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Moderators' Report/ Principal Moderator Feedback

January 2022

Pearson Edexcel International GCSE
In English Language (4EA1)
Paper 03: Poetry and Prose Texts and Imaginative
Writing (NEA)

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4EA1_03 Principal Moderator's Report January 2022

This was a smaller series; however, it was the first time that coursework was able to be submitted digitally and I would like to thank centres for their careful work in ensuring this process ran very smoothly overall and for the feedback in helping us to identify teething problems in readiness for the summer.

Administration

As we move to digital submissions, it was more helpful where centres had uploaded a candidate's coursework as one complete file rather than as separate pdfs for cover sheets and assignments. Centres are reminded that even though this is a digital submission, folders do still require a cover sheet to be completed and signed by both the candidate and the teacher responsible for assessing the work.

Speaking and Listening records are not required within the folder. However, it is useful if items within the folder are placed in the order listed on the cover sheet e.g. reading assignment, commentary, creative writing.

Assessment, annotation, and internal moderation

It is always helpful for the moderator to see summative comments transposed to the cover sheet rather than a request to see the comments on the pieces themselves. In this way, the moderator can see that the language and descriptors used in the summative comment match with the totals applied on the cover sheet. This can then be evaluated against the formative annotation and comments within.

A number of centres had applied very careful thoughts and consideration to candidates' work. There was evidence of thoughtful and detailed annotation from both a first and second marker and this good practice really is the key to fair assessment for a centre's entry. Thank you to those centres who worked so hard on this.

Where formative annotation linked to mark scheme descriptors is not used, or there is overuse of ticking, this is often where a lack of precision occurs. It often seems to be the case that leniency occurs in the reading section of the folder and severity in the writing. The leniency can often occur when centres have not considered the weightings for AO1 and AO2 and the emphasis placed on AO2 skills in the mark scheme grids – particularly in terms of the explanation or exploration of the effects of writer's choices. Severity can occur when centres have circled and corrected technical errors in spelling and punctuation, perhaps leading to a more negative impression – the focus then being on what the candidate can't do, rather than what they can.

Annotations are very often sparser on the writing assignment, and whilst candidates generally achieved well for AO4 especially, more engagement with the descriptors within each level to really refine the mark and their reasoning for its award can benefit candidates.

Centres with new colleagues or who are new to the specification may like to access this useful online training course and support materials by visiting the Pearson Edexcel webpage for iGCSE English Language A →Teaching and Learning Materials →Past Training Content → Coursework Marking Training online event.

There were only a few centres with no annotation at all on candidates' work. It is recommended that they too access the training below for future series.



Pearson Edexcel International GCSE English Language A: Coursework
Marking Training - Online Event

| ZIP 13.2 MB | 05 June 2020

Task setting

Most centres have acted on the advice in previous reports and constructed tasks which lead candidates confidently towards the assessment objectives in the correct balance. However, there are still some centres setting tasks which take a generalised 'comparative' approach, suggesting they have not updated their task setting in line with this new specification which has now been operable since June 2018. This does not benefit candidates. Additionally, we do still find some centres setting tasks which lead candidates to focus on AO1 to the detriment of the more heavily weighted AO2. Again, the training materials reference above are extremely helpful and supportive if you are new to the course or if this has been flagged in your individual centre feedback.

Assignment A

It was noted that many folders in this series contained reading tasks based on poetry texts. 'Disabled' and 'Out, Out-' regained their popularity, though 'Still I Rise' and 'The Bright Lights of Sarajevo' were also popular choices. Fewer candidates tackled the prose texts, though The Story of an Hour and The Necklace were used by several candidates effectively.

As a result of the improved task setting mentioned above, we also saw more focused responses, though at times references to language and structure can be rather generic and reliant on one or two mentions of imagery or structure. Whilst feature spotting is not to be encouraged, secure identification of precise choices and aspects of language and structure with clear exemplification can encourage candidates to write in more depth about their effects and what we might imagine, feel, or be led to think of through those choices. In turn this can lead candidates more securely into the higher reaches of the mark scheme if we note that some of the key words for Level 4 are 'thorough', 'detailed' and 'sustained'. Commentaries, where present, often offered a very personal response and many did not refer to other texts studied to explain their choice.

Assignment B

Candidates who had made a free choice in their writing provided a rich variety of narrative styles: tense mysteries, dystopian stories, science fiction as well as several highly descriptive pieces of travel writing and evocations of place. There was real enjoyment in so many of the pieces, distinctive stylistic choices, well-handled dialogue, and creation of character as well as several interesting structural choices and plot twists.

There were some great opening sentence/part of a sentence prompts which made for some engaging pieces of writing. One centre's candidates all had the same opening phrase and yet no piece of imaginative writing was the same. Clearly a lot of preparation and creative writing practice had been undertaken by the centre.

'A Day in the Life' style tasks did not always allow candidates to expand and develop ideas as they mainly went through the facts of their own daily routine which became somewhat repetitive.

Encouragement of a wide range of vocabulary choices can benefit candidates as it also creates the opportunity to demonstrate spelling skills. Specific teaching of different sentence types and how they may be punctuated for effect can also be beneficial for AO5. Many of the highest achieving candidates use the control and selection of varied sentences to extremely good effect and this can have real impact on the writing as a whole.