Examiners' Report
June 2018

GCE English Language 8EN0 01

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Introduction

In this, the third year of the AS English Language specification, examiners agreed that candidates were confident in their approach to the examination. It was evident that the majority of candidates had been well-prepared and came with a useful 'toolkit' of linguistic terms and concepts which enabled them to deal with any text with which they were presented.

This year in the Language and Context section, candidates were asked to write an extended comparative response exploring how contextual factors affect language choices in three short texts related to gardens and gardening. In the Language and Identity section, candidates were asked to explore how language is used to reflect and construct corporate identity in a passage from a website promoting a soft drink.

In this unit as a whole, examiners expected candidates to show the ability to:

- apply analysis across data

- support this analysis with a range of relevant examples

- organise the structure of their response and write in an appropriate register and style

- use and apply linguistic terminology accurately

- show knowledge of contextual factors and link this knowledge to the construction of meaning

- apply relevant theories, concepts and methods to the data

- apply critical skills to description, analysis and evaluation of a range of data

Examiners reported that candidates gave equal attention to both sections this year and in general gave full and detailed responses to both questions. The fact that the text involved the construction of a corporate identity did not appear to present any difficulties for candidates.

As in previous examinations, the most successful candidates were those who kept the focus firmly on the use of language. They were precise and accurate in their use of linguistic terminology and were able to make use of relevant frameworks and levels. They were also able to support their analysis by referring to well-chosen examples. Weaker candidates showed looser, less accurate use of linguistic terminology and tended to be descriptive rather than analytical in their comments. In some cases, analysis was over simplistic and failed to do justice to the complexity of the texts. Weaker candidates were sometimes distracted by irrelevant speculation (such as the gender of the speaker in Question 1, Text A) or wasted time repeating information provided in the rubric.

Question 1

Examiners reported that most candidates responded well to this question and were able to comment on how the language used in the texts was influenced by contextual factors. The majority of candidates were successful in adopting a comparative approach. This year, candidates were asked to comment on three pieces of data related to gardens and gardening. The texts included a transcript of a talk on a heritage garden, an extract from a 1978 book on self-sufficiency in gardening and an extract from a website intended to help parents interest children in gardening. In responding to this question candidates were assessed according to their ability to fulfil the following assessment objectives

- Applying appropriate methods of language analysis, using associated terminology and coherent written expression

- Analysing and evaluating how contextual factors and language features are associated with the construction of meaning

- Exploring connections across texts, informed by linguistic concepts and methods

All candidates were able to access the data confidently in Texts A and C. However the form and function of the 'historical' text, Text B, seemed unfamiliar to some candidates, and in conjunction with the slightly 'dated' language features, it meant some candidates struggled to identify the function and audience. Some candidates, for example, were misled by the elements of narrative in the text into assuming the text work was a work of fiction. However, most candidates identified features that indicated a pre-planned, carefully structured piece of writing. Mode was generally handled well across all texts and candidates were able to comment on the features which identified the first text as semi-spontaneous, the second as carefully structured and organised and the third as digital communication on the internet. Almost all candidates identified the non-fluency features in Text A and most attributed them to nervousness on the part of the speaker. The most able candidates were able to recognise that the transcript was fairly typical of partially-planned, relatively informal speech which included some elements of spontaneity. Successful candidates were able to comment on the way the writers of Text C incorporated features such as elision, informal lexis and linguistic patterning to establish empathy with the audience. In a similar way, successful candidates were able to comment on audience across texts effectively. They identified the contrast between the more clearly defined audience of Text C and the general audiences of Texts A and B and were able to comment on how this influenced linguistic choice in the texts. When considering 'field', weaker candidates often had an undeveloped concept of 'field' as 'subject'. This sometimes prevented them taking their analysis beyond the obvious. For example, one candidate wrote "the field of Text A is the history of a walled garden", and another wrote, "the field of Text C is a book about self-sufficiency in gardening". Stronger candidates were able to identify lexical items from a variety of fields within each text, such as the use of dates and historical periods in Text A and the use of language from the field of warfare in Text B ("battle of the weeds").

Candidates referred to a range of issues and theories in their answers. Reference was made to Grice's maxims, Language and Power (Fairclough usually) , Accommodation Theory (Giles), Politeness Theory Brown and Levinson) and various aspects of gender theory. It is worth reaffirming here that the ability to comment on theories and concepts is only rewarded with assessment objective 4 which relates to comparisons across texts. Candidate are therefore advised when considering relevant theories and concepts that it is best to do so in the context of differences and similarities across texts. For example, when considering the different levels of formality between Texts A and C and Text B, some candidates used the framework of accommodation theory as a way of discussing the differences.

Similarly, when looking at the different attitudes to gender in Texts B and C, many candidates found it helpful to refer to theories of gender.

Scripts are assessed in terms of levels. There are five with level five being the highest. This script was awarded a mark in the middle of level five.

1   Texts A–C all focus on gardens or gardening.

Analyse and compare how contextual factors affect language choices in these texts.

You should refer to **any relevant language frameworks and levels** to support your answer and consider:

- mode
- field
- function
- audience.

(25)

Both texts A and C reflect a relationship between the speaker/ writer and the audience, but in different ways due to their contrasting modes. In text A, the speaker y frequently uses direct address 'you' and the inclusive first person plural pronoun 'we' which reflects how he is communicating with his audience face to face, and engaging their interest by referencing them

throughout his speech. The speaker also adopts positive politeness strategies in lexical choices such as "thank you" which show his consideration for the audience in a way thats both formal, as the audience are strangers to him, yet open and relaxed. He also uses opressive discourse in the ~~phrase~~ declarative "I'd like to ..." to imply that he is asking the permission of his audience when in reality to speak he is not expecting their direct aproval, to again have a polite and friendly relationship with his audience and not an authoritative one.

Text C also reflects a relationship between writer and audience however is a lot more casual and personal in register, as unlike the audience of text A, the readers of 'netmums' are typically a regular audience who have built a community together already across the sight. This is reflected in colloquialisms such as "kids", and familiar colloquial ~~phrases~~ declarative "Oldie but goodie". Furthermore, the use of rhyme in the previous example and uses of alliteration: 'top tips" and "nine nifty ways" create a fun and engaging tenor of discourse reflective of the personality of the online community.

On the other hand, text B is a lot more formal and professional, and the lexical choices and structure do not suggest a personal relationship between writer and reader. While the speakers in texts A and C use direct adress "you" in their discours, text B uses third person pronouns "he" ~~a~~., "a man" and "the gardener". ~~The writer of text B has distanced~~ Text Bs formality and sophistication is also reflected in his use of polysyllabic

lexis "philosophical gardener" and sophisticated and conventional grammar "good for his early ~~seed~~ seed-beds; the draught that is shrivelling his summer lettuces..." It seems the writer's sophisticated techniques are to give himself overt prestige, which is appropriate for the context of the function as he is wanting to suggest advice and pass on knowledge. he must appear very knowledgeable and trustworthy in the field. This is very different to text C, where the context of the audience means the writer does not want to appear above the readers, but of equal power: 'we're all in this together' style of a community, and so converges to the language and references of parent-hood with "Blue Peter" and "your kids".

Both A and C display repetition in their language. In the case of text A this is a convention of the spoken mode, as the speaker has not pre-planned his speech and so stops and starts: "talk about the way gardens... talk about the way gardens..." The contracted forms "didn't" and "I'd" as well as filler "um" are also consequence of the spoken mode. On the other hand, the repetition in text C "grow, grow, grow" are used purposefully to engage the reader with the fun tenor of discourse and represent ~~the~~ visually the flowers growing. The graphology of "STUNNING" is also a choice by the writer to engage with the reader by reflecting their own excitement, again reinforcing the

communal relationship between them, and displaying graphological techniques typical of a blog such as this.

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Examiner Tip

Keep AO4 in mind from the beginning. Always make sure you refer to at least one other text in every paragraph. Remember to use terms such as 'similarly', 'in contrast',' unlike text A', 'on the other hand', 'In a different way from ...' It can be helpful to begin each paragraph with some element of comparison.

This candidate achieved a mark in the middle of level 4.

1 Texts A–C all focus on gardens or gardening.

Analyse and compare how contextual factors affect language choices in these texts.

You should refer to **any relevant language frameworks and levels** to support your answer and consider:

- mode
- field
- function
- audience.

(25)

Texts A-C all have a similar field of gardening, but the mode of each text is different. Text A is spoken, with the function of informing and educating people who are interested in gardens. Tex B is written and has a function of entertaining. Text C is multimodal, advising the audience who are people that are interested in gardens also.

Texts^A through to C all share a similar field, which can be exemplified through the use of subject specific lexis like <garden>, <crop>, <plant> and <seeds>. These subject specific lexis help create a semantic field of gardening. In addition to this, all the texts use modified noun phrases to help add description and detail about the topic, and in this case, gardening. However the way each text uses it is different, having a different affect on the audience.

For example, in text A, the modified noun phrase that is used is <an older garden> using the article <an> and the comparative adjective <older> to help describe

the garden, giving the audience, who are historian and garden lovers given by the lexis <victorian> and <history>, more content knowledge. In addition to this, <special knowledge> is also an example of a modified noun phrase, which helps keep the audience engaged as they are keeping them intreigued by using the adjective <special>.

In text B, the modified noun phrases that are used are <peculiar weather> and <vital operation>. In these examples both the modifiers are adjectives, both complex adjectives. The adjective <perculiar> is a very complex word, which is not normally used that often, but because of this the audience emphasises it even more because not many people use it, keeping them engaged as it's a story. The other adjective <vital> also has the same effect as it gives the audience a sense of urgency, keeping them engaged, wanting to find out what follows.

In text C, <an old classic idea from Blue Peter> is the modified noun phrase that is used, <an> being the article, <old classic> being the modifier but also <from Blue Peter> is also acting like a modifier too. The adjectives <old> and <classic> help describe the noun <idea> but the preposition <from Blue Peter> tells the audience where the <idea> is from, which means this is context dependent. The audience, who are parents that have gardens, must know what Blue Peter is to understand where they have gotten the idea from. The lexi <kids> is used throughout the text to

help us understand who the audience is.

Text A, is also context dependent and this is shown through the phrase <this garden> using the determiner <this> meaning that the audience would have to know what the speaker is refering to, which is shared knowledge. As of this, the function of the text can also be referential language, as the speaker is praiding the listener with objects or abstract concepts, while the listener has knowledge about the context.

Text B is very different to text A and C mode wise. Eventhough they all have seperate modes. Text A being spoken as it's a talk, text B being written as its a story and text C being multi-modal because it's a website. However, both text A and C have a lower degree of formality compared to text B. In text A, this is demonstrated through the use of contractions like <I'd> and <we've>, and the sentence starters with the conjuction <and>. As it is very informal, we can suggest that the audience do not have a high status and are just ordinary people otherwise, the degree of formality would be high. Furthermore, the use of fillers <um>, <er> and false starts <tha> and <thr>. These languistic features help highlight the spontaneous side of the text, emphasising that it is spoken, and talking infront of a group of people is nerve racking and scary so its expected to crumble a bit.

Similarily, text C also has low degree of

formality which is exemplified through the use of contractions again like <there's> but also through the lexi <kids> These features help demonstrate informality because they show that they are colloquial. It may be planned but it's still laid back. The website could have chosen to put <children> instead of <kids> but they didn't because they wanted to be liked from the audience. This is known as a positive face. Both text A and C demonstrate a positive through positive politeness strategies such as colloquial language i.e. contractions, shared lexis.

However, text B shares quite a negative face, which is when you don't have the need to be liked by others. This is shown through negative politeness strategies like formal language, jargons etc. Examples include <peculiar>, <scarcely> and <philosophical>. These are adjectives and adverbs which are all polysylabic, increasing the degree of formality, which also creates an unequal footing between the writer and the audience.

There is consistent analysis and relevant examples given. There is an accurate use of terminology and consistent awareness of contextual factors and language features. The response also displays a consistent awareness of connections across the data. However, the analysis falls short of being discriminating. Towards the beginning of the response, the candidate identifies a common feature, 'modified noun phrases' and proceeds to look at how they are used across the texts. This is an effective strategy to keep the focus on comparisons across texts. However, the candidate struggles to find anything significant to say about the use of noun phrases other than to identify the basic structure. There was an opportunity, for example, to consider the use of the indefinite article in the noun phrases in Text B ('a man', 'a city') or the use of an 'empty adjective' in Text C ('STUNNING flowers') but this is not explored. The candidate's understanding of the function of Text B is flawed as he identifies it as a 'story'. Furthermore, the identification of the purpose of this text as "entertaining" is a limited description that fails to take on board other purposes of the text. In discussing the assumptions built into Text C, however, the candidate does begin to comment on pragmatic elements within the text and hints at the extent to which the text depends on pre-supposition. The candidate correctly identifies certain context dependent references in Text A. However, the candidate does not take the opportunity to look beyond the use of the word 'this' to consider other deictic aspects of the speech.

At the end, the candidate returns to an overview of the three texts in terms of formality and correctly identifies features such as elision as a marker of informal discourse and links this to purpose and audience and the construction of meaning. There is a reference to politeness strategies and face theory in the context of identifying links between Texts A and C and contrasts between these Texts and Text B. However, the opportunity to explain these concepts and the theory behind them was not taken

Overall, this is a good level 4 with detailed analysis, accurate use of terminology and consistent focus on context and on comparison across texts. The response could have been improved by a more accurate and considered analysis of purpose and audience, especially on Text B. The identification of the piece as a story, to entertain, ruled out the possibility of exploring the discursive element and the extent to which the author was using stereotypical characters in order to illustrate a persuasive point about different attitudes to the natural world.

Question 2

This question requires that candidates used their linguistic knowledge to explore the concepts of identity/presentation of self as exemplified in a short extract of data. This year, the text offered the opportunity to comment on the creation of commercial and corporate identity in an extract from a website promoting the soft drink 'Equinox Kombucha' produced by a company called 'Flower of Life'. In responding to this question, candidates were assessed according to their ability to meet the following assessment objectives:

- Apply appropriate methods of language analysis, using associated terminology and coherent written expression

- Demonstrate critical understanding of concepts and issues relevant to language use

- Analyse and evaluate how contextual factors and language features are associated with the construction of meaning

Candidates responded well to this text and found there was plenty to say about the way the company presented itself. The most successful candidates were those who recognised that the company constructed their identity in a variety of different ways, sometimes not entirely consistently. For example, the highly field-specific scientific language describing the ingredients of the drink contrasted with informal language in other parts of the text ("loads of love", "four funky flavours") and also with the lexis with connotations of spirituality and exoticism in other parts of the text ("miraculous"). Many candidates commented on the methods used in the text to 'personalise' the company for example, by using inclusive pronouns. The most able candidates were able to go beyond lexis and identify grammatical strategies such as the use of expanded noun phrases and link that to purpose and function and the creation of meaning. Some candidates identified a familiar 'rags to riches' narrative within the text and were able to explore how the idea that the company had been 'on a journey' from humble beginnings to wide-spread success was working in terms of purpose and audience. Candidates who recognised and addressed this narrative element often produced excellent responses. Most candidates took the audience to be potential customers. A few recognised that the reference to 'shelf life' and the repeated reference to the lack of necessity for refrigerated transportation, suggested a secondary audience of retail outlets.

Candidates also explored the way the company sought to align itself with environmentally friendly and socially conscious contemporary movements in order to present itself as a socially responsible organisation. The most able candidates were able to recognise that this was being done using a variety of different strategies. For example, by direct address, slogans, pledges and frequent reference to well known environmentally friendly organisations. Other areas commented on by candidates included the allusions to alternative lifestyles and the frequent claims that the product promoted health and well-being.

Scripts were assessed in terms of levels. There were five levels with five being the highest. This response achieved a mark in the middle of level five.

2 Analyse how the company which produces 'Equinox Kombucha' presents itself in Text D.

You should refer to **any relevant language frameworks and levels** to support your answer and consider:

- mode
- field
- function
- audience.

(25)

The company of Equinox Kombucha use the mode of written language to produce this webpage, advertising and encouraging the public to buy their drink.

They use bolded text for the headings, as well as an attractive picture to get the reader's attention and give them a concrete idea of what it is they are promoting.

The headings are slightly unique, giving an informal, friendly, and open flavour by echoing their "audience's question "what exactly is Kombucha", using the adverbial exactly to intensify the question in an informal manner.

The next heading "Our Story", is short and inviting. With no adjective qualifying the noun "Story", they leave it up to the reader to decide what they think of their story, thereby presenting themselves as young equals to their audience, and very open to comments and feedback.

¶ With regards to grammar, they plunge straight into their story with a verb "Leading", bringing the reader in straight away. They present themselves as default leaders, as though it happened without much effort "have grown rapidly."

They use to inclusive pronouns "we", to give the image of a small, tight-knit company which people can trust. They also use sophisticated noun phrases — "a sustainable, wellbeing-boosting alternative" and "unpasteurised, organic Kombucha" to give the idea that it has myriads of almost magical properties, further supported by their statement that they "discovered this miraculous tea."

They use field specific lexis of adventure and exoticism, such as "backpacking around Asia", "discovered", "green Chun Mee tea" and "fermented with live bacteria." This is likely to inspire excitement in many young people, who would probably ever look at these founders as role models, especially since their goals are extremely timely and appealing to the modern sense.

By using lexis such as "revolution" and "passionate", they give over their desire to make change, to create something new, giving them a fresh feel. They also sound very personal, presenting themselves

as a "small artisan brewery", who came from "humble beginnings" to become "market leaders". Their success story is very appealing, especially since they try to demonstrate as many lofty goals as they possibly can, using phrases such as "truly believe" and "infinite potential" which connote spirituality and deeper meanings, showing that they are not just steeped in physicality, but have higher goals as well.

Moreover, they use many social phrases such as "socially conscious", "improve people's well being" and "giving back" to show their altruistic side, giving people a good feeling when they buy from them, because they are helping to "save the planet".

However, they don't just enumerate lofty goals, but demonstrate convergence (Giles Accomadation theory), by using youthful words such as "funky" to bring themselves down to the level of modern-day teenagers who use such words, yet at the same time divergence, by using technical jargon such as "coexist in a symbiotic colony" to demonstrate their research and their expertise that cannot be matched.

Lexis of health, such as "naturally carbonated", "unpasteurised, organic" and "wellbeing-boosting",

also features prominently, so they seem very health conscious, and 'concerned about their customers' wellbeing, which would obviously give their audience a 'looked after' feeling, encouraging them to buy the drink.

Throughout the webpage, they use a mixture of formal and informal language, as though they are having a friendly conversation with an educated audience, using the discourse marker "What's more" as a friendly sentence starter, acknowledging its audience, and several carefully placed exclamation marks to add the perfect amount of sophisticated excitement "at a time!"

This response shows systematic, detailed, close analysis throughout. There is confident and accurate use of linguistic terminology and confident handling of concepts and issues. It is particularly successful in identifying the range of different lexical fields that are being invoked in the language and how this relates to purpose. There are a number of points where the candidate begins to address aspects of pragmatics (for example when discussing the pre-supposition involved in the use of the verb 'leading' at the beginning of the text). The style is economic; the candidate makes a relevant point then quickly moves on to the next point. For example, the analysis of the use of questions in the sub-headings is described with insight as 'echoing' the reader's questions, making a clear link between feature and function. The candidate identifies and exemplifies the way the text uses complex noun phrases to give a sense of 'myriad ... almost magical properties' which is an accurate, precise and sophisticated analysis of how this text is working. The candidate is also able to recognise the range of lexical fields being referenced in this text. For example, a lexical field of 'adventure and exoticism' is identified. The candidate is able to examine how this lexical field is related to presentation of self and the purpose of the text. The analysis goes on to look at other fields such as those related to 'spirituality'. There is a relevant reference to accommodation theory and the candidate comments on the contrast between the occasional example of 'youthful' lexis such as 'funky', cited as an example of convergence, with the more divergent and alienating aspect of some of the technical language. In the conclusion, the candidate accurately characterises the tone of the piece as 'as though they are having a friendly conversation with an educated audience' and gives an example of a discourse marker which helps create this ambience. While there is some accurate comment on grammar and discourse, the candidate does tend to focus mainly on lexis. A broader focus including grammar and discourse would have improved the piece.

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Examiner Tip

When dealing with lengthy complex scripts like this one, expect to find a wide range of lexical fields being invoked and a variety of ways in which identity is being established, some of which may appear contradictory. Expect complexity.

This candidate achieved a mark which put the response in the higher end of level 4. This is the opening of the response.

2 Analyse how the company which produces 'Equinox Kombucha' presents itself in Text D.

You should refer to **any relevant language frameworks and levels** to support your answer and consider:

- mode
- field
- function –purpose
- audience.

(25)

The company 'Flower of life' describes throughout the discourse its Journey of firstly 'humble beginnings' selling 'locally' and how it then became 'market leaders' and finally how it is it way ahead of its Competitors' and is now 'distributed to over 500... Stores, cafes, and bars' and 'flying off the shelves in seven other Countries' too. & The Inconspicuous humble beginnings makes the entire 'Story' more credible, as it went through the normal Stages, as well as giving this the drink the 'local flavor' although it is so International. This helps their purpose of reaching out to the 'organic lovers' who are sometimes also very into being local and also the regular person who gets the feel of 'if everyone loves it I must try it too.' (as its flying off Shelves) This in turn presents the company as credible, so also their Promises are more believed, as well as giving them a local feel even if there Product is now an e international item.

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Examiner Comments

This candidate is consistent in the application of analysis and selects relevant examples to support the points made. The candidate is also able to take an overview of the text as a whole and recognises the way the underlying metaphor of "a journey" is used by the company to present itself in a positive light. The candidate comments insightfully on the way this underlying narrative allows the company to appeal to the section of the audience who like 'local flavour' as well as those who are impressed with its international connections and the way the product "flies off the shelf".

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Examiner Tip

It can be helpful to ask the question, what kind of story is the speaker/writer telling about themself? This can help get an overview of the text as a whole which then makes it possible to see how specific linguistic choices fit in with the overall theme or narrative.

This is a second extract from the same response.

The Juxtaposition of the items in the lexical field of size, such as 'Small artisan with a big heart' lends the company the connotation of an ad of one with much ambition. Especially that they are a 'group of friends' lends the company a homey touch to it and takes away the commercial feel that is bad for this kind of company that caters to the niche market of health-minded people, and even adventurous spirits. The audience of organic lovers, also tend to draw to local produce, which through this lexical field they present themselves as such. Thus fulfilling their requirements, because ambition is something admired by everyone which is there ~~passive~~ Secondary audience, and the initial primary audience of health-minded people and adventurous spirits appreciate the homely local feel the company tries to creates.

Graphologically,

↑Flower of life presents their product in an unconventional manner, Drinks are usually sold in bowls of ice, while this picture features the bottles in a bowl of nuts. This presents the Company as unconventional and also gives credibility to their statement of them being a leader as they are not following norms, but are stepping on fresh ideas and thus presents their product as new and innovative.

In this extract from the same response, the candidate develops some of the earlier ideas about the way the piece seeks to engage different audiences. The candidate examines how the phrases 'small artisan with a big heart' and 'group of friends' appeals to a specific section of the audience who are attracted by the "homely, local feel" while the company's presentation of itself as 'ambitious' appeals to a different section of the audience. In its consideration of the way the piece tries to engage different audiences, the analysis here is approaching discriminating. However, the analysis of the examples given could have been improved and perhaps extended by a more precise description of them as 'noun phrases'. The second paragraph considers ways in which the company presents itself as 'unconventional' which the candidate has already looked at within the text, but here, unusually, the candidate links the construction of an 'unconventional' identity with graphological elements within the text.

If there are graphological elements within the text (such as pictures, or as also in this text, deliberately non-standard spelling), the chances are they are related to the identity that the creator of the text is trying to establish. Most candidates don't comment on graphological elements, so this opportunity is often missed.

Paper Summary

Based on their performance on this paper, candidates are offered the following advice:

- focus all comments on language levels and frameworks. Ensure that linguistic terminology is accurate and precise

- make sure your response has a coherent structure and that there are smooth transitions between topics.

- maintain a systematic comparison across texts in question 1 and ensure that this comparison is sustained and well-integrated.

- keep a clear focus on identity/presentation of self in question 2 and support the response with reference to language features.

- be aware that texts are likely to be complex and may involve lexical items from a wide range of fields.

- be prepared to comment on any graphological features that appear in the texts if it seems appropriate.

Grade Boundaries

Grade boundaries for this, and all other papers, can be found on the website on this link:

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