This was self-limiting and deemed a breach of rubric.

For those candidates who chose the Personal Writing option, many engaging treasured possessions were identified – including unique and unexpected responses. Responses to the Creative Writing question were impressive and compelling, with many candidates attempting to craft a thriller/crime story. The Examining Team had the pleasure of reading many excellent responses.

Successful responses to Task 1 were written in a lively way that showed an effective grasp of the appropriate register, together with the ability to engage well with the intended audience. Less successful responses were underdeveloped or failed to sustain ideas in an engaging manner. Sentence demarcation was generally secure, and many candidates appeared confident in using a wider range of punctuation. However, it is worth reinforcing that a proficient use of punctuation is more important than extending the range. This is an area that teachers may wish to focus on as colons and semi-colons were used indiscriminately by candidates across the ability range.

Most candidates were able to navigate the writing section of the booklet and correctly completed their Task 1 response in the allocated space.

## **Section B: Reading Literary and Non-Fiction Texts**

### **Task 2**

Candidates engaged well with the two texts, many identifying with the awkward school-based scenes where the protagonists were asked to remain behind after class. Most were able to make different inferences about characters' descriptions and feelings, as well as interpreting details of the setting. Successful candidates were more analytical in discussing specific language effects attributed to the correct techniques. However, there were too many instances where candidates simply identified techniques rather than referencing the writer's intention in the texts. Examiners reported, in particular, marginal references to narrative stance and sentence structure where there was limited attempt to illustrate the writer's intention with reference to the clear focus of the question. There was also a degree of misinterpretation of techniques evident.

Many competently synthesised ideas and evidence from both texts to produce clear comparisons. Again, quality teaching is evident in this regard. It was also noted, however, that while many candidates were able to select suitable material, the cross-referencing was not always appropriate. Many responses also fell short of reaching the level of evaluation, with disappointingly few candidates able to comment on the use of inner monologue and explore the effectiveness of the writer's craft. Consideration of how an uncomfortable atmosphere had been developed was not always fully investigated. The examiners believe this is an area that teachers may wish to focus on to help candidates fulfil their potential.

### **Task 3**

The stimulus text was relatable for the full ability range, with many candidates noting the writer's humorous and frustrated tone. Most candidates could identify the writer's use of exclamations, questions and exaggeration, although occasionally, inaccurate claims were made about the writer's intentions and the effect of these techniques.

### **Task 4**

As with Task 3, the stimulus text was well received. It was relatable for the full ability range, with many candidates noting the writer's blunt and disapproving tone. Most candidates could identify the writer's use of alliteration, questions and lists, although there were occasionally inaccurate claims made about the writer's intentions and the effect of these techniques. There was also a high degree of misinterpretation of techniques evident. For example, some candidates were identifying 'call a spade a spade' as the use of alliteration.

The extracts for Task 3 and Task 4 were local in nature but students should be reminded of the demands of these tasks and that previously held knowledge is not required or creditworthy. Some responses offered opinions based on the candidates' own knowledge and experiences of Portrush.

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