



Pearson

# Principal Moderator Report

Summer 2018

Pearson Edexcel GCE  
In English Language (9EN0\_04)  
Unit 4: Crafting Language

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## **9EN0 04 Principal Moderator report**

### **General comments**

Following completion of the 2018 series, I am pleased to confirm that there was widespread evidence of good practice amongst teachers and students in the summer 2018 submission. Thank you for your hard work. There were some instances where centres did not always succeed in maximising the potential of all their students' entries, and cases where the assessment criteria were applied too generously. This report will highlight areas of good practice, as well as identify areas that prevented students from achieving their full potential.

### **Original writing – A05**

In terms of task setting, the most successful centres managed to encourage students to choose genres for themselves. It is important that students should choose their own writing focus to suit their individual skills and interests. Centres should direct students towards those pieces which are likely to provide evidence of an ability to demonstrate expertise and creativity in the use of English.

What was abundantly clear, from work submitted by more successful centres, was that if students were encouraged to go beyond the obvious in terms of function and/or audience, then the chances of their fulfilling their potential were significantly increased. This included recognising the multiple purposes of most texts in 'real life' rather than a simple choice of inform, instruct, entertain or persuade – acknowledging that there are more effective ways of describing audiences than a basic identification by age and/or gender, and choosing viable and realistic genres for both pieces.

It was also rewarding to note that many centres had clearly followed the advice given within last year's report, via the online advisers and at face-to-face meetings, to emphasise to the students the importance of choosing 'sophisticated and challenging' tasks for their coursework. Assignments which succeed in terms of the application of the structures and conventions associated with specific and ambitious/challenging genres, and in achieving sensitive and 'highly engaging responses' to meet the requirements of the audience and function, should be awarded an A05 mark in Level 5.

Although the higher-level marks should be reserved for work that provides 'sustained' evidence of 'ambitious' and more challenging genres to appeal to a more challenging audience, it should also be emphasised that all assessments should be based on a combination of the nature of the task – the level of challenge, ambition, originality – and how successfully this is achieved. There was clear evidence from the range of folders reviewed by moderators in this series, that there were occasions when some students would have been better advised to undertake what might be regarded as a less ambitious task, but one that might result in a more convincing and successful realisation.

An example that emphasises the above points would be a centre where a significant number of students wrote opinion pieces for a newspaper website –

although this is a viable task for practising writing skills, it is unlikely to be of equal advantage to all students if imposed as final pieces for submission on a group of students of varying abilities and outlooks.

One concern that was raised by moderators was of centres encouraging students to complete fictitious interviews with real subjects – this type of writing is not permitted. Students may complete their own interviews and use the recordings/transcripts to compose their original pieces.

The selection of style models and the way in which they influenced students' writing was also commented upon by moderators. Maximum effectiveness was achieved by those students who selected pieces that contained multiple features of language, structure, register that were worthy of imitation, and/or adaptation, and that were appropriate to the final piece. The use of more appropriate style models was also beneficial when sourcing material to use within students' commentaries.

### **Original writing key points**

- Using the same style model for a number or even all, students in a centre should be avoided, as it is unlikely to be equally effective for all students. It tends to discourage students from taking ownership of their writing, as they are not fully invested in their topic.
- Students should spend time researching suitable style models and the genre and context they want to write for, as this will help ensure their pieces are well-focused.
- Suitable texts for style models should resemble the student's choice in genre and/or audience, or in certain language features.
- Poorly written and unattributed models from the internet should be avoided as these are likely to produce poorly written pieces.

### **Commentaries – A01, A02, A03, A04**

In terms of commentaries, the best examples involved prioritising the most significant features of both the original writing and style models, rather than attempting to include references to as many linguistic features as possible. Students who achieved a good range and variety in their commentary will be able to meet the requirements for the higher levels in the AOs, without having to work their way through all the methods for both pieces. Commentaries which follow a formulaic or 'checklist' method, irrespective of the nature of the task undertaken, are very unlikely to achieve top marks, as the recommended 1000 word limit for the commentary does not enable a detailed discussion of the significance of every single feature from both the candidate's original pieces and style models.

In assigning marks for commentaries, centre staff should be aware of the key characteristics that should be identifiable across the commentary under the Assessment Objectives in each level.

Some moderators expressed concern over word counts and although it is true that the word counts mentioned in the specification are recommendations, rather than absolute requirements, it should be recognised that the assessment descriptors were constructed with the recommendations in mind: 1500–2000 words total for the two original writing pieces and 1000 words for the commentary. Any significant departures from these figures may have a limiting effect on the marks that can be accurately assigned to folders.

With regards the word count for the commentaries, where there were problems in this area, they tended to be due to their excessive length, often as a result of students feeling the need to cover every aspect of every linguistic method across both pieces, rather than prioritising those that were the most salient for their particular texts. Occasionally over-long commentaries were the result of students relying on description of content, rather than analysis of language features and the reasons for including them.

### **Submission of folders and internal standardisation**

It was generally felt that centres had taken on board advice about the necessity for and the nature of annotations on students' work. The best practice in this area saw detailed comments either on the work itself or on a separate assessment sheet, in which the assessors clarified how and why marks had been allocated by referencing the relevant aspects of the marking criteria. There was also a noticeable increase in second markers' comments and initials to provide evidence of internal standardisation, which is excellent practice.

However, there were still some centres that included little or no annotation of any sort, and it should be remembered that the Code of Practice for A Level states that the awarding body requires internal assessors to show clearly how the marks have been awarded in relation to the marking criteria defined in the specification. Those that just quoted directly from the marking criteria with no guidance to the moderator as to how it was relevant to the specific assignment, and those on which any comments written were directed to the student, rather than the moderator, were also not so helpful.

### **Administration**

As with the previous series, the vast majority of submissions arrived punctually, in good order, and containing all the necessary constituent parts. However, there were some submissions with administrative issues.

- Ideally, folders should be organised as follows: completed non-examination assessment authentication sheet, original writing (piece one), original writing (piece two), commentary. It is also helpful to moderators if each part is clearly identified/headed. The recommended way of keeping folders together is via treasury tags.

The submission to the moderator must include the following:

- the sample of students' work indicated by ticks against candidate names on Edexcel Online (each student's work with the authentication sheet attached to the front using a treasury tag). If any student has been withdrawn or if they have an incomplete submission, a replacement folder along with a covering note for the moderator
- in addition to the sample, the work of the highest and lowest-scoring students (if either were already in the sample, please include additional folders at similar levels)
- a print out of the marks entered for the whole cohort from Edexcel Online
- a note to the moderator if you are a 'lone teacher' in a centre to explain that there will not be evidence of internal moderation on the sample submitted
- centres are not required to submit a 'centre authentication sheet' signed by all teachers assessing NEA. The only authentication sheets required are those for each individual candidate.

While errors of addition, missing signatures or other administrative inaccuracies were by no means widespread this series, where they did occur, they were likely to cause delays to the moderation process.

Overall, the vast majority of centres, teachers and students provided moderators with ample evidence of a wide range and variety of writing tasks undertaken with skill and imagination, combined with incisive reflections on the writing process.

Finally, I would like to add my thanks to all those involved in making this moderation series both successful and enjoyable and I wish you a very successful 2018/19 academic year.