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Examiners' Report

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In English Language A (4EA1)

Paper 01: Non-fiction Texts and Transactional  
Writing

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## Introduction

January 2022 saw the third January series of the International GCSE English Language Specification 4EA1. This examination paper is Unit 1: Non-fiction and Transactional Writing which is sat by all candidates.

The paper is organised into two parts.

Section A, worth a total of 45 marks, tests reading skills and is based on an unseen passage and a text from the International GCSE English Anthology with a total word count across the two extracts of approximately 2000 words. In this series, the unseen extract was adapted from *Miniature Miracles*, an article in which the writer describes the early life and work of the artist Willard Wigan. The Anthology text was the article *Young and dyslexic? You've got it going on* by Benjamin Zephaniah, in which the writer describes his experience of dyslexia. Candidates are advised to spend about 1 hour and 30 minutes on this section.

Section B, also worth a total of 45 marks, offers candidates a choice of two transactional writing tasks. A particular form will always be specified and for this series the two tasks were to write a leaflet aimed at school students which offers advice on how to deal with bullying or to write a letter to a museum director explaining what items should be displayed in a new exhibition called 'Life in the Twenty-First Century'. Candidates are advised to spend about 45 minutes on this section.

This has been yet another year with many difficulties and challenges and examiners felt that candidates entered for this series should again be commended for their commitment to their studies and that the dedicated determination of teachers to ensure their students were well-prepared should also be recognised. The paper was well received with examiners commenting on how the unseen text matched well with the Anthology text, was accessible to students of all abilities and provided ample material for the comparison question. It was clear that many candidates engaged fully with both texts and responded with interest and enthusiasm.

There was evidence that candidates had been well-prepared for the examination, with most of them attempting every question, but they should be reminded to read all the printed instructions on the examination paper very carefully and follow them precisely.

## Section A

Questions 1-3 are based on the unseen extract and are all assessed for **AO1**: Read and understand a variety of texts, selecting and interpreting information, ideas and perspectives.

### Question 1

This question, which tests the skills of selection and retrieval, is intended to serve as a straightforward way into the paper and the vast majority of candidates were able to select two apt words or phrases that showed what Willard Wigan gained from his work. There were four possible choices and responses were evenly divided between them.

The given line references for the question were 6-7 and very few candidates selected quotations from outside of these lines. It is important to remember that the given lines could come from anywhere in the passage. A very few candidates simply copied out the whole of the given lines and could not be awarded any marks as no selection of relevant material had been made. A small number of candidates selected 'creativity' or 'unique perspective' which, although in the correct lines, are qualities that Willard Wigan possesses not things he has gained from his work. Some candidates offered explanations of the words/ phrases selected

but this is not a requirement of the question and time could be better spent on other questions.

Below is an answer that gained two marks:

**Text One: Miniature Miracles**

1 From lines 6–7, select **two** words or phrases that show what Willard Wigan has gained from his work.

1 'respect'

2 'a lot of money'

**Question 2**

This is a 4-mark question that requires candidates to interpret information, ideas and perspectives. For this examination they were asked to look at lines 8-21 and describe Willard Wigan's childhood. Examiners noted that most candidates knew what was required and were able to identify the relevant information in the text. There was a good range of possible points that could be made and most candidates achieved full marks; in particular they picked up on Willard Wigan's humiliation at the hands of his teachers, the fact that dyslexia was not understood at the time, that he made little sculptures in his garden shed and he made small homes for ants. Some candidates made general comments about how Willard Wigan might have felt, stating that he was 'lonely' or 'isolated' and whilst 'interpreting information' is an AO1 skill, such points must be supported by information supplied in the text, for example 'Willard Wigan may have felt isolated as teachers and fellow pupils mocked him'.

Candidates need to follow the instruction '**In your own words**' and again in this series examiners did feel that a few candidates were struggling to do so. There were also a few who included some analysis of language and structure, an AO2 skill that cannot here be rewarded, and whilst some were still able to make a range of different points, others spent too long exploring just one or two ideas or became side-tracked into offering their own opinions about school, teachers, dyslexia or bullying.

Examiners reported that the most successful approach employed by candidates was to make **at least four** clear and distinct points. However, it is important to remember that the question asks candidates to 'describe' and therefore, although it is not necessary to write at length, and points can be set out separately, it is not acceptable to simply list very brief points. The response should be written in full and complete sentences that clearly show understanding and secure interpretation. A few candidates did not achieve full marks because they provided an overview of the whole extract and did not focus on the question or the given line references.

2 Look again at lines 8–21.

**In your own words**, describe Willard Wigan's childhood.

At school, Willard Wigan was bullied by classmates and teachers for not being able to read due to his undiagnosed dyslexia.

Wigan was also publicly humiliated at school by his teachers and made the laughing stock of the class when he could not do the work. He started finding comfort in his shed as it was an escape from the people that did not understand him at school.

### Question 3

This is the final AO1 question; it is worth 5 marks and, like Question 2, requires candidates to show their understanding of the text by selecting and interpreting ideas, information and perspectives. For this examination, they were asked to explain what we learn about Willard Wigan and his work using lines 38-53.

In Question 3, candidates are told that they 'may support' their points 'with **brief** quotations' and many did so to good effect. Examiners reported that most candidates achieved at least 3 marks, with many achieving the full 5 marks. Many candidates made the point about Wigan receiving an award from the Prince of Wales and some went on to make a further point explaining why recognition was so significant to him as he had been deemed a failure as a child. Most candidates also picked up on the fact that Wigan turned his teachers' 'taunts into a challenge'. Some candidates also understood the potential impact on medical science of his microscopic working techniques. Successful candidates often worked methodically through the set section of the text identifying key points although a small minority referred to points outside of the specified lines, for example referring to his time working in a factory. Where candidates did not achieve the full five marks, it was sometimes because they repeated the same point more than once.

Many candidates adopted the very effective approach of making **at least five** clear points, sometimes set out separately on the page, written in full and complete sentences and supported by relevant brief quotations. Some expected long quotations with no comment to act as evidence of their own understanding but answers including overlong quotations very rarely gained full marks.

There is no need for comments on the language used in the quotations, but examiners noted, as with Question 2, that a few candidates spent time on analysis of language and structure, an AO2 requirement, for which again, they could not here be credited and which may have led to a disproportionate amount of time being spent on the question.

The best answers used a good balance of short quotation and some interpretation, paid attention to how many marks the question is worth and made five clear and discrete points.

3 From lines 38–53, explain what we learn about Willard Wigan and his work.

You may support your points with **brief** quotations.

Firstly when wigan was at school he was told that he would never succeed in life but fail, ~~this made~~ he then 'turned his teacher taunts into challenges' meaning he would not give up. Secondly he had been <sup>presented</sup> awarded an award from the prince of wales' because of his work ~~and that he didn't get stop trying.~~ Thirdly wigan made things that ~~he~~ could only be seen under a microscope, this was a ~~challenging~~ and 'frustrating challenge' but he wanted to prove that he could do it and dyslexia wouldn't get in the way. Also wigan would get reactions like 'wow' which meant a lot to him because all his life he had been told he couldn't succeed in anything. Finally wigan is showing people different ways to view art, scientist were even amazed with what he was doing and thought he might be able to do something to save lives.

#### Question 4

This question is on Text Two, the Anthology text, and is assessed for **AO2**: Understand and analyse how writers use linguistic and structural devices to achieve their effects. It is therefore a more challenging and discriminatory question and is worth 12 marks divided over five levels.

In this examination, candidates were asked how the writer, Benjamin Zephaniah, uses language and structure in the extract *Young and dyslexic? You've got it going on* to interest and engage the reader.

This piece contains a wide range of features of language and structure as exemplified in the mark scheme, but examiners were advised that these are just examples of possible points that could be made and instructed that they must reward any valid points that candidates make that are securely rooted in the text. There does not need to be an equal number of points on language and structure, but both should be addressed as, indeed, they were by nearly all candidates.

Examiners noted that most candidates responded very positively to the text and there was clear evidence of their understanding and engagement with both the text and the question. Many candidates spotted major features of the language of the text, such as the use of first person or the autobiography genre, but whilst they provided relevant quotations, did not go on to explore these aspects specifically in relation to Zephaniah's writing but discussed first person/autobiography more generically. A number of candidates were interested in the title of the piece and many focused on the repetition of the phrase 'We are the architects, we are the designers' with its message of positive reinforcement.

Examiners commented that the majority of responses offered at the least some sound understanding of the text. At the lower levels, candidates tended to describe and make general comments on the text although a few did little more than rewrite the text substituting 'he' for 'I'. At this level some candidates offered a straightforward narrative account of the text with some vague observations such as 'Zephaniah uses language to portray a picture of his life to show how he coped with dyslexia'. Mid-level candidates tended to work through the article methodically, made a sound range of points and selected apt textual references for support, but often did not move on to analyse closely the impact or connotations of individual words and phrases or fully consider the effect of the structural features. Some candidates tended to spend too long on introductions that merely repeated the question and conclusions that simply repeated the points already made; the focus should be on making a range of relevant points, not simply reiteration. There is no requirement for any comparison with Text One in this question.

The most effective responses were able to comment on Zephaniah's tone and his use of humour, his use of anecdotes, his theme of positivity and the specific ways in which the writer built a relationship with the reader. Candidates at this level engaged with the text with evident enthusiasm offering analysis of, for example, the metaphor 'the past is a different kind of country' with one candidate pointing out the irony that the writer, dismissed as a failure at school, could effortlessly reference 'The Go-Between'. Many considered the impact of Zephaniah's final defiant rhetorical question and appreciated his constant encouragement and support of those with dyslexia. At this level, candidates were discriminating in their use of quotations, effectively linking different parts of the text.

Below [Example 1] is an example of a response achieving a mark in the middle of level 3. The opening paragraph makes a general point, but it is unsupported by any reference to the text. The candidate goes on to show clear understanding offering comment and at times

explanation e.g. in the final paragraph. There is some repetition of ideas, but this response is securely in Level 3.

### Example 1

**Text Two: *Young and dyslexic? You've got it going on***

**Remind yourself of the extract *Young and dyslexic? You've got it going on* (Text Two in the Extracts Booklet).**

- 4 How does the writer, Benjamin Zephaniah, use language and structure in **Text Two** to interest and engage the reader?

You should support your answer with close reference to the extract, including **brief** quotations. (12)

Benjamin Zephaniah uses many language devices and structure techniques to engage the reader and keep them interested throughout the play story.

Paragraphs are used to skip time and move along to the next event in his life without making the writing too descriptive and boring for the reader. This lets the reader say his examples in his life quickly, then showing the main point he is trying to explain.

The writer also uses direct speech to appeal to the reader. The example of this, "So don't be too heavy on yourself" directly appeals to the reader as if we are talking to Benjamin face to face.

Facts and figures are also used to give some knowledge to the reader and an insight to how dyslexia affects people. The quotes "A high percentage of the prison population are dyslexic, and a high percentage of the ~~architect~~ architect population shows that despite many being in prison, many others have gone on to a very useful career path, showing these people are not silly and unlawful."

Mr Zephaniah also explains about the "Opportunities opened for me and they missed theirs, didn't notice them or didn't take them."

"They" referring to the dyslexics in prison, shows that the reason why many are there is because they didn't find jobs or "opportunities" like Benjamin did, so they turned to crime and therefore got sent to prison.

He also uses a strong conclusion by giving a speech-like lesson which after reading many will not forget.



Below [Example 2] is a response that gained a mark in level 5. It opens in an assured and confident manner and immediately shows good understanding. This is a perceptive and focused response that analyses language and structural features; there is some repetition of ideas on the second page but throughout the selection of references is discriminating and clarifies the points being made.

**Text Two: *Young and dyslexic? You've got it going on***

**Remind yourself of the extract *Young and dyslexic? You've got it going on* (Text Two in the Extracts Booklet).**

- 4 How does the writer, Benjamin Zephaniah, use language and structure in **Text Two** to interest and engage the reader?

You should support your answer with close reference to the extract, including **brief** quotations. (12)

Zephaniah uses language and structure to engage and interest the reader by presenting dyslexia as something positive that is unused by society, rather than as something that renders a person useless, which is the stereotypical view. This unusual and therefore engaging idea that dyslexia is something to be celebrated is already reflected in the title, when Zephaniah states that if you are 'young and dyslexic?' 'you've got it going on.' This central theme that the title encompasses is further underlined when he states that dyslexic people are 'the architects... The designers.' This presents the idea that dyslexic people are more creative, more mathematical that - the idea that dyslexic people are capable. This idea that dyslexic people are more creative is almost a motif, with Zephaniah again saying that 'a high percentage of the architect population are dyslexic.' Architect is a word that has connotations with education, creativity and mathematical intelligence. Training to be an

Architect is a long, academic process. The idea that young dyslexic people are not held back by dyslexia, but rather advantaged by it, is an idea that is new and inspirational, making the article more engaging, especially for a young and dyslexic audience.

Zephemiah also interests and engages the reader with his ~~use of~~ description of the school system and how, despite all adversity, he never gave in. Zephemiah talks of the school system as a 'system' - ~~see~~ - an institution that perpetuates racism and ~~pre~~ prejudice against those with dyslexia. Zephemiah, so as to ~~eng~~ engage teachers, absolves most of them of guilt when he states that 'he is not angry at the teachers - 'the ones who wanted to have an individual approach weren't allowed to.' Zephemiah ~~is~~ describes his issues with school, how he was expelled 'partly because of arguing with teachers on an intellectual level and partly for being a rude boy and fighting.' To young, modern readers, being rude does not equal expulsion, and arguing with teachers on an intellectual level ~~is~~ is almost encouraged to do so in subjects such as Philosophy and Ethics<sup>50</sup>, this historical contrast will engage and outrage the young reader. They will be even more

outraged that Zephaniah has to clarify that he 'didn't stab anybody', because that was simply the expectation. This description of a corrupt school system with 'no compassion, no understanding and no humanity' ~~note~~ will surely engage a young reader who may be outraged but may also relate, especially if they are dyslexic. The use of a triad, with emphasis on 'no humanity' also underlines previous ideas that Zephaniah was treated as a dangerous black boy who 'should be in prison' - when teachers saw him, they saw someone dangerous, incapable of <sup>\* a 'savage'</sup> humanity. What will perhaps engage the reader most is Zephaniah's fortitude. He is almost facetious at times, alluding to *The Go Between* when he says that 'the past is a different kind of country'. His teachers told him that he was stupid, and yet he effortlessly quotes classical literature. ~~This is~~ This strength, humour and determination is further underlined when Zephaniah says that he 'had self belief' and that he 'never thought I was stupid. I never had that struggle.' This earnestness, <sup>and</sup> encouragement of 'passion, creativity, individuality' is what makes the article so engaging. Zephaniah is clearly saying to the young generation, those wronged by the confinement of the school system, that they are good enough and that they are capable of great things, no matter what people <sup>say</sup>.

(Total for Question 4 = 12 marks)

## Question 5

This question provides the only assessment in the specification of **AO3**: Explore links and connections between writers' ideas and perspectives, as well as how these are conveyed.

This question is the most demanding of those in Section A and, with 22 marks distributed between five levels, carries almost half of the total marks available for reading so it is extremely important that candidates allow sufficient time for a developed response.

Examiners were pleased to note that nearly all candidates attempted the question, but careful time-management is crucial for success in this examination and candidates should factor in time to plan with care the points that they wish to make in order to ensure that they have a wide and balanced range.

Examiners recognise the challenge of the question and it was pleasing to note that nearly all candidates achieved some degree of success with one examiner noting that 'most candidates recognised the requirement to compare the texts and made an effort to do so'. There was little evidence of planning, but candidates should be advised that a plan can be very helpful because it can aid them to move towards a more exploratory approach based on key elements of similarity or difference rather than producing an explanatory, chronological approach to the texts for example, a Level 2 response might comment that '*both writers are dyslexic*', but a Level 4 response will use this fact as a succinct launchpad for a further point, e.g. '*The writers' dyslexia made each of them creative and able to 'think outside the box'...*'

At the lower end, candidates tended to list techniques such as '*Text One is written in the third person, whereas Text Two is a first-person account*' or make obvious comparisons for example '*Both the men had a tough time at school*'. Often these responses became narrative, sometimes with greater emphasis on one text leading to a lack of balance. Candidates at this level were generally able to draw a few links between the writers' ideas and make some straightforward comments about language and/or structure. Some candidates copied out over-long quotations whilst a small minority used no supporting textual references; these answers tended to be more list-like and often went little further than mere identification. Examiners were pleased to note that fewer candidates in this series wasted time writing about the italicised introductions.

In the mid-range candidates tended to pick up on the writers' similar experiences at school and many also commented on the different impacts of an article and an autobiographical approach. A number looked at the respective titles of the texts. Some were able to consider the childhood experiences of both men and the impact these had on their adult lives, their creative paths, and their pleasure in either 'wowing' others or in helping others with dyslexia.

The most successful responses focused almost immediately on comparing specific details of the extracts and looked at the writers' perspectives as well as their ideas and balanced their points, confidently interweaving thoughts on both texts with exemplification and exploration of ideas.

The most assured responses included astute analysis of language, purpose and tone. At this level one examiner noted that responses often seemed to reflect genuine enjoyment in, and engagement with, both the texts and the task'. The range of comparisons, depth of comment on both ideas and perspectives and the use of appropriate references were all discriminators.

One successful response offered the following strong conclusion: *'Both authors tell inspiring stories of hope in the face of the same enemy- the school system, but they also deliver the hope in different ways, with the shared hope of Zephaniah and the personal hope of Wigan. Both stories could change a young person's life and both are, ultimately, a testament to human strength and the talent and determination of both individuals.'*

There are different ways to approach this question, but examiners noted that the most successful responses made each point a valid and appropriate comparison with supporting references from both extracts; this led to the balance required for marks within Levels 4 and 5. Feedback from examiners suggested that use of references was still variable and might be a useful area for future focus. Some candidates use references within an almost entirely narrative response and offer no real comment, others select relevant quotations but then do little more than paraphrase them rather than offering any further explanation or expansion. More successful responses were able to select pertinent words within the lines being discussed, embed them effectively within their own sentences and, if looking at language features, offer some astute analysis.

Below [Example 1] is a response that gained a mark in the middle of Level 3. A range of relevant points of comparison are considered and some are supported by appropriate textual references. A sound overall understanding is demonstrated but ideas are not developed.

- 5 Compare how the writers present their ideas and perspectives about the experiences described.

Support your answer with detailed examples from both texts, including **brief** quotations.

(22)

The two texts are have similarities and differences. They are both about two boys who had learning disabilities and struggled in school. They were both "ridiculed" and pushed aside by teachers for not being able to read and having different ideas.

In Young and dyslexic? Zephaniah quotes "teachers didn't know what dyslexia was." As in Miniature Miracles. Wigan says "no one talked about dyslexia in those days," this show the comparison of misunderstanding about dyslexia. Also both boys were called a "failure" for thinking outside the box, which wasn't incorageed then.

Both writers embraced there talents on was thinking of poems and getting his sister to write them down. The other was making miniature sculptures out of anything. Although they are different the overall storys are very similar.

They both went on to pursue their passion and inspire other people like them. Also helping awareness for learning disabilities to grow.

Zephaniah speaks about how he learned to read as an adult which shows its never too late to learn.

They both have a different way of viewing the world and art. Which they explain further through the texts. Both texts also use a lot of powerful and emotive language to get their point across. Such as "having dyslexia can make you creative." Zephaniah also uses short sentences "its not you" as an example. This gives more of an impact and a forceful tone to help get a point across express his opinion.

Wigan would sculpt characters from books he would struggle to read. He shares his journey by saying how he worked in a factory before making a name for himself. This presents him not giving up and will encourage others to do the same.

So the structure of both texts are quite similar the language used and their stories are fairly different.

Below [Example 2] is an example of a response that gained full marks. This impressive response presents a varied and comprehensive range of points. A high level of astute analysis is sustained and references are discriminating. There is perceptive understanding of the key elements of both texts in this well-crafted answer.

### Example 2

- 5 Compare how the writers present their ideas and perspectives about the experiences described.

Support your answer with detailed examples from both texts, including **brief** quotations.

(22)

Wigan and Zepheniah both discuss the dyslexic experience, and it is almost haunting how similar their descriptions of school are. Wigan was 'paraded' in front of a classroom, pointed at as an 'example of failure' just as Zepheniah was told to 'shut up, stupid boy' and called stupid for 'just being creative.' 'Paraded' indicates ~~that~~ has connotations of circuses, spectacles in which people were ridiculed and mocked, just as Zepheniah and Wigan were. ~~Their school experience is very similar.~~ Both Wigan and Zepheniah were belittled - Wigan was forced to 'seek refuge <sup>from</sup> and school and his unsympathetic teachers' at 'just five years old.' At 5 years old, Wigan's self ~~esteem~~ esteem was so damaged that he had to escape. ~~This~~ School was a prison in which Wigan was 'ridiculed by teachers and peers alike' and Zepheniah was treated with 'no compassion, ~~to~~ no understanding and no humanity.' The use of structure here - the triad with emphasis on no humanity, underlines the long list of basic qualities the school system lacked, with 'humanity' being the most important one.

of them. ~~Instead~~ Instead of being helped and guided through education, Wigan and Zepheniah were treated like 'savages,' people ~~unders~~ undeserving of humanity.

While the experiences Wigan and Zepheniah describe are similar, one stark - perhaps even <sup>the</sup> salient - difference ~~was~~ <sup>is</sup> how they reacted. Zepheniah did not let the bullying get to him, and 'never thought' he 'was stupid,' describing how if someone thinks 'doesn't have a problem reading and writing'... 'thinks that black people are savages,' he know that they are the one who is stupid, not him. One theme that carries through the whole of Zepheniah's article is his belief in 'conquering your fears and finding a path.' Zepheniah always 'had self belief' and appears ~~to~~ not to worry about what other people think, ~~so~~ which could be clearly seen with his arguments with teachers at a young age and his ~~stare~~ unbotheredness at the fact that he gets an actor to read <sup>his</sup> novels out for him. Zepheniah prefers not to focus on the things he can't do, but instead the positives, firmly believing that 'us dyslexic people - we've got it going on.' Zepheniah grew up to be proud of his differences, his 'advantage' and <sup>tries to pass</sup> ~~passes~~ this on to the younger generation.



Wigan, however, was affected by his childhood in a slightly different way, as he appears to have very little self belief. Wigan was embarrassed by his dyslexia, - he even 'used to carry a bandage to put over my hand if I had to fill in a form.'

This covering up of his dyslexia, coupled with his description of how 'small' his teachers made him feel, could imply that Wigan grew up to be a young boy with <sup>low</sup> self-esteem, embarrassed by who he was.

This is further reflected in the way he appears to have need constant reassurance. While Zepheniah loves it when that he is giving young children pride when what he 'didn't have that as a child,' Wigan seems to store alone the 'reaction he gets after someone views his finished pieces,' and the 'look of awe in their faces.' This need for reassurance and validation is even further explored when the extract describes that 'this "wow" factor means a lot to Wigan, especially after being told he would amount to nothing.' Wigan's childhood gave him such low self-esteem that he cannot survive without people being impressed by him, whereas Zepheniah 'had self belief.'

Despite their different reactions to similar treatment in their childhood, both Zepheniah and Wigan ~~are~~ write with a tone of pride, with the purpose of

inspiring the young dyslexic people who read it. Zephemiah assures young people that 'if you don't have passion, creativity, individuality, there's no point,' ~~but that if you~~ Rather than encouraging them to 'get the right grade because you have a good memory,' he encourages them to be creative in a way that was never accepted when he was young. Zephemiah's description of his school and how he <sup>persisted to argue</sup> life indicates that he believes creativity is something important, something worth fighting for. His encouragement for children like him to 'see the world differently,' be 'designers' and 'architects' is a message of hope to everyone. No matter your situation, if you conquer your fears and find the right path, you can achieve anything.

Wigan's article is also hopeful and inspirational, describing dyslexic's ability 'remarkable ability to think outside the box' and stating that 'now I'm showing how big nothing really is.' Just as in Zephemiah's article, Wigan shows his troubled and miserable childhood, his work 'in a factory for two decades' something that may be considered work for the uncreative and unscientific. Showing Wigan's eventual success not only subverts stereotypes about workers such as factory workers, which

are generally negative, but it also sends a message of hope to any young person. Anyone who has ever felt dehumanised and devalued by their teachers will feel a response to Wigan's bold statement that he will 'now I'm showing how big nothing is,' and they may feel encouraged that, despite their struggles, they too can be 'phenomenal.' The <sup>use of the word</sup> juxtaposition of 'phenomenal' with 'failure' - a word that is frequently heard by modern students, will conjure images of red marking on the front of a paper, working hard to scrape by and yet never being good enough, struggling to agree with teachers and subsequently doubting yourself. When juxtaposed with 'phenomenal' and 'The eight wonder of the world,' it is bound to inspire students that they, too, can do this.

The tones, and therefore the form of inspiration, varies between pieces. Wigan's story appears more personal and niche. His story is in third person, so perhaps it is more difficult to directly address the reader, but Wigan's story only describes his successes, and doesn't tell the reader they can do the same, although perhaps this encouragement is implied. On the other hand, Zephaniah's article is directly addressed to readers, young, dyslexic readers from

The very beginning - the title - to the very end, when he encourages readers to 'use it to your advantage, see the world differently.' Zephaniah also states that 'we are the architects, we are the designers.' This use of 'we' makes the reader feel more involved and included than Wigan's third person use of 'he', and this perhaps illicit a more personal, deeper response, as the reader feels as though they are being directly addressed, not talked at. Zephaniah's style is more personal, and therefore more engaging.

Both authors tell inspiring stories of hope in the face of the same enemy - the school system, but they also deliver the hope in different ways, with the shared hope of Zephaniah and the personal hope of Wigan. Both stories could change a young person's life and both are, ultimately, a testament to human strength and the talent and determination of both individuals.

## Section B

Candidates are required to answer just one writing task but it carries half of the total marks available for the paper and so they must ensure that they allow sufficient time to plan and organise their response.

There are two assessment objectives for writing.

**AO4:** Communicate effectively and imaginatively, adapting form, tone and register of writing for specific purposes and audiences. (27 marks spread over five levels)

**AO5:** Write clearly, using a range of vocabulary and sentence structures, with appropriate paragraphing and accurate spelling, grammar and punctuation. (18 marks spread over five levels)

## Question 6

Both questions in this series proved to be equally popular. This question, asking candidates to write the text of a leaflet offering advice to school students on how to deal with bullying elicited a range of thoughtful responses giving sound, practical advice.

There were some responses where the required form was not evident, but examiners noted that the vast majority of candidates were able to write in an appropriate format often using sub-headings and occasional bullet pointing to good effect. An awareness of the conventions of the given form helps candidates to make appropriate language choices which will lead to apt register and tone.

Candidates covered a range of ideas and clearly this is a topic about which they are well-informed as all seemed to show genuine awareness and understanding of the potential consequences of bullying as well as its possible causes.

At the lower and mid-levels candidates tended use the question's bullet points to give structure to their response and gave straightforward definitions of the different types of bullying that could occur with advice to 'tell an adult' or 'ignore the bully' At this level the intended audience and given form were not always apparent and one examiner noted that 'attention to these details would have lifted the impact of the content'.

More successful responses considered a range of strategies and were reassuring in their tone, using a personal and friendly 'voice'. An examiner reported that many of the responses were 'thought-provoking' with some candidates effectively using 'personal experience or anecdote to supplement their points'. Some also addressed those who might be instigators of bullying and others explored reasons such as peer-pressure or problems at home that might lead someone to become a bully.

## Bullying And how to deal with it!

Bullying happens in every single school. Yep, even yours. You may already know that, because you or someone you know has experienced it first hand. Well today you're going to learn how to solve that problem. But first, what is bullying?

Bullying is a person, or group of people, repeatedly making someone's life worse on purpose. So you can't call your friend a bully for taking your jumper and not giving it back. Even if they meant it! This is because it's not repeated, it only happened once. Now that we've cleared that up let's look at some examples of bullying. Examples include:

- verbal, saying hurtful things
- physical, like beating someone up

- cyber bullying, being nasty to someone online
- spreading rumours, telling people lies to get them to dislike someone

Any of those sound oddly familiar? A lot of people have been or are being bullied without realising! Don't get too disheartened, as now I'll show you how to combat it.

- Don't fight back! You need to be 100% in the right, so that no one can hold anything against you!
- Tell someone, a teacher, friend or another adult you trust. Your friend may be able to stand up to your bully, and adults have enough authority to stop it happening again
- Kill them with kindness! A bully really has nowhere to go if you're being extra sickly sweet to them. Chances are they'll get a bit uncomfortable and leave you alone.
- Keep your distance. I know this isn't

always possible in a school environment, but, if you can, just ~~try~~ try and stay away from them.

Remember that ~~bullies~~ bullies aren't the way they are for no reason. They might have stuff going on at home, or friendship drama, or anything really. So leave a bit of sympathy for them, because sometimes they have it worse than you do!

### Question 7

This task instructed candidates to write a letter to the director of a museum explaining what items should be displayed in a new exhibition entitled 'Life in the Twenty-First Century'. Many candidates showed a high level of engagement with the question and had clearly given careful thought to the proposals they made which made their letters very interesting to read. Inevitably, events of the past two years led many to suggest items related to the COVID 19 pandemic with masks, hand sanitiser, ventilators, PPE equipment all being discussed. The most popular item, mentioned by almost all candidates was the mobile phone and its technological advances and other areas of choice were linked to climate change and movements such as Black Lives Matter.

A few candidates seemed to misread the question and did not choose items from the Twenty-First Century for display or offered a critique of museums generally. At the lower levels responses were sometimes little more than a list with added occasional comments. Successful responses often came about when candidates thought beyond the more obvious items and also considered art, music, fashion etc.

At the lower levels, as with Question 6, there was often no real sense of organisation, with errors in sentence structure and syntax that sometimes led to a lack of clarity and coherence. Making a plan seemed to help candidates achieve a cohesive and well-ordered response.

Again, it was noticeable that less successful responses demonstrated limited awareness of form and audience with little to indicate that the response was a formal letter.

Below [Example 1] is an example of a response that gained marks at mid- Level 3 for both AOs. The candidate communicates clearly with a sound sense of purpose and appropriate form and tone. There is some expansion of the first suggestion, but further ideas remain undeveloped although there is some connection. There is an attempt to vary vocabulary and reasonable accuracy.

### Example 1

Dear 'Life in the Twenty-First Century' organisers,

I am writing this letter today to express my opinion on the items that should be shown for the display.

Item number one in my opinion should be the oldest phone to the newest one. Phones have evolved very quickly and have become a big part of our day to day life. Phones and technology are some of the most used items in everyone's lives. If it's not for school or work it's for social media or talking to friends. Especially since Covid started phones have been a huge part of keeping connected with family and friends.

Secondly I think cars and transport play a big part in twenty-first century life. Transport has allowed people to do a lot bigger things outside of their home town. This is why I think it is a key factor of this century.



Another point I wish to make is the fashion of this century. Looking back fashion evolves all the time so it is fascinating to look at what it was and what it has become.

By putting some of the fashion trends now in a museum, in the future people can look back on what it was.

Before writing to you I was trying to think about some things I couldn't live or imagine life without. So these are my suggestions. I hope they were helpful.

Many thanks,

Below [Example 2] is an example of a response that gained full marks. This is an extremely impressive response where communication throughout is perceptive and subtle. The candidate has adopted an appropriate persona and completely engages the reader through a persuasive presentation of their thoughtful and well-chosen suggestions, which skilfully utilise their experiences of the past two years. Complex ideas are developed and linked within a cohesive structure and despite the serious nature of many of the points there is an assured lightness of touch. This is a sophisticated piece of writing with an excellent level of technical accuracy and full marks are well-deserved.

### Example 2

Dear Sir or Madam,

I have recently been made aware that the Oxford Ashmolean Museum is planning on opening ~~an~~ a new exhibition entitled 'Life in the ~~21st~~ Twenty-First Century.' Firstly, I must congratulate you on your previous excellent exhibitions, particularly the one on Pompeii, and I write with ~~the intention of~~ an aspiration to contribute to this one, however I can.

~~Emily Davis~~

Encouraging the younger generation to get involved with museum exhibitions is essential. ~~as a history teacher I have seen the engagement~~ This exhibition of life in the twenty first century - a more recent century, ~~only~~ ~~has~~ may be a starting point for young people to become more engaged in Britain's history. <sup>Now, in</sup> ~~During~~ the 22nd century, ~~we are~~ students are most interested in the 21st century's first three decades - namely, the period before and after the pandemic. As a history teacher who specialises in Coronavirus Pandemic studies, I have seen how engagement in a

lesson skyrockets when I mention the period between 2019 - 2025. Students have indeed compared it to an apocalyptic dystopia, and I am certain that if you displayed artefacts such as the horns from the Capitol protestor dressed as a bison, an ancient soldier's uniform from the Kabul evacuation and a lateral flow test kit, students who have heard so much - largely from social media - about the fascinating beginning of the 21st century, would be fascinated and intellectually stimulated.

One artefact I believe the combined politics - history students would be particularly interested in is a tape of Prime Minister Boris Johnson's Prime Minister's Questions on the 12<sup>th</sup> January 2022. Having studied it with one of my classes, it is truly fascinating to see Johnson attempt to justify his crimes against the nation. Perhaps a resignation notice could be exhibited next to it, although this may be wishful thinking. I believe that this item is essential to any display on the 21st century. It truly encompasses life <sup>in the 21st century</sup> - the crowding of MPs to jeer at the Prime Minister, the silence of the Conservatives and the breakdown of law and order. Through this horrendous display of governance, anyone could gain an understanding of the fear, distrust and resentment that the British public lived through during this disaster. We must learn about history's mistakes.

to ensure that they are not repeated.

Another, perhaps less political artefact that could be used is a ~~the~~ a collection of <sup>an individual's</sup> ~~a~~ shopping panic shoe in 2020. While it would be difficult to find food from the 21st century, perhaps replicas could be made. Visitors would be able to admire the mountain of toilet roll and flour; ~~the~~ and would be able to tell us that about the life of those who lived back then, about the panic they experienced. It would be excellent for the students of any subject, particularly economics and history, as history GCSE studies the pandemic from January 2020 to June 2021 and ~~as the economic~~ economics of the struggle of working class families who could not afford to panic buy and were therefore left with little security and little food is studied. Again, I must reiterate the importance of engaging students in 21st century history, to ensure ~~this does not happen~~ <sup>we can do</sup> better.

~~My~~ Another artefact you could display is one from Kabul airport - perhaps some equipment recklessly abandoned as US forces ~~fled~~ <sup>fled</sup>. The worldwide <sup>not just the UK's situation</sup> situation at that time should also be understood, and perhaps several a whole portion of the exhibition should be dedicated to the struggle for power in Afghanistan. Students interested in history and politics will benefit

from this, and it also serves as a warning to those  
observing. <sup>It demonstrates</sup> The continued fear of war, and  
awareness of what it did to so many people, is what  
prevents another war, another total breakdown of law  
and order. These artefacts from Kabul Airport and  
Afghanistan can also teach you about the ~~war in~~ worldwide  
suffering, the disaster of Biden's ~~Prime~~ office to fix the  
problems Donald Trump foolishly created. The botched  
rescue attempt sums up the incompetence of governments  
of that time.

\* more on last page

Perhaps on a more personal level, diaries and phones should  
be included. Perhaps <sup>personal</sup> stories - that of the little  
known people who <sup>are essential for understanding the 21st century</sup> fade into history. Their social media  
posts and the things they left behind ~~are~~ might  
even be the most poignant and striking indicators of  
life in the 21st century - how individual people  
struggled to make ends meet with Universal Credit,  
how students unsure of how their education would  
go dealt with chronic anxiety, some even developing  
anxiety disorders. ~~These~~ The texts and letters between  
people and their stories should be a significant part of  
the exhibition, because they are the ones who lived  
through it and survived - they are history, and we  
should not forget them. Their views of events are almost  
more important than the events themselves.

Our children are the future, and the ultimate leaders of this world. By exhibiting the most interesting and exciting parts of history - parts that could also be almost be considered apocalyptic, we ~~are~~ could be starting a new passion: a child who becomes fascinated by John Boris Johnson's rapidly declining career could grow up to become a politician who never makes his mistakes. By educating children, <sup>by</sup> encouraging passion and creativity, we can make the future a far better place than the past ever was. In the words of Sir David Attenborough, 20th and 21st century environmental campaigner,

"Young people can fix what we have failed to recognise as a problem. They will be the scientists and politicians who engineer a better future for us all."

I hope my suggestions prove useful, and that the new exhibition is a success.

Yours sincerely

#### Final comment on the writing questions:

To achieve the highest level in AO4 writing needs to be 'perceptive', 'subtle' and 'sophisticated' and there should be a clear focus on the appropriate form. For AO5, candidates should consider the ordering of their ideas, write in clear paragraphs and aim to link them effectively. There needs to be accuracy but also a 'strategic' use of an 'extensive vocabulary' and an assured and controlled use of a range of sentence structures 'to achieve particular effects'. Candidates should not avoid using an ambitious vocabulary because they fear making spelling errors but neither should they simply learn a list of words and use them in their writing with little regard for their meaning and aptness.

Those who achieved higher-level marks frequently opened their piece with an intriguing question, a powerful statement or a short sentence and proceeded to explore and develop

their ideas with fluency, clarity and enthusiasm. Candidates are advised that colloquialisms such as 'gonna' and 'wanna' should really be avoided and only be employed in direct speech. They should also avoid writing solely in upper case as this does not allow them to demonstrate an awareness of the correct use of capital letters.

Candidates must ensure that they do not rush the writing task, allowing time both to plan and to proof-read as unforced errors in grammar and spelling can lead to lower marks.

Examiners commented that where there was evidence of planning, this often led to a clear and effective structure and greater textual cohesion and accuracy

### **Concluding advice**

Candidates should:

- be provided with plenty of opportunities to practise reading and responding to unseen passages under timed conditions
- be aware of the different assessment objectives to ensure that they focus their answers specifically on the different question requirements
- highlight the relevant lines for Questions 1-3 in the Extracts Booklet
- use the number of marks available for Questions 2 and 3 to suggest how many clear and discrete points they should make
- not spend time analysing language in answers to Questions 1, 2 or 3
- answer Question 2, as far as possible, in their own words and aim to offer some interpretation
- offer some interpretation of the text in Question 3 and not simply rely on quotations to make the points without comment
- underline or highlight the key words of Question 4 so that answers are appropriately focused
- consider the effects of language and structure features within the context of the given extract in Question 4 rather than offering generic explanations
- select appropriate references from the whole extract that fully support points made in answer to Question 4
- make a range of comparative points in Question 5 and link elements such as content, theme, tone, purpose, narrative voice, language; points should be balanced across both texts and supported with relevant quotations or textual references
- references should be selected carefully and some exploration of these should be attempted
- take time to make a brief plan for the higher tariff questions (5 and 6 or 7)
- give careful consideration to the given form and audience for the writing task and use these to inform register and tone
- try to use a wide vocabulary and varied sentence structures
- aim for a structured, cohesive and complete piece of writing

- allow time to proof-read their writing response in order to achieve the highest possible degree of accuracy
- read all instructions carefully
- attempt every question

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