Pearson

Examiners' Report
Principal Examiner Feedback

January 2017

Pearson Edexcel IAL
In English Language (WEN03)
Unit 3: Crafting Language (Writing)

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Introduction

The source booklet consisted of four texts relating to 'homes of the future', taken from a range of sources. The material seemed accessible to the candidates who sat the unit, who were required to write a speech for an audience and purpose of their choice adapting the contents of the source booklet into a single new text. The necessity of adopting an appropriate register and tone, as well as the need for expressive and organisational accuracy were amongst the keys to success here.

The second task, which was more highly weighted, asked for a commentary on the candidate's answer to Task 1. This should have taken account of the use and adaptation of the sources, the context, the intended audience and the purpose of the re-cast response. The requirement for an analytical language focus should not be overlooked as a cornerstone of this aspect of the test. The importance of appropriate methodology, organisation and writing is also worthy of note.

Section A

There was a generally very sound understanding of the requirements of the paper and candidates seemed mainly very well-prepared for Task 1 despite this being the first 'live' iteration of WEN03. It was encouraging that almost everyone taking the exam had at least some sense of the conventions of speech-making and how to deploy them. This often led to convincing and engaged responses, or at least something which resembled it. The best answers appeared to be those where the candidate had projected themselves (or an adopted persona) into a genuine speech-making environment and where their language took significant account of the need to address the audience and engage them. There were thankfully few 'essays'.

The specification states that at least 50% of the response here must be written in the candidate's own words – it was a very positive feature of this exam that the absolute majority got nowhere near this stipulation, choosing to produce something which was wholly or largely original in almost every case. Evidence of unassimilated lifting was therefore scant and this is to be commended as another positive feature of the way in which students had been prepared to sit the unit.

There is no particular requirement for how much each of the source materials should be deployed in the re-cast however it would seem sensible to advise that students should attempt to make purposeful use of at least 75% of the materials on offer. This recommendation is included for guidance only, this stated.

At the higher end of the attainment profile, students created and sustained a credible voice, made extensive concessions to the task in their use of the conventions of the genre and adapted the sources to sound effect.

In this case, the candidate opens well and makes a pleasing use of an imagined situation to involve the listener. Whilst such a strategy will not always work, it does at least show some real thought about how to speak to an audience.

SECTION A

Read texts A, B, C and D in the Source Booklet before answering Question 1.

Write your answer in the space provided.

1 Using the material in the source texts, write a short speech that explains what the home of the future might be like.

You **must** use the information in the source texts to create your speech.

You may include additional material drawn from your own knowledge and experience.

Choose your own audience, purpose and context and complete the grid below.

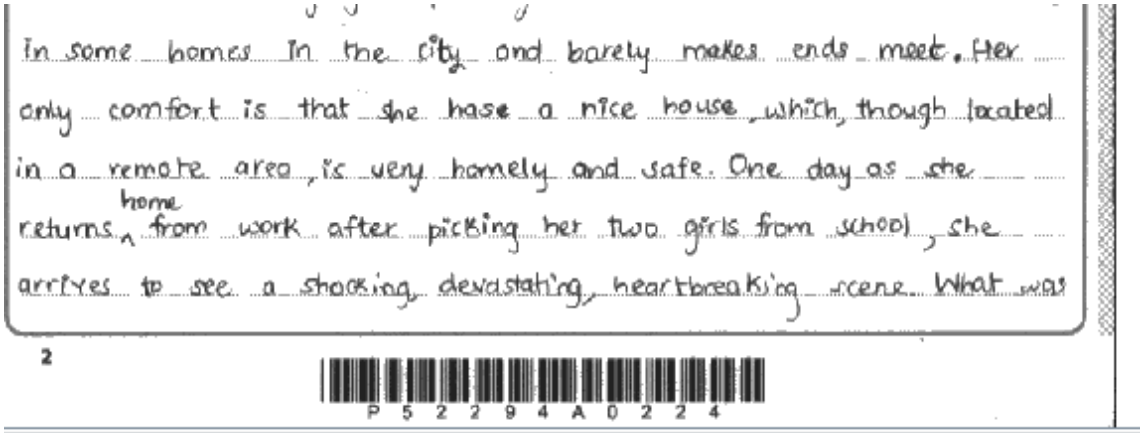
[20]

Genre	Audience	Purpose	Context
Speech	Businessmen and people involved in charity organisations which fund technological research in the improvement of homes.	Inform audience about technology in homes. Explain what future homes could be like. Entertain and encourage more donations	"YOUR MONEY TODAY, A BETTER LIVING HOME, TOMORROW"

A BETTER HOME FOR TOMORROW"

Good Morning ladies and gentlemen. It is a great pleasure to have all of you here at the Home Technology Research Centre (HTRC) and I wish to thank you on behalf of HTRC for the large amount of funds that you have put in technological research for improvement of future homes. Before I start my speech, I would like to tell you a story, of a woman named Lucy.

Lucy is a single mother with two young twin daughters who are still studying at primary school. She works as a house help



In some homes in the city and barely makes ends meet. Her only comfort is that she hase a nice house, which, though located in a remote area, is very homely and safe. One day as she returns home from work after picking her two girls from school, she arrives to see a shocking, devastating, heartbreaking scene. What was

once a beautiful house is now a black mass of nothing. All she can see is a pile of black and gray ash and debris. Her safe haven and all her belongings are gone. Lost forever. Taken by fire without a single warning.

What happened to Lucy could happen to any of us. You could be the next victim. Such incidents need to be prevented or stopped completely. But how? How do we stop these enishaps or reduce the intensity of damage they bring?

This answer went on to make good use of the sources, producing a genuinely compelling discussion of what the 'homes of the future' might hold. It scored in the top band.

In the lower reaches, a very few candidates appeared to have struggled with timing. More commonly, they were hampered by a failure to cover sufficient of the sources or by problems of pitching, tone, organisation or duration. Some problems which might be considered 'typical' of second language learners, such as tense construction issues or prepositional difficulties were evident in a handful of cases. Where they did appear, they were obviously detrimental.

Section B

Here too there was a good spread of response, with candidates ranging in their answers from the informed, methodical and analytical to the linear and descriptive.

Clearly, a chronological account of the 'This is how I used Text A…This is how I used Text B…' kind is unlikely to succeed and centres are firmly warned off such an approach. Further 'My speech begins with…My second paragraph has…My third…' is equally ineffective and to be avoided at all costs.

Something which deals with language levels (lexis, grammar and syntax, possibly semantics and phonology), with well-chosen exemplification and evaluation is going to read well and there were enough examples of this kind of thing to suggest that candidates had been taught such an approach and were confident enough to use it.

At the upper end of the profile, this sort of writing was often accompanied by worthwhile discussions of audience, purpose and contextual factors and even some interesting consideration of discursive and pragmatic matters.

Uses of the meta-language of linguistic analysis were often accurate and knowledgeable, though there was, as is often the case with papers of this kind, an occasional tendency to list or feature-spot without discrimination or any sense of the effect of the choices under discussion.

There were some interesting assertions about rhetorical features which candidates thought they might have deployed, most often questions and tripling for instance, though there is a clear danger of reduction to formula in systemising this sort of approach.

This advice also applies to the understandable, but sometimes over-rigid use of mnemonic-based methods such as C.A.R.P. (or other variants). These plainly have their place, but they can on occasion stifle real insight and self-awareness.

Bravely, some students in this exam set out for the dizzy heights of syntactical commentary. Some of these were, to their great credit, successful. Others resorted to the kind of 'I used a lot of complex sentences / declaratives…' generalisation which usually doesn't indicate real understanding.

Comments on graphology are not particularly highly credited in contemporary language exams of this kind, especially where the task calls for speech-making. Thankfully there were relatively few diversions down such unnecessary detours.

Centres are reminded that relevant concepts and issues for WEN03 might include register; tonality; tenor, field and mode; provenance and generic convention. For the more ambitious, especially in a task of the kind set for this series, ideology could also be worth considering.

Though it is not explicitly stipulated, there might be some mileage in offering candidates a little broad-stroke theoretical background in terms of, for example, Halliday's language functions, generic structure potential or even Grice's maxims on which to frame their responses. This should not be over-stated however, nor should it lead to 'bolted-on' paragraphs of the 'Important theories I have used…' kind.

Reproduced below is part of a very competent answer to this question. Though it is not without fault, it has many obvious strengths, not least in its language focus and its use of exemplification. It is also quite clear, interestingly, about its discursive approach to the task and the tonality resulting from that.

This text's mode is a speech, the voice of the speech belongs to an ex student of the university he is giving the speech to, which is part of an educational presentation about techology. The audience ~~is the~~ are young adults attending the university.
The purpose of this speech is to introduce the concept of "home of the future" and mostly to discourage it in order to convince the students to not embrace it.
The speech is in first person and I am using a medium register, as in formal but simple since it is spoken and I am addressing young adults.
I am using short sentences with ~~lexis~~ and punctuation such as question and exclamation marks to emphasise the fact that I am talking and also to make the speech clear and understandable for the listeners.
I start off by introducing myself and saying roughly what I am going to talk about.
I then try to break the ice by giving a humourous touch to my sentence: "I want to start[...] too cliche of me". I am trying to crack a joke so the audience will think of me as one of them and maybe listen to me more carefully.
I then ask a direct question to the audience, ~~making~~ to make them feel like they are part of this, and still to keep their attention.
With the phrase "they might even help you shower!" I am again using humor, the sarcasm in my words is to keep the audience entertaind

This response continued at some length in a similar vein. It scored in Level 4. The candidate might have achieved a higher outcome by adopting a slightly less linear method and by commenting to greater effect on syntax, for instance.

Ultimately, the most deserving answers were pleasingly aware of the issue of what might be termed 'speech-likeness' and how this could be recreated on the page without becoming 'stagy'.

Paper Summary

The candidates and the teachers who prepared them for this exam are to be congratulated, in the main, for managing to be ready to take this exam after what, one assumes, was a relatively short lead-in. That they all tackled both tasks and that so many of them were at least partially successful is a testament to the work of all concerned.

The following advice is offered to students for future series. It is by no means exhaustive.

Task 1.

- Try and cover a good range of the sources in your answer.
- Think carefully about your audience in particular.
- Make sufficient concessions to the task.
- Ensure that you have actively read sufficient examples from different genres to give you an understanding of how they work.
- Where possible, plan your answer.

Task 2.

- Adopt an appropriate analytical method.
- Be specific and support your assertions with examples wherever possible.
- Consider how you have addressed your audience and the context and purpose of the task, then write about these things concisely.
- Don't spend a great deal of time on graphology.

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