



**Pearson
Edexcel**

**Moderators' Report/
Principal Moderator Feedback**

Summer 2019

Pearson Edexcel GCE

In English Language & Literature (9EL0_03)

Coursework

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

Grade Boundaries

Grade boundaries for all papers can be found on the website at:

<https://qualifications.pearson.com/en/support/support-topics/results-certification/grade-boundaries.html>

Summer 2019

Publications Code 9EL0_03_1906_ER

All the material in this publication is copyright

© Pearson Education Ltd 2019

MODERATOR REPORT FOR GCE ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE

9ELO/03 2019

General comments:

As this is the third year of the qualification, it is pleasing to report that most centres have taken on board the advice and seen the exemplar material available on the website, and have submitted superb and often very moving creative work, both literary and non-fiction. Most centres have given their students a reasonably free rein to select topics and genres; comments from moderators suggest that this is a very good way to improve engagement and achievement. Some centres started with core stimulus texts and then encouraged impressive wider reading and genre research. Many centres have used the Coursework Advisory Service, usually in relation to the suitability of texts, and this will be covered in a later section.

Many students, as in the past, have used knowledge and skills from other A level subjects, including History, Psychology, Music, Theatre Studies and Modern Foreign Languages, and these have often produced impressive results.

Moderators sometimes found submissions where the students had not only all done the same texts, but also the same tasks and did comment on what seemed like a lack of personal approach or engagement. There is no reason not to take this approach, but evidence seems to suggest that many students flourish when they make their own choices. Some centres offered a broad topic such as journeys, entrapment, racism and persecution, and then allowed students to develop their own direction and wider reading.

As usual, there was a clear connection between the quality of the wider reading and the quality of both the creative pieces and the commentaries. This applied to students who had written short stories and had actually read some; many students offered short stories, but there was no evidence either in their creative work or their commentaries that they understood how the generic conventions are different from writing a chapter from a novel. Similarly, students who offered all-purpose 'articles' without any sense of genre or audience, were unable to shape their work appropriately or say anything interesting in their commentaries.

Students whose reading included ambitious literary texts were often able to imitate specific stylistic and structural influences, and were also able to discuss this influence in the commentaries. Similarly, those who had clearly researched the specific generic features of their non-fiction work were able to produce convincing texts and analyse how

form, content and reception were related. A few students seem to have gone for what seems like an easy option and offered so-called Young Adult texts as stimulus, but were often unable to say anything interesting about the influence of these texts and whether the influence was thematic or stylistic.

Awareness of generic conventions is a key discriminator in both parts of the creative submission. Many students were willing to experiment with narrative devices and structural features in their literary writing. These included split narratives, fragmented narratives using epistolary techniques, dramatic monologues, extracts from plays and screenplays, use of non-fiction genres such as journalism and blogs to tell the story. These allowed the students to offer detailed and specific commentaries about the shaping of texts, at both a lexical and syntactical level, and offer developed evaluation of whole text features. Similarly, the best non-fiction work was rooted in secure understanding of genre, purpose and audience; commentaries on this work often offered subtle, nuanced discussion of the nature of the text and how it had been shaped to meet expectations (and sometimes to subvert them!)

Themes and core texts

Some centres used the original thematic suggestions from the specification, while others developed their own ideas and most of these worked very well. Issues relating to mental health were still popular, but topics such as coercion, sexism and body shaming also featured. There were successful explorations of literal and metaphorical journeys and a willingness to experiment with form and content. Some students were very ambitious in terms of literary playfulness and used interesting literary strategies, such as multiple narrators and epistolary forms; although not everyone was clear about their understanding of the term 'epistolary'. Unreliable narrators were often successfully used. Play scripts and occasional screenplays also featured, sometimes unsupported by any evidence that the student had read any examples of their chosen form. There were some very impressive monologues, often in the style of Alan Bennett.

The most popular fiction text seemed to be *The Kite Runner*, but it was pleasing to see other texts making headway and centres are to be congratulated for encouraging some impressive, but less obvious wider reading. Graham Greene and Patricia Highsmith made welcome appearances as did Oscar Wilde and Robert Louis Stevenson. There was also work inspired by Martin Amis and David Storey. A useful but reliable choice was often made from texts already listed as prescribed texts for either Component 1 or Component 2, provided they were not being studied for those exams. Although there are no prescribed texts for this coursework component, centres are advised to consider what the student will gain from reading specific texts. For example, one student chose crime

as the theme and offered an undemanding example of the genre as the stimulus text. They would have been better served by reading around the topic and perhaps finding a writer, such as Kate Atkinson, to use as a starting point.

A few students offered two fiction texts as stimuli, and some seemed to rely on single newspaper articles as the sum of their non-fiction wider reading.

Bill Bryson was one of the most referenced non-fiction writers, although the success of imitating him was often limited. The same was true of those who used Charlie Brooker as a starting point, and many students under-estimated the skill required to establish a comic or satirical voice. Joan Didion and Vera Brittain proved to be inspirational, as did Elie Wiesel and Grayson Perry.

Pairings of texts

Many centres/students offered imaginative pairings of fiction and non-fiction texts, and there is an extensive list in last year's Principal Moderator's report. One of last year's suggestions, Oscar Wilde and Grayson Perry, proved very popular this year. Other pairings which worked well this year included;

- *Regeneration/Chronicle of Youth*
- *The Lovely Bones/Our Daughter's Disappearance*
- *A Thousand Splendid Suns/My Forbidden Face*
- *A Broken World/WW1 Poetry Anthology*
- *The Turn of the Screw/The Amityville Horror*
- *The Color Purple/White Rage*
- *The Handmaid's Tale/The Bitch Doctrine*
- *The Handmaid's Tale/On the Road to Kandahar*
- *The Mousetrap/In Cold Blood*
- *Go Set a Watchman/Just Mercy*
- *We/See You Again in Pyongyang*
- *The Line of Beauty/The Life and Times of Harvey Milk*
- *American Psycho/The Psychopath Inside*
- *1984/iDisorder*
- *Pride and Prejudice/The Woman Warrior*
- *The Bloody Chamber/ Why Be Happy When You Can Be Normal?*
- *Life of Pi/The Motorcycle Diaries*
- *The Handmaid's Tale/On the Road to Kandahar*

Please note that this list is not intended to be prescriptive and students should spend time on their own wider reading to come up with suitable and inspiring text choices. It is

also intended to indicate the quality of text which might reasonably be expected at this level.

Tasks

Fiction – it is pleasing to report that many students were willing to be adventurous in their choice of literary writing. Many were encouraged to take risks and there were inspiring choices in terms of literary forms. The best work was, simply, easy and enjoyable to read. This does not mean it was not sophisticated but that it communicated its message in interesting and arresting ways. Students are advised to avoid too much (or any) dialogue as this often clogged up the narrative. The same applied to those students who felt the need to modify every noun with an adjective (or two) or who relied on adverbs at every turn. The key discriminator was the effective creation of narrative voices and an awareness of structure. The influence of stimulus texts was often evident in terms of narrative devices, for example unreliable narrators or multiple perspectives.

Non-fiction – most centres seem to have got the message about what constitutes non-fiction and a pleasing feature of this year's submissions was the number of students who took a personal approach, either offering memoirs or interviewing family members and re-shaping the material into biographies or articles. An effective guide for students is to be able to describe in a single sentence the genre, purpose and audience for their work (and putting this on the front sheet). Too many students offered all purpose 'articles' with no evidence that they really understood what they were writing, for whom or, indeed, why. Some bibliographies seemed to suggest that they had not read any articles. However, the non-fiction part of the submission was often the most engaging and moving for moderators who repeatedly commented on the power and effect of much of what they had read.

Commentaries – although worth less than half the total marks, the commentary often became the key discriminator when assessing the folders. There are plenty of exemplars available for students to use as models of how to integrate the AOs. The best examples this year were concise, focused, and able to evaluate all aspects of the student's research, as well as their shaping of the text to meet the specific requirements of a carefully identified audience. Some folders seemed to contain basic mistakes that restricted AO1 achievement, and which should have been addressed in the drafting and editing stages. Students are getting better at focusing on AO2 in terms of analysing their own writing, rather than just identifying techniques. Overlong commentaries often self – penalised and it is possible, and more likely, for students to achieve full marks by keeping within the recommended word limit. Similarly, the use of polysyllabic linguistic terms does not guarantee high marks unless there is evaluation and analysis of effect in

terms of purpose and audience. Merely identifying linguistic and literary techniques will ensure that a commentary stays in the middle levels. The following paragraph from the first Principal Moderator's Report on this component still applies:

'Weak commentaries often described the content of work or quoted at length without developed analysis at either word, sentence or whole text level. Conclusions about particular choices were often limited to superficial references about making the work easy to relate or making the reader want to read on.'

Bibliographies – these are required by the specification and are an opportunity for the moderator to gauge the extent and quality of the wider reading and research. They should include references to primary texts, as well as web sites, articles, films etc. There was often a correlation between the quality of the bibliographies (and the care with which they were presented) and the overall achievement.

Presentation of work – on the whole, this was of a very high standard and made the moderation process very straightforward. A few centres persist in submitting work that could generously be described as careless. There is sometimes evidence of the work having been rushed at the last minute. As a rule of thumb, it should be immediately clear to the moderator what they are reading, for example using basic headings and explanations.

The coursework authentication sheet is a good place to clarify genre, purpose and audience. Many centres submit fully word-processed versions of the authentication sheets, personalised by the student and including a single sentence synopsis of content and theme.

For example, a top level student included this as a helpful guide for the moderator: 'An article for the Guardian Online about the effects of domestic abuse and why it is portrayed as a taboo topic.' This might be regarded as good practice.

Most centres no longer submit journalistic work in columns, although specific styles such as scripts should adhere to genre conventions. Different fonts can be an effective way of differentiating different narrative voices.

Work should be printed single-sided, double-spaced, in a font such as Times New Roman or Arial, font size 12. It should be held together by a treasury tag. Candidate and centre numbers and names should be checked, and each piece of work should have a word count. Several centres included a check list for their students, and this ensured that these folders were fully in line with specification requirements.

Administration – the overwhelming majority of centres sent their work in plenty of time to meet the 15 May deadline, with all the requested folders, including the highest

and lowest, plus EDIs, authentication sheets completed accurately, with work arranged in uniform order, collated with treasury tags.

A few did not.

Assessment – one of the most pleasing aspects of this series was the quality and accuracy of centre assessment. There was some under- and over-rewarding of work and this was mostly in the commentaries, where observational, explanatory and narrative accounts of the content were sometimes given high marks. The criteria for Level 5 require an evaluative approach, with sophisticated structure, discussion of nuances, as well as an appropriate register and style. For creative work to achieve Level 5, it must be accurate and assured, with an individual voice suited to audience and function. However, there is no reason why outstanding work, which does not need to be perfect, cannot be awarded full marks. Centres seemed willing to use the full mark range, although responses below Level 2 were few and far between.

The purpose of annotation is to justify the awarding of marks and to allow moderators to see how decisions have been reached by centres. Where possible, two markers should read and annotate scripts, although in some centres this is not practical. The best annotations address the student's personal achievements and reflect the character and style of each submission. They should be individual rather than merely copying level descriptors from the marking criteria. Achievement in relation to specific AOs should be highlighted and supported by comments on the nature of the work. Some centres provide separate marking grids and there were many examples of such good practice. However, the quality of summative comments on the work can be very helpful in confirming the centre's judgements.

It is also worth advising centres that they are responsible for all the work in the submission, including external students, even when they have had nothing to do with the preparation of the student or the assessment of the work. It is good practice to check this work and to be prepared to change marks if it is felt that these are not accurate.

Conclusions – the majority of comments from moderators referred to how enjoyable it was to read work from students who had entered the spirit of the qualification and produced entertaining, engaging and often very moving work, supported by thoughtful evaluation of the shaping of these texts.

The Coursework Advisory Service will offer guidance on the selection and suitability of texts and tasks. Centres are also advised to look at the exemplar material on the

Pearson website as it can provide models of how to approach specific aspects of the submission.

Finally, it seems appropriate to thank centres who have clearly inspired and encouraged their students. A constant refrain from moderators was how enjoyable the moderation process was and how impressed they were by the quality, originality and rigour of much of what they read.

Pearson Education Limited. Registered company number 872828
with its registered office at 80 Strand, London, WC2R 0RL, United Kingdom