Moderators' Report/
Principal Moderator Feedback

Summer 2015

Pearson Edexcel GCE
in English Language and Literature
Unit 2 (6EL02/01)

Edexcel and BTEC Qualifications

Edexcel and BTEC qualifications are awarded by Pearson, the UK's largest awarding body. We provide a wide range of qualifications including academic, vocational, occupational and specific programmes for employers. For further information visit our qualifications websites at www.edexcel.com or www.btec.co.uk. Alternatively, you can get in touch with us using the details on our contact us page at www.edexcel.com/contactus.

Pearson: helping people progress, everywhere

Pearson aspires to be the world's leading learning company. Our aim is to help everyone progress in their lives through education. We believe in every kind of learning, for all kinds of people, wherever they are in the world. We've been involved in education for over 150 years, and by working across 70 countries, in 100 languages, we have built an international reputation for our commitment to high standards and raising achievement through innovation in education. Find out more about how we can help you and your students at: www.pearson.com/uk

Outline of Unit

Students are required to produce a folder containing two pieces of creative work. One is intended for a reading audience. One is intended for a listening audience. Both are linked to one theme, taken from the specification. This work is accompanied by two commentaries. These need to be analytical, explaining how the work has been crafted and how the stimulus texts have influenced the creative writing. The commentary must include comments on a range of literary/linguistic features which have enhanced the creative work.

Topic areas

- Entrapment
- Dystopia
- Women's Lives
- Gothic and Supernatural
- Journeys and Pilgrimages

Gothic and Dystopian themes tend to be the dominant choices. Entrapment and Journeys and Pilgrimages have increased in popularity. Women's Lives remains very much a minority option. The quality of much creative work is high. Candidates have shown an aptitude for experimenting with genres and with styles of written language. Fiction texts have proved to be the most successful in generating the more developed responses. Poetry and drama texts have not been adapted with the same degree of imaginative enterprise, yet a choice of study of one or other of these texts is a specification requirement. The quality of commentaries is slightly more variable. In the case of fictional writing candidates are generally quite strong in producing an analytical view of their own writing. In the listening work there is evidence of less security in dealing with speech and the spoken voice, although there is growing evidence that centres are making efforts to improve this aspect of the specification.

Creative work

The most successful work reflects a very close knowledge of the generic conventions of the chosen stimulus texts. It is a fact that these texts are usually ones deemed as being of suitable literary merit for study at AS. This work is often supported by evidence of apposite wider reading. These folders are often imaginative in terms of both narrative and lexical experiment. The less accomplished work tends to have a weaker integrated grasp of the stimulus texts. The wider reading in such work often includes modern popular fictional texts and media sources. Whilst these might merit passing attention as secondary sources, they can often prove not to be amenable to the critical and exploratory language required in the accompanying commentaries.

Reading Audience

For the purpose of this report students' work has been chosen as exemplars. The responses show some of the possibilities that can be developed, whilst adhering to the formal academic demands of the specification. It is hoped they will prove useful to centres for both discussion and exemplification.

Exemplar 1

This is taken from creative prose work. The theme was a 'living' dystopia, with general focus upon mental instability in a particular character.

> ...A piercing shriek fills the room. It takes me an inordinate time to realise that it's coming from me. My chest cavity shudders of its own accord, trying desperately to suck in all the world's oxygen, the resulting clamour expelling from my lips mercilessly. My harsh cries are nothing compared to the war waging inside my head.
>
> **I'M SORRYI'MSORRYI'MSORRYI'M**
>
> *You asked for it. Stop your screaming now. You're just making a scene*
>
> **MAKEIT STOPGOD CHIPPLEASE NO MORE**
>
> *I did warn you. Can't have you slipping up*
>
> I feel myself vomit on the tiled floor. There are three people in front of me, their mouths moving at different speeds. Cannot hear what they are saying. Only hear my screams...

Key Features:

- Fluent and engaging
- Typographical experiment with speaking voices to emphasise differences within the split personality of the character. (Demonstrates the theme of leading a dystopian life of pain, fear and voices within the character's head)
- There is a dramatic arc in this extract
- Writing from a subjective viewpoint
- Mystery - establishing further potential thematic issues
- The naming of a second personality/speaking voice

Exemplar 2

This is taken from creative prose work. It is the opening lines of the first chapter of a novel about Women's Lives. It explores the beginnings of a romantic involvement.

...He intrigued me at first. He seemed so detached. Indifferent. He was extraordinary. I study him regularly . My eyes involuntarily seek him out. The crinkles by his eyes are beautiful. Later, when we began to speak, my thoughts turned to. Well, what.? I remember the tentative question. "So, would you ever want to settle down? You know, get married? Have your own family?" I can recall
tilting my head is a questioning way.
"No" he responded
"No?"
"Why not?" I proceeded, uncrossing my legs, just to cross them again. "You can't just play around for ever you know." Perhaps I had expected a light hearted bantering reply.
" I am not predictable. I am indifferent. I like to be me". This was said without any eye contact. I tried to relate this to my previous partners. As long as I flashed some cleavage, or looked engagingly interested in them, they soon came under my control. They became unsurprising. I disliked their vacuity. Their inherent belief that they were important to me.
" I am detached from, have an unsentimental boredom with, the ideals of love". This made that challenge arise within me. I wanted to reassure myself that he would have some vulnerability. I realised I wanted him to feel, almost sensually, my presence in front of him in that small office. He was, indeed, extra ordinary...

Key Features

- Starting the story in media res with prose economically controlled
- Sense of mystery and uncertainty - where, when etc.
- Dialogue is short and raises the emotional level of the narrative
- Though from a subjective viewpoint, the register seems suitable
- The imagery is limited, yet a strong sense of character emerges
- The potential for future development is propagated in the opening short sentences
- The economy of the language reflects style(s) of some modern novels

The accompanying commentary gives an interesting view of candidate's approach:

> I wanted to attempt to challenge some feminist writing. I decided I would have a young woman, who works in an office, exploring her instant obsession with a man who is not readily available. I wanted to create small details and not lengthy descriptive passages. I hoped I would subvert the conventional 'love story' into something which could have the quality of a dramatic interlude...Something that was not meant to last.

Listening Audience

The quality of listening work has improved in the most recent examinations. This was also the case this year. There were more attempts to use the voice

in dramatised excerpts. Some of these have been both engaging and show some clear understanding of the basic art of scripting.

Exemplar 1

This is part of a dramatised fictional listening piece, following the conventions of television productions.

> *Dim audience lights, lights up on stage*
> **Reporter:** *Reads from teleprompt*
> Alarming news that Syndrome X is spreading. This can prove to be a lethal mental illness. I have Dr Rivers here from State Three hospital.
> **Doctor Rivers:**
> The symptoms are severe mood swings. Neurotransmitters in the brain make the victim psychotic.
> Hypomanic moods predominate and can cause dangerous violence.
> **Reporter:** Thank you Dr Rivers. Joining us is an experienced psychiatric nurse, Joan Everall, she will explain these behavioural patterns in more detail.
> **Joan Everall:** I want to pick up on those hypomanic swings, which the doctor mentioned. They can be frightening and unpredictable. The sufferer becomes unresponsive to anyone, even loved ones. They are difficult to control. The threat to public order, if the syndrome spreads, will be horrendous. The best policy....*(camera cuts back to reporter)*
> **Reporter:** I am interrupting the broadcast. Breaking news has just informed us that Syndrome X appears to be going viral. There are messages coming in from across the capital and the south east. Unconfirmed reports talk of rioting. Another unconfirmed source has cited a politician calling for marshal law to be instigated immediately. We will get further news as events develop
> *Lights up over studio audience.*
> *Consternation on many faces .Camera cuts to O. B.location.*

Key Features

- Economy of spoken discourse
- The aspect of dystopia introduced rapidly into script.
- The dialogue rapidly creates a sense of context
- Lexis and syntax are largely appropriate to the scripted material
- There are perspectives opening up on wider social issues.
- Paralinguistic features are minimal but effective
- The creative potential of the dystopian theme is dramatic

Exemplar 2

This is a dramatised fictional extract using the medium of radio.

> *Interior domestic noises. Late evening*
> **Man:** What makes you want to live so far from the village? It must be lonely out here in the forest on your own; not to mention eerie. Even rather frightening and claustrophobic
> **Maria:** The forest is full of mystery, yet never eerie. I like to be closed in by the gloom of the pines.
> **Man:** The long nights and I dread to think what lurks in the blackness out there
> *Maria chuckles softly yet menacingly*
> **Maria:** There is nothing to be afraid of. We fear only our inner demons
> **Man:** But the black and evil crows
> **Maria**: They are the true inhabitants of the forest. Magnificent rulers of the shades
> *Pause*
> Stay the night and fear not the dark rulers in the forest
> *Scene moves to morning. Man v/o*
> I slept badly .I dreamt of crows. They circled me and mocked me with shrill calls. I fell to the ground and their pervading shrieks surrounded me, entrapping me like a helpless animal. Then, in one swift movement, they descended ravenously upon my unclothed body. I woke in cold sweat. Alone in that musty bedroom. Strange corvine noises seemed to be echoing around me. Sudden gusts of wind shook the door. As I looked into the dawn light I saw the drizzle of rain. The insistent sounds of the crows penetrated into my soul. I knew fear...

Key Features

- Under-stated but focused gothic setting, e.g. the 'mystery' woman
- Moderated gothic lexis
- Sense of entrapment (the selected theme)
- Simple declarative sentences, appropriate for the broadcast medium
- 'Corvine' - an interesting adjectival meaning relating to crow family
- The use of the birds as symbols for fear and unease, especially as relayed in dream sequence
- The aural quality of the sounds of the birds

An extract from the accompanying commentary shows good cohesion with textual study.

> ...I used the motif of the crow as inspired by the raven in the poem *The Raven* by EA Poe. The image of birds as a gothic motif appeared in WW Gibson's poem *Flanagan Isle...* I was further inspired by *The Woman in Black* and the dismal atmosphere which was so symbolic in that text. I also wanted to use aural imagery, again inspired by the sounds in Poe's *The Raven.* I wanted the sense of entrapment to be

pervasively present as the man slowly experiences what is being foreshadowed by the sounds of the crows...

Commentary on the work in general

The extracts have been chosen to show that candidates can find very imaginative and creative methods in their coursework, without necessarily restricting themselves to lengthy prose descriptiveness. Sounds and images, spoken discourse, lack of sustained narrative continuity and the creation of more than one speaking voice can all be effective in building an engaging creative folder. It is also quite likely that the more experimental approaches will help foster a more incisive and invigorating lexicon, which can be evaluated in the critical commentary. Evidence of autonomy in the folders is something to be praised.

Bibliographies

Centres appear to be encouraging candidates to reduce these to a sensible and appropriate length. Web-based research seems to be offering the candidates ever-widening horizons. As can be seen in the last exemplar, poetry can offer some candidates a really useful resource for imaginative writing. It should be appearing more, along with dramatic texts, which are mandatory in the specification.

Moderation

Many centres moderate in very helpful detail. There has been an increase in internal moderation. Annotations which specify achievements against the AOs are particularly useful for moderators.

Concluding Comments

It was clear from the work scrutinised that many centres have responded to previous moderator reports. Far fewer centres were allowing candidates to rely too heavily upon filmic and televisual materials. The problem with some forms of contemporary popular fiction does remain. It is usually not substantial enough in terms of offering support for literary and linguistic analyses. Another feature, referenced in last year's report, concerned speeches by historical and living people such as B. Obama, W. Churchill, M. Luther King etc. This does not really accord with the specification demands of prose, poetry or drama. Centres should try to avoid such texts as central elements of creative listening work although they could prove of secondary referential value.

The linguistic elements of candidates' critical commentaries appears to be overtaking the literary. As far as possible centres should try to ensure that there is a sensible balance between the two. It is to the credit of centres that some of the conventions of speech are being more academically addressed in the listening work. This adds a very useful dimension to candidates' analytical skills. It is pleasing to conclude with the fact that all moderators reported very positively upon much of the work they read. It is

to be hoped that centres will continue to develop the skills which their candidates have acquired.

Grade Boundaries

Grade boundaries for this, and all other papers, can be found on the website on this link:
http://www.edexcel.com/iwantto/Pages/grade-boundaries.aspx