

GCE AS English Language

Case Study 2

Wickersley Comprehensive

Unit 2 Coursework

Exploring the Writing Process

Edexcel is grateful to the staff and students for their collaboration in supplying guidance and examples of student work

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PowerPoint Presentations available with this document

PowerPoint 1: Journalism Interview

PowerPoint 2: Narrative Writing presentation: Dramatic Monologue PowerPoint

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PowerPoint 6: Scripted Presentation

PowerPoint 7: Commentaries for Monologue/Scripted Presentation

Case Study 2: Introduction.

The second Case Study comes from Wickersley Comprehensive School in Rotherham, South Yorkshire. The person responsible for coordinating the A level English Language course is Katie Walker. The materials she has put together for this case study make up a scheme of work covering all four tasks for unit 2. The lessons are given in the form of PowerPoint Presentations with links to various web sites and to the student book. Each PowerPoint presentation includes starters, key terms, examples and exercises involving pair and group work. The scheme of work tackles each task in a systematic way, using short texts to illustrate key aspects of the genre being studied and moving on to longer texts while building up confidence with a range of pair and group activities. The scheme also includes two PowerPoint presentations which take candidates through the particularly challenging process of writing a commentary on their work.

In common with Case study 1 this scheme links the teaching of the writing tasks with the students' developing awareness of linguistic concepts and terminology. Key terms and concepts are built into the preparation for the various tasks and there are checklists of all relevant terms. This not only gives them a framework to discuss their own writing analytically in their commentaries, but it also supports learning for Unit 1, Language Today. The scheme also builds into the lessons opportunities for students to use the assessment objectives so that they become familiar with the mark scheme that will be used to assess their own work.

The textbook referred to in the lessons, as with case study 1, is the Edexcel AS English Language Student Book by Alison Ross, published by Pearson. The examples of student's journalism interviews, oral narratives and written narratives are from the Edexcel website as are the examiner's comments on these scripts (1).

Wickersley Comprehensive School Overview



Wickersley is a large 11 to 18 comprehensive with over 1,900 students. It has a very successful sixth form with 233 students in year 12 and 178 in year 13. The school was judged to be 'outstanding' in the most recent Ofsted inspection. English Literature and English Language are both popular subjects. Over the last two years four students went on to study English at university. The present year 12 has 44 students (29 girls, 15 boys) taking English Language and there are 38 taking A2 in year 13 (25 girls, 13 boys). There are three groups in each year. The course is taught by a team of five teachers.

Katie Walker says:

"We've managed to get students up to A grade in all of the coursework tasks each year however, I think this year we're going to excel ourselves because the focus has been heavily on getting the oral transcripts right and teaching the techniques properly first. I'd say the best journalism comes from an interview with an everyday person who has perhaps an interesting opinion or job that links with the current issues in society. The best narratives come from a small personal memory. The best monologues are often believable everyday characters – not with some outlandish experience or tragedy."



We are extremely grateful to Katie for allowing us to use these materials.

Writing for a Reading Audience

The first set of lessons (PowerPoint 1) introduces students to the skills and concepts they will need to approach the Journalism Interview. It starts with getting the students to interview each other in pairs and uses this as a way into considering questioning strategies such as the use of open and closed questions. The students are then given extracts of interviews from the textbook to examine. Once the students are engaged and understand the task, the materials begin to focus on two key areas which students need to master to do well in it. The first concerns the variety of ways speech can be represented in an interview. The materials refer to examples in the student book to illustrate how speech might be represented using direct speech, indirect speech, free indirect speech and Narrative Report of a Speech Act (NRSA). The second area is being aware of how the writer or journalist can shape the reader's perspective of the subject (finding an angle). Students need to have thought about the angle they will use to 'present' the subject of their interview. At Wickersley they are taught about how authorial intervention, inquirers and Narrative Report of Action (NRA) can shape reader's perspective on the subject of the interview. While working through the lessons and examples the students fill in a key terms sheet (appendix 1). By covering these two key areas the centre ensures that candidates have knowledge of the skills and concepts they need to attain the higher bands of the marking criteria for A04. Finally for this task students are given copies of candidates' work from the Edexcel website with copies of the assessment objectives and asked to assess them. They then compare their assessment with that of the Principal Moderator also on the website.

One of the strengths of this centre's approach to Narrative Writing (PowerPoint 2) is that it keeps the relationship between the oral narrative and the written narrative in focus throughout. The centre begins by looking at oral narratives and asking students to generate their own anecdotes. It introduces Labov's work on the structure of oral narratives as a way of helping them become aware of recognisable narrative patterns. It then moves on to asking students to consider and evaluate different ways of beginning and ending a narrative with examples from the textbook. The difference between 'showing' and 'telling' is taught by asking students to convert short 'telling' statements into 'showing' statements. Students are then introduced to two complete written narratives, one a

coursework submission by a former student, 'Black Magic Woman' (appendix 4) and the other, a short story by John Ravenscroft, 'Fishing for Jasmine' (2). Students are given a framework of questions with which to identify and comment on the narrative strategies used in these stories. They then experiment with changing the person or the point of view of the opening paragraphs. In the next lesson the students' attention is returned to the oral narrative and they are asked to consider ways the oral narratives in the textbook might be turned into effective written narratives. At the end of this section students are again given examples of student narratives, oral and written, from the Edexcel website and asked to assess them using the assessment criteria as they did with the Journalism Interview examples.

A checklist of key terms for both tasks for writing for a reading audience is given on a separate PowerPoint (PowerPoint 3).

The centre teaches the commentary for the two tasks together by going through a series of short extracts from both tasks and annotating the features which might be mentioned in a commentary. (PowerPoint 4) The key constituents of language are stressed here. Students are given a final exercise to help them focus on the need for precision when writing commentaries.

Writing for a Listening Audience

The centre starts the Dramatic Monologue (PowerPoint 5) by getting students to think up characters and develop 'mini-monologues' in pairs and then 'performing' them to each other. It then uses some examples of monologues by Peter Cook (see links in the slide show) to demonstrate the idea of how idiolect and paralinguistic features can be used to suggest character and to create dramatic tension and humour. The students then look at a further series of monologues from Teachers TV and are introduced to idea of creating a 'hook' to capture the listener's attention and to the concepts of 'subtext', 'foreshadowing' and 'dramatic irony'. There is a useful chart for students to use to explore these ideas in relation to the examples. Students are encouraged to think about context. They are asked to consider whether their monologue would appear on radio, TV or stage and how that might affect the way it was written. One of the strengths of the way the dramatic monologue is taught at Wickersley is the clear focus on the monologue as a performance and the way that students are encouraged to think about the effect their monologues will have on an audience.

The work on scripted presentation (PowerPoint 6) begins by asking students to come up with ideas for key language issues that could be subjects for presentations. It then asks students to consider how a speech might be structured and how a listener's attention can be held. Students look at the extract from Jean Aitchison's Reith Lecture in the student book as well as some examples of presentations from the website www.ted.com and a talk on phonics by Michael Rosen on Teachers TV (see links in the slide show for urls). Students are helped to understand how to structure a scripted presentation and what techniques will engage an audience by analysing and evaluating the methods used by the speakers in these examples. Visual aids are discussed and students are encouraged to think of engaging and useful ways of clarifying their topics visually. As with the monologue there is a strong emphasis here on purpose and audience.

The final PowerPoint presentation (PowerPoint 7) addresses the commentaries for the monologue and the scripted presentation. Like the earlier lessons on writing commentaries the scheme uses

specific annotated examples from both writing for listening tasks as a way of showing what sort of issues might be tackled in an effective commentary.

Finally students are asked to evaluate ideas for speeches as a preparation for coming up with their own ideas.

(1) <http://www.edexcel.com/quals/gce/gce08/english/lang/Pages/default.aspx>

(2) Not reproduced here. It can be found at :-

<http://www.eastoftheweb.com/short-stories/UBooks/FishJasm.shtml>

Appendix 1: **Key Terms for Journalism Interviews**

You'll need these to use in your commentaries so make sure you know what each is!

Term	Definition
Questions: Open	
Closed	
Key Terminology: Publication	
Interviewee	
Types of speech: Free Direct Speech	
Direct Speech	
Indirect Speech/Reported Speech	
Free Indirect Speech	

Narrative summary of speech act	
Techniques: Inquit	
Angle	

Appendix 2: **Key Terms for Narrative Writing**

You'll need these to use in your commentaries so make sure you know what each is!

Term	Definition
Story beginnings: Orientation	
Abstract	
In Medias Res	
In Ultimas Res	
Story endings: Closure	
Summary	
Moral	
Writing Style: First Person narrative	
Voice	
Human Limitation	
Third Person narrative	
Omniscient narrator	
Techniques: Showing	
Telling	
Chronology	
Anachrony	
Inciting Moment	
Labov's oral narrative structure: Abstract	
Orientation	

Complicating Action	
Evaluation	
Resolution	
Coda	
Wolfson's Performance Features: Direct Speech	
Asides	
Repetition	
Expressive Sounds	
Sound Effects	
Motions and Gestures	
Conversational Historic Present	

Appendix 3

Key Terms for Dramatic Monologues

You'll need these to use in your commentaries so make sure you know what each is!

Term	Definition
Idiolect	
Sub-text	
The Hook	

Foreshadowing	
Dramatic Irony	

Appendix 4

“Black Magic Woman”

When a bullet enters you're body it enters your thoughts as well. It messes with them and manipulates them and turns them to things you wouldn't expect.

Bang. She'd slammed the car door again. Not intentionally but she does it all the time. She's not necessarily a strong lady, she just has a good throwing arm. I told her that every time she slams my car door one of those African orphans you see on those appeals dies. I don't think she found it as funny as I did, but nevertheless I bet you next time she does it I'll see a little flicker of guilt in her eye. The engine started up nicely, it always did, a gorgeous rumble followed by a soft, gentle hum. I always felt proud of my car, the neighbours all seemed to neglect theirs, but mine was a statement, a statement that said, “Hey look at me, I take care of my stuff you lazy bastards” and over the years I think they've got the message.

We were heading to the shop, it doesn't matter which one, if it sells food at a fair price then who gives a monkeys. It was usually a trip of about fifteen minutes to get there and today was no exception, but the only problem with those fifteen minutes is that each week, before we leave the house she picks up her “Santana: Greatest Hits” CD and puts it on. Originally I liked Santana and would even go as far to say that I was a fan but believe me, we've made this shopping trip now every week for the past five years and if I hear “Black magic woman” one last time I may have to break my ears. So I told her, I told her that every time she played “Freakin' Black Magic Woman”, Mr. Carlos Santana aged by one year. She

scowled at me and I laughed, I think she quite fancies ole' Carlos. Anyway we'd just about got up to "Gypsy Woman" on the CD before we pulled into one of the shop's many empty parking spaces. It seems a bit odd but at that moment I stood and looked at the relatively small supermarket cowering in front of us and had a sudden urge to just get back in the car and drive straight to the new supermarket that had just been built a half-mile down the road, but in the end my pity won me over, as it always did, the shop was failing and its owners were losing money, so why not make use of the "Close to entrance parking spaces" that were now so frequently available and do a little shopping in the process.

Bang. She'd slammed the car door again so I quickly spun round and tried to catch the flicker of guilt in her eyes, there was none. I can't deny that I was a little disappointed, maybe I should have chosen kittens instead of orphans. And believe me I was very close to putting that idea to her when she looked me straight in the eyes and said she was sorry. So I smiled at her and took her hand and walked off into the shop.

There was only one person working in the shop that day and his name was Harold (it said so on his badge) and he was stood manning the till. It could be a sham for all we know I told her, his name might not be Harold, it could be anything, but to be honest she was too busy perusing the courgettes to give a toss, I bet if Santana had made that point about the badge she'd have listened. The annoying thing is that I used to play guitar, but she never seemed that bothered, maybe I'm not Spanish enough to make playing the guitar sexy. Anyhow she found the courgette she wanted and so we moved on. As we were walking along she slowly began to chat about the possibility of having her parents over to stay sometime soon knowing full well that the days they were with us would be a delicious mixture of awkward silences between me and her father and a serious amount of inane gossiping between her and her mother, it was always worth it though just to show off the garden.

Bang. I looked behind me and saw that some little kid had gone hurtling around the corner and run head first into one of those "Freshly baked" stands. He stood up and wobbled a bit and we went over to see if he was alright, but then his mum emerged from around a nearby isle and she quickly scooped her son up off the floor and stood him upright. The mother quickly began introducing herself and began apologising to us to which we politely replied that we didn't need an apology. And just as we were about to turn around and carry on shopping we saw Harold (if that is your real name) quickly leave the till and come racing over to the scene of turmoil and begin partaking in a heated discussion with the mother. The last we saw of her was her angrily storming past us through the aisles and out the exit with what looked like a very dazed young boy in tow. Harold was cleaning up the mess. As we carried on shopping we began reckoning that now that the lady and her son had left we were the only shoppers remaining.

We were now on the far opposite side of the shop in the freezer section and she didn't know whether she wanted to get chicken or pork. I asked her which one would Santana like most, this time she giggled and told me to shut up and that he was twice the man I would ever be. I smiled back, her laugh was always so genuine, so warm.

Bang. Our smiles dropped immediately, she had reckoned the sound before I did and was already half-way down the aisle leading towards the tills before I realised what was happening. I didn't want her to go down there, I'd have given anything at that point for her

just to have stayed in the car with her beloved Santana and deliberated over the chicken or pork dilemma, but I couldn't. I raced after her and saw her standing motionless at the end of the isle. She was staring at Harold. Oh no. He was slumped back in his chair, his head flung backwards and his chest covered with a dark velvet red. He was dead and we could do nothing. Behind the till was a mask, a mask with a body, a mask with a brain, a mask with a gun. That mask was frantically piling money from the till into a rucksack. That mask was a killer and she knew it. She screamed. The mask fixed his eyes on her, he hated her and he didn't even know her. I quickly grabbed for her and pushed her behind me and fixed my eyes on his. He told her to get on the floor. She did as he asked. His gun was now pointing at me, his gun, his scythe. He asked me her name and I told him. He asked me if I loved her and I told him I loved her more than anything else on this planet. He finished filling the bag and climbed over the counter towards me, the gun that was still pointed at my chest was dancing in his hands. I asked him to leave and we would not ring the police. She was crying. He looked at her and then looked back to me. His voice lowered and he asked me why life was so short but death was so long, why life was so fragile but why death was so resilient, so unbreakable. I didn't answer. It was simple he said, because death was a gift.

Bang. When a bullet enters you're body it enters you're thoughts as well. It messes with them and manipulates them and turns them to things that are most important. For me my thoughts were driven to her. I'd seen the flash and heard the shot and saw him run out into the late afternoon sun. I saw his silhouette move further and further away in a haze of golden light as though god himself were guiding him to safety, but I didn't care. I concentrated on her, on her face, on her eyes and on her voice, each one more precious to me now than anything else on earth. And as I looked at her I remembered all the times she'd ever smiled and I wanted to see her smile now, just that one thing that I could remember, that one thing that I would last the test of time and stay with me forever.

It was getting darker now and I was feeling tired and cold, her tears painted bright colours on her cheeks and I thought of how much I would miss her. She wasn't shouting anymore, just crying, and as I felt her warm hands touch my cheek, I smiled. She smiled back.