

Version



**General Certificate of Education (A-level)  
June 2011**

**English Language and Literature      ELLA2  
A**

**(Specification 2720)**

**Unit 2: Analysing Speech and Its  
Representation**

***Report on the Examination***

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## General

Candidates are required to answer two questions. The first question requires an analytical comparison of unseen spoken texts. Candidates are asked to focus on two pieces of speech, one transcribed spontaneous speech and the second prepared speech or another form of speech representation from a non-literary context

The second section of the paper requires the candidate to focus on the way speech is used and represented in an extract from the set text they have studied as well as to consider particular stylistic and thematic matters relevant to the particular text.

These questions test the ability of candidates to:

- use appropriate terminology to support their analysis
- compare different kinds of spoken texts
- analyse set texts with reference to representation of speech as well as exploration of stylistic and thematic issues
- write fluently and coherently.

Successful candidates:

- showed clear and detailed knowledge and understanding of speech features and their effects
- identified specific features, gave examples of them and explained the effects created
- offered an integrated comparison of the two speech texts
- showed detailed analysis of specific features of language and the effects created
- supported their ideas with examples and comment
- used the appropriate terminology to describe the features they identified
- wrote fluently and accurately
- answered the question.

Less successful candidates:

- offered general comments about speech without giving examples or analysing the effects created
- did not compare the texts in Section A
- did not sustain a clear focus on the question
- offered general comments rather than detailed analysis of the text passage
- ignored the set passages or paid them scant regard and wrote about other parts of the text of their own choosing
- did not focus closely enough on the question
- did not support or illustrate their comments
- did not use a language or terminology appropriate to literary and linguistic study
- showed basic technical inaccuracies in their writing.

## Section A: Analysing Speech

The overall topic was well received and both extracts gave ample opportunities for candidates to express their skills in analysing different types of speech, both spontaneous and prepared.

Successful candidates continued to show an excellent grasp of relevant terminology, and were able to construct an argument which merged analysis of features with an understanding of attitudes and a secure grasp of context. Clear comparisons were often a feature of the work of better candidates, and these were frequently combined with a balanced analysis across the two extracts.

Some candidates tended to focus their attention mainly on Text A and many features of Text B were left unexplored, especially where attitudes were concerned. Candidates seemed more comfortable in examining the relationship between Patsy and Phil over the more complex and embedded attitudes emerging from Text B. However, many candidates were able to explore the variations in lexis offered by B and compared them well with the vocabulary displayed in A.

Some candidates were rather taken aback by the long response to Phil's question and this led to a repetitive commentary on Patsy's "monologue" with limited development of her attitudes – mainly fear, being afraid, petrified and having a dislike or hatred for spiders. More perceptive candidates, though, detected rather more in Patsy's response, such as her use of hyperbole, dynamic verbs, adjectives, emphasis, similes, repetition, colloquial language and so on. It is worth noting that spontaneous does not always mean a balanced exchange between speakers and candidates should be prepared to handle a variety of contexts. Some candidates wasted precious time on pointless conjecture about where Patsy was from and came up with ideas ranging from Liverpool to Newcastle and Somerset to Yorkshire. It should be stressed to candidates that there will never be a question that requires them to identify where the speaker(s) comes from and efforts to try and do this are a complete waste of time.

Other areas of weakness in candidates' responses included significantly more attention being given to one text than the other. Often these responses presented detailed analysis of all speech features and attitudes in A followed by very general comments on B where comparisons were mainly negative, pointing out what was in A but wasn't in B.

In some there was a failure to discuss the structure of B in terms of the balance between developing argument and supporting evidence. The result of this was that too many candidates used the quotation from Ben Clarke as their only source of examples and, indeed, as defining the 'attitude' of B.

Another frequent feature of the weaker response was the listing and identifying of a range of speech and style features but offering no comment or analysis or relying on isolated words taken out of context as evidence.

It was disappointing to note that examiners commented on an increase in candidates using theoretical concepts as the key to their analyses of the texts. Almost always, the use of theoretical concepts, half understood and inappropriately applied in analysing the texts, adds little or nothing to a response. Very often they lead to generalised comments that are detrimental to the quality of the response and therefore the candidate's chances of achieving the grade that they want, or deserve. Fortunately such responses are still the exception rather than the norm.

## **Section B: Analysing the Representation of Speech**

### **Question 2: *Great Expectations***

The extract proved a fruitful passage for analysis, with many stylistic features to draw on. Candidates were able to express a range of ideas about the relationship between Estella and Miss Havisham, and most showed a good grasp of this relationship within the wider text. Speech features were commented on, as were a good range of rhetorical features – namely, repetition, questions and exclamations and various kinds of imagery. Overall there was some good, close analysis of language features with evident grasp of both the extract and the overall text.

### **Question 3: *Eden Close***

Overall this question was done well with candidates able to distinguish between Andrew's attitudes to his wife and his son, and compare it with his attitude, often to Eden, in another episode. Generally candidates were able to use the extract effectively for the purpose of analysing the representation of speech and some also focused on Shreve's narrative techniques. Candidates often commented well on features such as the metaphor "floods", the short sentences, "Andrew winces", the brief "Drag and exhale", the simile and effect of Billy's sigh and Andrew's change of tone in talking to Billy.

### **Question 4: *The Lovely Bones***

*The Lovely Bones* continues to be a very popular text, and most candidates had clearly enjoyed the novel and were able to write at length about the 'character' of Grandma Lynn. Sadly, many merely produced extensive commentaries upon her various traits and her relationship with members of the family, but neglected to analyse the given extract with a view to exploring Sebald's use of "representations of speech and other stylistic techniques". It was also clear from these candidates' responses to Section A that most had all the terminology and critical tools to examine these features but failed to apply them to the literary extract. Overall, this tendency to comment on Grandma Lynn as a character rather than to undertake language analysis limited the language features explored and therefore the marks gained.

### **Question 5: *Enduring Love***

Although some candidates focused well on the idea of a 'sense of menace' and analysed effectively McEwan's presentation of Joe's thoughts, the physical description of Parry and Clarissa's reaction, others seemed to want to write about tension. Certainly tension is a part of the menace, but candidates tended to write underdeveloped responses if they ignored the weird psychotic topic shifts in Parry's speech, his physical manifestations of unpredictability (sweat, tossed his head from side to side, measured movements). Some considered Joe's menace (his gun, his yawning, his minimal comments) in Parry's eyes.

### **Question 6: *Waiting for Godot***

Few answers were seen on this text, but overall candidates focused effectively on the idea of hopelessness and picked out features such as the negative vocabulary, the connotations of death and the suggestion of suicide and that even that is not possible. A few candidates interpreted 'hopelessness' as 'being hopeless' and wrote about what 'hopeless' characters Vladimir and Estragon are but unfortunately this interpretation tended to miss the main point of the question.

### **Question 7: *The Caretaker***

Few answers were seen on this text and of those that were most seemed to focus mainly on the shoes and Aston's response to them. Some commented on points such as Davies's quibble over shoe lace colour, the use of demotic language and Davies's complaints about Aston. Weaker candidates found difficulty in understanding the interaction between the two characters and Pinter's style in general.

**Question 8: *Othello***

This continues to be a very popular text, and candidates seemed to welcome the opportunity here to write about *Othello*, although some had rather confused notions concerning the context of the passage. Some clear language analysis and some close focus on text examples were seen and most had a good grasp of *Othello*'s character, although sometimes the interpretation was quite simplistic. Some were drawn into shifting the focus onto Iago but most were able to comment meaningfully on the language used in the passage, and on the wider characterization across the play. It was interesting to note how many differing responses to *Othello* this extract provoked, within the spectrum of his controlled authority to threatening rage. It was encouraging to see some candidates writing fluently and meaningfully about dramatic irony.

**Question 9: *Equus***

Few responses were seen on this text.

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