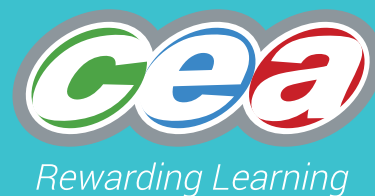


GCSE



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

Summer Series 2022



Foreword

This booklet outlines the performance of candidates in all aspects of this specification for the Summer 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.

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GCSE English Language

Chief Examiner's Report

Subject Overview

In this Summer 2022 series it was evident that, in general, the candidates successfully managed the tasks in both GEN11 and GEN41 units. Clearly this was testament to the effective teaching and learning in centres with past papers, mark schemes and other support materials having been used purposefully to help prepare candidates for both papers.

Overall, the examination papers seemed accessible to a wide range of abilities. The standard of answering was evidence of the preparedness of the candidates, as candidates of all abilities, were able to answer in a way that demonstrated their respective ability.

A high percentage of candidates used 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 in all sections of the papers. A small number of candidates did not complete the papers, possibly indicating that they did not manage their time effectively and this tended to result in the final task being omitted.

Several examiners commented on the fact that candidates who did make use of the recommended planning time for Task 1 produced more organised and crafted responses. It would be useful to remind candidates that the advice to spend fifteen minutes thinking and planning their response would work to their benefit.

Although the front cover of the examination paper draws attention to the importance of legibility many examiners, across both units, found it increasingly difficult to decipher candidates' handwriting – it was felt that there was a marked deterioration in this area. It is worth reinforcing this message about legibility to candidates in preparation for these two units. Under examination conditions perfect handwriting is certainly not an expectation, however, examiners can only credit what they are able to read.

Where candidates have made use of a scribe it is crucial that a scribe cover sheet is completed by the centre and submitted with the script, clearly indicating 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 indicate, through the scribe sheet details about the spell check and grammar check. If this is not originally indicated, the marking process will be delayed as the centre must confirm the relevant scribe option. Since spelling, punctuation and grammar are discretely assessed in Section A of GCSE English Language (Units 1 & 4) through Assessment Objective 4 (iii) the inclusion of a spelling list, applicable to some other GCSE subjects, is not accepted as evidence of spelling ability. Please see the CCEA Circular S/IF/36/19 issued in May 2019 to all centres for further details.

Assessment Unit 1 Writing for Purpose and Audience and Reading to Access Non- fiction and Media Texts

Overview

The Examining Team felt that this examination 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.

Planning their time did not cause too many issues and some candidates noted the time allocation at the start of each task along with the scheduled finishing time. This may be a useful approach for future candidates who struggle with time management.

The writing task facilitated a range of varied and engaging responses. Most were able to write persuasively and argue their position with self-belief and confidence. Many were able to comment with genuine conviction about the difficult times experienced by young people over the last couple of years.

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. On some occasions candidates listed the devices as part of the introduction and then repeated this in the main explanation – the listing, if disconnected from examples found within the stimulus, was not credited, and unnecessarily encroached on their time.

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 the micro-library was a success) and in Task 5(b) and 5(d) where the focus should have been on the effect on the reader.

Section A Writing for Purpose and Audience

Task 1

Overall, the Examining Team saw many positive responses to Task 1 where sound arguments were proffered, allowing candidates to confidently demonstrate skill and knowledge. Examiners reported that the candidates referenced kindness in all its guises – personal experience, local, community-based and broader ‘political’ kindness reflecting wider, topical issues such as the role of the NHS workers during the COVID pandemic and aid for Ukrainian refugees. Almost all candidates were able to express an opinion in a lively and engaging manner – many agreeing with the statement whilst a few warned of the risks of being too kind. Examiners reported an increased use of anecdotes which generally served to enliven the responses. In the majority of responses there was evidence of logical progression and candidates included engaging introductions and clearly defined conclusions, indicating that this is an area of focus within many classrooms. As one candidate observed: ‘Kindness is that piece of chocolate, that hug after you’ve been crying and that high five after you land a skateboard trick.’

In this series, as was the case in previous series, a proportion of candidates ignored the given task, opting instead to write about something unrelated (school uniform was popular) or which they may have prepared beforehand. Once again, it should be stressed that candidates’ marks were unquestionably restricted by this self-limiting choice. Candidates occasionally included implausible opinions from ‘experts’ (Dr Luvurself was cited) and

improbable ‘statistics’ which often detracted from their arguments and diminished engagement. Carefully considered perspectives and personal anecdotes were more effective and teachers would be advised to highlight to prospective candidates the judicious use of incorporating higher authority sources into their responses.

Effective use of accurate grammar was noted by many examiners. One area for improvement would be attention to punctuation and paragraphing. The absence or lax use of punctuation was particularly noticeable in word processed scripts.

Section B Reading Non-fiction and Media Texts

Task 2

The article about the establishment of a micro-library in a telephone box allowed many candidates to identify and comment on a range of techniques deployed by the writer – the vast majority noted the use of the statistic ‘one in 10 families’ to shock the reader. Candidates should be reminded that this task, although immediately following on from the writing section, is assessing their reading skills as a few candidates attempted to persuade and expressed their opinion on the use of the micro-library.

The Competence Level Strand relating to reading and understanding the text and selecting appropriate material continues to be the area where candidates tend to perform best. Most could identify relevant material and support this with an attempt to offer valid insights. A few candidates did not recognise that Sharon, the founder of the micro-library, was not the journalist. Once again, the Examining Team would like to advise candidates to consider using shorter quotations – this would assist with their time-management and also help ensure they are able to explain how the writer engaged their interest.

Most did attempt to comment on the language and identified the puns of the ‘novel idea’ but occasionally the connection to the writer’s purpose was explicit.

Again, there were instances where candidates performed at a lower level in this task, centring their response on a theoretical understanding of techniques and their purpose, but without the context of the stimulus.

Task 3

This task has been designed as an accessible way for candidates to achieve credit via synthesising information within the stimulus material. However, the main difficulty is that some candidates are failing to read the question. 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. Once again, the Examining Team reported that many candidates failed to answer the question, instead they included references to evidence of the scheme’s success rather than reasons why it was successful. The stem of the question indicated that the writer explained why the book nook has been a success – reasons for the success, not evidence of the success, were required. For example, many candidates selected lack of use of public phone boxes or 4,000 public phone boxes as a reason for its success.

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

Task 4

This task enabled candidates of a wide range of ability levels to respond appropriately. The candidates were clear about the writer's intentions and were able to make effective and purposeful comments on why 'Maleficent' would be an exciting DVD to watch. Evaluation and analysis of the effect on the reader was also evidenced. The use of the contrast between the 'idyllic life' and the 'ruthless betrayal' along with the metaphor 'Aurora holds the key to peace in the kingdom' were popular selections and were paired with generally meaningful comments.

The most significant recommendation this year, again, is to encourage candidates to review their responses and consider to what extent reference has been made to language used i.e. actual words and phrases. Examples of potent vocabulary such as 'the land's fiercest protector' and 'withstand the marauding forces' were disregarded, resulting in a lack of meaningful interrogation of the language itself. Candidates should be reminded to select relevant textual material and to consider what the intention(s) of the writer was.

Task 5

Most candidates noted the image of Maleficent, the use of contrasting colours, the image of the castle, with many also commenting on the thorns/branches.

As has been highlighted in previous reports, there were still candidates who didn't 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).

Explanations which focused sufficiently on the effect on the reader were rewarded; candidates who lost marks tended to offer a generic description of what the feature might suggest in any context. 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 depth required for higher marks.

Some, as has been noted previously, tried to cover their options in Tasks 5(b) and 5(d) by offering analysis of several features, for example, the image of Maleficent, the castle and the thorn bushes. Inevitably this limited what could be said about any specific aspect. When a 'multiple' approach like this is used, examiners will credit the best explanation offered for one example.

The most important point to reinforce with candidates is the judicious choice of a presentational feature which will not be too self-limiting. Candidates should consider if they will be able to comment in a meaningful way about the feature they have selected and what effect this has on the reader.

Principal Moderator's Report

Assessment Unit 2 Speaking and Listening

Internal Assessment Overview

Moderators welcomed the opportunity to visit centres again to moderate teaching groups for this Speaking and Listening Unit. They were also pleased to note that, despite the disruption encountered, a majority of centres had provided candidates with a wide number of opportunities to develop their Speaking and Listening skills. Many had designed interesting collections of formative tasks covering all three task types. It was also evident that a minority of centres had coped well in exceptional circumstances to assess at least one of each task type. Teachers are to be praised for their dedication and commitment in achieving the delivery of this Unit.

Overall, the standard applied was generally accurate. Teachers had adhered closely to the Assessment Criteria in order to make fair and correct judgements when awarding marks. Moderators reported that where discrepancies did occur, they were in Level 4 and Level 5. Previous reports have stressed that the criteria for both these levels are clear and precise. One of the distinguishing features of a Level 4 candidate is the ability to:

'...challenge, develop and respond to what they hear in thoughtful and considerate ways...'

This is building on the requirement at Level 3 which states:

*'Candidates listen closely and attentively, **engaging** with what is heard through perceptive responses.'*

At Level 5, 21-15 marks, this becomes:

*'Candidates sustain concentrated listening, showing understanding of complex ideas through **interrogating** what is said.'*

Centres are reminded that the skills of challenge and of interrogation are ones that do not come naturally to many candidates and for that reason, it is important to reiterate that they must be taught. The subject page of the CCEA website provides exemplar clips of these skills being demonstrated. Moderators observed that in some cases candidates were unable to demonstrate the necessary skills for the marks awarded during the moderation exercise.

Moderators were also pleased to report that the role of Chairperson had been well undertaken in a majority of centres, with candidates managing the discussion, shaping the direction of the talk and contributing well as individuals to points being made by others. In a few centres, it became apparent that the group discussion was taking the form of a dialogue between the Chairperson and each individual in the group which had a negative effect by restricting spontaneity which is the essential ingredient of a lively and challenging discussion. Given more time and more practice in group discussions, this should be easily improved.

General guidance for centres:

- Encourage candidates to carry out some research to assist with the gathering of complex information on their chosen topic.
- Brief the Chairperson on how long the discussion should last and when/how to conclude it.
- Emphasise to all candidates that moderation is part of a formal process requiring appropriate conduct.

- Carefully consider the of the ability of the candidates when assigning viewpoints to represent (if applicable).
- Offer advice and guidance to each group when selecting an appropriate task for moderation.

On the whole, moderators found the process to be efficiently organised. However, some problems were encountered. Despite Lead Teachers receiving a checklist ahead of the moderation period, many problems centred around the administration requirements. Centres are required to complete the eCRS form for each candidate using the E-Moderation section on the CCEA website and then provide hard copies for moderated candidates who will take part in the moderation exercise. Best practice should also ensure that a hard copy of the eCRS is also available for any reserve candidate being used on the day. It is advisable to select reserve candidates at the time that the formula for selection is being applied so that they can be part of the group's preparation rather than being introduced on the actual day of moderation. When the latter did arise, moderators witnessed the detrimental effect on the group dynamics.

Another factor which contributed to an adjustment being recommended was when unsuccessful Internal Standardisation had resulted in lenient, severe or inconsistent marking by the centre. If the marking has been inconsistent, then the moderator will inform the Lead Teacher that a Second Moderation will be required. This is to give the department time to review its marking and employ a more robust method of Internal Standardisation to ensure more consistent assessments. As any adjustment affects the whole centre, it cannot be stressed enough how important Internal Standardisation is. The support materials which are available on the subject page of the CCEA website can be used to facilitate this either in centres or remotely. Many Lead Teachers reported that these resources had also proved useful with both teachers and candidates in modelling achievement in the top levels.

Lead Teachers can use the front page of the Centre Moderation Form to record selected candidate absences, use of reserves, staffing changes, missing signatures and any other information which may impact on the performance of the candidates during the moderation process.

Centres are also required to compile a rank order for each moderation group to ensure that the formula for selection has been applied accurately. In cases where this was not readily available, moderators had to request it which hindered the smooth running of the process, delaying the start time for candidates unnecessarily. In a few centres, the formula had not been applied correctly and centres are reminded that this is a compulsory requirement which must be closely adhered to.

Formative records for every teaching group in the centre are also essential for the moderator to check that there has been a fair variety of tasks experienced, which cover the three task types and, most importantly, that any assessed role play tasks are rooted in real-life contexts. Once again, in centres where these were not available, they had to be requested before the moderation process could be completed.

Moderators have commended the perseverance and professionalism of subject teachers who have succeeded in delivering this Unit during the most recent challenging circumstances. They continue to enjoy listening to our young people demonstrate their Speaking and Listening skills.

Assessment Unit 3 Studying Spoken and Written Language

Internal Assessment Overview

The members of the CCEA English Language Moderation Team agreed that, with some exceptions, most centres set suitable task titles, complied with CCEA's instructions on annotation, contained in Appendix 5 of the GCSE English Language Specification, and accurately assessed the work of their candidates. When centres utilised the Assessment Criteria as comments in the margin and/or ticks and/or underlining to indicate how and where credit had been awarded, this facilitated the process. Almost all task titles were appropriately theme-related and clearly satisfied the CCEA rubric requirements. Moreover, candidates in many centres benefitted from the provision of appropriate support structures, generally in the form of a series of assessment-criterion-referenced bullet points. Stimulus material, for both Task 1 and Task 2 was carefully selected to match the interests and abilities of most candidates. Carefully planned task titles enabled candidates of different levels of ability to respond successfully. Teachers in most centres interpreted and applied the CCEA Assessment Criteria accurately across the two tasks and across the mark range in their centre. It was obvious that effective Internal Standardisation had been carried out in most centres.

Unit Overview

Administration Procedures

The Moderation Team found that sampling on the mark, introduced in November 2021, helped improve the moderation process. Following the Summer 2022 series, 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 in the correct order on each response.
- Every page of each candidate's Controlled Assessment should be clearly identified with the Centre Number and Candidate Number.

As in recent years, administration in most centres was excellent and proved to be very helpful to the moderation process.

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. Teachers in almost all centres took great care to select, in accordance with the exceptional arrangements in place for this series, appropriate **Spontaneous/Scripted (2021)** or **Inspirational Speeches (2022)** as their spoken language texts. There was a wide and varied range of spoken texts including those delivered by: Bill Clinton, George Bush, Barack Obama, Martin Luther King, Winston Churchill, Martin McGuinness, Vladimir Putin, Steve Jobs, Oprah Winfrey, Malala Yousafzai, Bear Grylls and David Beckham. It was also pleasing to see a lot of new and topical material and the enthusiasm evident in the responses of many candidates. One centre had asked their candidates to respond to speeches by Anthony Joshua and John Boyega which proved to be both interesting and

accessible for the candidates. Most centres had made a conscious effort to ensure that the spoken language texts chosen were relevant and engaging for their candidates and included ample opportunity for meaningful cross-referencing. While most centres selected stimulus material which appealed to their candidates, some centres could have been more judicious in their selection. The stimulus materials worked well when there was a range of linguistic and delivery techniques for candidates to explain, analyse and evaluate. At the upper end of performance, candidates showed the ability to analyse and evaluate the language, rhetorical devices, and delivery of both speakers. However, it was clear from some responses that a proportion of candidates were more familiar with discussion of linguistic techniques than delivery techniques. On occasion, the material selected, did not contain the depth nor breadth of material to facilitate analytical or evaluative responses. Whilst candidates were not required to compare and contrast, teachers in most centres appropriately based the task title on two texts with clear links between the speeches in terms of context, purpose, audience, language, rhetorical devices, and delivery style. Many candidates showed awareness of how and why language was influenced by context, purpose and audience. In a significant number of centres, teachers set task titles based upon a short and carefully chosen extract from each of the two texts, appropriate for the sixty-minute time limit. This approach was beneficial to candidates of different levels of ability as it enabled them to focus on specific and relevant details of language, linguistic techniques, and delivery techniques. However, candidates in a very small number of centres were asked to respond to two quite lengthy texts which made it difficult for them to explain, analyse or evaluate specific details related to the speakers' use of language, linguistic techniques, and delivery techniques.

Task titles were generally assessment-criterion-referenced which helped to focus candidates on the demands of the task title though it was obvious that candidates in their responses were more confident with discussion of linguistic techniques than delivery techniques. 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. There was evidence that delivery techniques had been marginalised or overlooked by some candidates, and this may be a helpful area for centres to focus on as they prepare their candidates for future series. 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 by the centre for references to facial expression and body language. In these instances, the potential for the moderator's marks to differ from the centre's marks are increased and may result in a negative adjustment to the marks that have been submitted.

Whilst teachers in many centres applied the Assessment Criteria accurately, there was still a tendency towards leniency, especially at the top end of achievement. Candidates in some centres were rewarded for simply referring to the speakers' language, linguistic techniques, and delivery techniques. Some centres awarded candidates CL555, when there was no evidence of an evaluative response. Some responses quoted the speaker's choice of language and commented on it in a general way but did not analyse the language, the linguistic or delivery technique being used in terms of the impact on the listener or audience. There was often relatively little evaluation of the speaker's linguistic or delivery techniques. In some centres, references to the audience being inspired or the technique being effective were inappropriately interpreted as evaluation and rewarded accordingly. 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. A clearer understanding of the terms 'appropriate explanation', 'purposeful analysis' and 'clearly focused evaluation' would assist candidates during their independent preparation for the write-up stage.

In a few centres, there was evidence of an overly-led teacher approach to Task 1. In some teaching groups or centres, 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. Please note that this approach can have serious consequences. At Competence Level 4, candidates are expected to include: ‘a good selection of language choices and some analysis of their intended effects’; ‘purposeful analysis of linguistic techniques and their intended effects’ and ‘analysis of delivery techniques and their purpose’. At Competence Level 5, candidates are expected to include: ‘an excellent selection of language choices with confident analysis of their intended effects’; ‘clearly focused evaluation of linguistic techniques and their intended effects’ and ‘confident evaluation of delivery techniques and their purpose’. To satisfy these Assessment Criteria, candidates should be 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. In cases where candidates require additional assistance from the teacher, this should be recorded and the final mark amended accordingly to reflect the degree of teacher involvement.

Teachers are reminded that secretarial errors made in Task 1 responses should neither be highlighted nor penalised.

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 each candidate identified by the sample has 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

The range of themes permissible for this moderation period were extended in accordance with the exceptional arrangements in place for this series. The themes: **Weaknesses or Change (2021)** and **Conflict or Ambition (2022)** afforded many opportunities for teachers to plan and design appropriate task titles based upon a range of texts across the three literary genres. ‘Of Mice and Men’, predictably, was the most popular text used for Task 2. This text enabled some candidates to produce confident, analytical, perceptive and evaluative responses. However, some responses to the novella, became narrative, explaining what had happened to George, Lennie and other characters, rather than analysing and evaluating the various aspects outlined in the Assessment Criteria. Another popular choice of novel was ‘To Kill a Mockingbird’. Some centres also used the short stories ‘Lamb to the Slaughter’ and ‘Father and Son’ by Bernard MacLaverly while others opted for drama texts such as ‘Blood Brothers’ and ‘Juno and the Paycock’. Teachers in some centres set task titles based upon poetry such as that of Seamus Heaney, Wilfred Owen, Carol Anne Duffy and Rupert Brooke. These successfully enabled candidates to analyse and evaluate to a greater extent.

In most cases, task titles were carefully planned and designed. In many centres, appropriate scaffolding, in the form of a series of assessment-criterion-referenced bullet points, was provided. Most candidates had selected and analysed appropriate detail in relation to the chosen theme and maintained a clear focus on the terms of the question. Candidates also demonstrated that they had thought carefully about the writer’s craft, intentions and effect on the reader. In the higher Competence Levels, there was some very deft and sophisticated use of embedded quotations which enabled candidates to comment on language in a subtle and discriminating way. Less successful responses were characterised by a tendency to retell the story. Many of the candidates’ responses demonstrated an enthusiasm for what they had read and a clear willingness to express their opinions. However, there were some task titles which were less enabling. These titles tended to be too general, requiring candidates to focus on the entire novel, often resulting in responses that were largely narrative.

Again, those centres which had included assessment-criterion-referenced support structures

in their task titles provided their candidates with a much clearer focus on the Assessment Objectives.

Most centres which used poetry, short stories or extracts from longer texts, included copies of the stimulus material for Task 2 for each of the sampled candidates.

In a few centres, however, there was evidence of an overly-led teacher approach to Task 2. In some teaching groups or centres, 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. Please note that this approach can have serious consequences. At Competence Level 4, candidates are expected to offer: 'a clearly engaged analytical response' with 'a sustained interpretation' and 'purposeful analysis of the writer's techniques'. At Competence Level 5 candidates are expected to offer: 'a confident evaluative response' with 'assured evaluation of the writer's techniques'. As with Task 1 above, in order to satisfy these Assessment Criteria, candidates should be 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. In cases where candidates require additional assistance from the teacher, this should be recorded and the final mark amended accordingly to reflect the degree of teacher involvement.

Teachers are reminded that secretarial errors made in Task 2 should neither be highlighted nor penalised.

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.

Overall, the senior members of the CCEA GCSE English Language Moderation Team were pleased with the range and standard of work produced by candidates of different levels of ability in centres across Northern Ireland. The candidates had obviously worked extremely hard in challenging circumstances and clearly benefitted from the expertise of their teachers. Most task titles were clearly defined, enabling and appropriate and many teachers interpreted and applied the CCEA Assessment Criteria accurately. Furthermore, in most cases, there was clear evidence of effective Internal Standardisation, resulting in candidates being awarded the appropriate overall Unit 3 mark.

Chief Examiner's Report

Assessment Unit 4 Personal or Creative Writing and Reading Literary and Non-fiction Texts

Overview

The Examining Team felt that this paper offered scope to the wide range of ability levels. On the whole candidates utilised their time well, however, there was some evidence that candidates ran out of time – teachers may wish to discuss exam technique with timing. A critical element is for candidates to adhere to the suggested timings for the Writing Task in order to leave sufficient time for the Reading Section of the examination paper.

The language used in the stimulus texts was felt to be accessible to all ability levels while still providing top candidates 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 in which candidates could improve.

Section A Personal or Creative Writing

Task 1

Responses to Task 1 were mainly very successful, with the Personal Writing being very popular. There were a few instances of candidates writing in a persuasive manner for the Creative Writing response and this was self-limiting.

For those candidates who chose the Personal Writing option there were many engaging destinations – including unique and unexpected responses. Clearly candidates were well prepared for this task.

The highest achieving responses were written in a way that showed an effective grasp of the appropriate register and demonstrated the ability to engage well with the intended audience. Less successful responses were underdeveloped or failed to sustain ideas in an engaging manner. There was evidence of a proportion of candidates relying on a pre-prepared topic; these candidates then struggled to adapt the text to the given stimulus statement.

Section B Reading Literary and Non-fiction Texts

Task 2

Candidates engaged well with the two texts and were able to make different inferences about characters' feelings as well as interpreting details of the setting.

Successful candidates were more considered in analysing 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 – in particular marginal references to narrative stance and sentence structure with no attempt to illustrate the writer's intention with reference to the clear focus of the question.

Overall, candidates were successful in synthesizing both ideas and evidence from both texts to produce clear comparisons. The examination technique for this task has clearly been a focus in classrooms. In order to further improve the quality of responses, the Examining Team would urge future candidates to explore the effectiveness of the writer's techniques they have identified. A judicious selection of elements of the writer's craft would assist in this regard. Consideration of how a sense of unease had been developed was not always fully investigated, occasionally because candidates seemed distracted by 'feature spotting' instead.

Tasks 3 and 4

The two stimulus texts were well received, and it was felt they were relatable for the full ability range, with many candidates noting the writer's humorous and exasperated tone. Most candidates could identify the writer's use of short sentences, alliteration and lists, although occasionally, inaccurate claims were made about the writer's intentions and the effect of these techniques.

Many candidates were more successful in Task 4 than Task 3, attention should be drawn to how the writer gains and holds the reader's interest throughout the extract.

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