OCR
Oxford Cambridge and RSA

AS LEVEL

Examiners' report

ENGLISH LANGUAGE

H070

For first teaching in 2015

H070/02 Summer 2022 series

Contents

Introduction

Our examiners' reports are produced to offer constructive feedback on candidates' performance in the examinations. They provide useful guidance for future candidates.

The reports will include a general commentary on candidates' performance, identify technical aspects examined in the questions and highlight good performance and where performance could be improved. A selection of candidate answers is also provided. The reports will also explain aspects which caused difficulty and why the difficulties arose, whether through a lack of knowledge, poor examination technique, or any other identifiable and explainable reason.

Where overall performance on a question/question part was considered good, with no particular areas to highlight, these questions have not been included in the report.

A full copy of the question paper and the mark scheme can be downloaded from OCR.

Advance Information for Summer 2022 assessments

To support student revision, advance information was published about the focus of exams for Summer 2022 assessments. Advance information was available for most GCSE, AS and A Level subjects, Core Maths, FSMQ, and Cambridge Nationals Information Technologies. You can find more information on our [website](#).

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Paper 2 series overview

The quality and breadth of learning undertaken by a range of candidates was evident across the paper. Candidates are required to answer one compulsory question in Section A, Topical Issues. Section B features a choice of questions focusing on either power or gender. The majority of candidates were able to differentiate between the journalistic and persuasive style required for Question 1 and the analytical style required for Question 2 or 3.

This series saw no return to the traditional candidate focus on Question 3 on gender over Question 2 on power. There were significant differences between the style of the two texts chosen but candidates seem to have selected them in roughly equal measure, suggesting they're judging each text on its merits.

There continue to be a number of candidates who incorrectly label which response they are answering and, while this had no impact on the mark given, it is best avoided. There were no issues with timing on the paper and all candidates were able to answer questions in the given time.

Candidates who did well on this paper generally did the following:	Candidates who did less well on this paper generally did the following:
• differentiated the style required in Section A and Section B • used language skilfully to build a persuasive argument and specified clear conceptual areas in both questions • clearly understood the requirements of either Question 2 or Question 3 • focused on language use and patterns of language use in Section B • used theory to explore language use • explored contexts in depth/detail.	• wrote in an essay-based style throughout • listed a range of unselective theory which may or may not be relevant to the issue stated or the texts presented • did not clearly focus on relevant conceptual areas in Section B • presented undigested chunks of knowledge with little relevance to the texts • focused on theory at the expense of analysing language in Section B • limited discussion of contexts to GAP and make sweeping assertions about audience.

Section A overview

In previous series, candidates have found this section to be a strong aspect of performance; however, candidates in general have struggled to engage with the form creatively and many have struggled to engaged with the specified issue. While candidates can, and indeed should, try to shape the issue to the strengths of their knowledge, this series saw candidates struggle to maintain a focus on the issue. Similarly, there were issues with the persuasive purpose and notion of a "particular point of view".

Question 1

'All children should be taught to speak Standard English and discouraged from using non-standard English at school.'

1   Write a magazine article that critically engages in any way with the statement above and persuades readers to agree with a particular point of view. Your article should be aimed at a non-specialist, reasonably well-educated audience. You should write about 500 words.   **[24]**

Candidates were able to engage with the needs of form reasonably well and very few responses lacked at least some elements of a magazine article. Examiners felt that candidates were able to meet the needs of the tone for a magazine article and the question, in some cases, seems to play to the strengths of candidates' presumed natural tone. As in previous series, many candidates chose to use the issue title itself as the headline and this was deemed appropriate by the examiner. It is worth highlighting for candidates that a headline can be an opportunity to be more creative in matching the form and presenting the issue.

The persuasive purpose was generally done with clarity but a significant number of the candidature struggled with the notion of persuasion over argument and were drawn into presenting more balanced and informative pieces. Those who did engage with persuasion used a range of relevant techniques and some showed real flair in the use of extended metaphor, cyclical structures and humour. Glossing is an important part of meeting the needs of audience and can be done through exemplification or simple explanation; this was done well by candidates who had a clear sense of the non-specialist audience. In some cases, glossing was not present or not accurately exemplified.

The issue itself was felt to be one which candidates would have strong views on and this proved to be the case. The question's instruction to engage with the issue "in any way" also allowed candidates a wide range of approaches; however, the issue was clear in specifying "speak" and "Standard English" and some candidates struggled to understand this clearly. While examiners felt there could be *some* leeway in terms of the influence of speech and writing together in the school environment, candidates still needed to have some focus on spoken language.

The greater concern was the number of candidates who conflated Standard English, a dialect form of English, with Received Pronunciation, an accent of spoken English. While there is a crossover between speakers of SE and users of RP, candidates who solely focused on accent were not seen to be meeting the requirements of the question.

Misconception	
?	Conflation of accent and dialect – this is an area that candidates often struggle to conceptualise and centres may wish to focus on developing clear conceptual schemas associated with the two. This may well have a knock-on effect on candidates' ability to engages with spoken texts at A Level as well.

Exemplar 1

> For as long as language has been around, there have been variations. Prescriptivists around the globe have frequently thrown their toys out of the pram and suggested that Standard English is the only 'correct way' to express oneself. Despite their dismay, new forms of non-standard English keep popping up, slang words such as 'innit', 'leng' and 'bruv' continue to fill the ears of disgruntled prescriptivists (boring people who don't want English to change). Now, these words are a march towards efficiency, their shortened and typically monosyllabic nature allow for faster speech, and have filled lexical gaps (holes in the English language) to allow access to a greater range of expression for our youth.

This response interweaves a range of conceptual knowledge in a subtle manner that shows off both a flair for the style of writing specified and a deep understanding of the issue. The focus is on prescriptivist attitudes, a relevant area of knowledge to use for this issue, and shows understanding of dialect, neologisms and processes of change (lexical gap and efficiency). All of these issues are skilfully glossed for a non-specialist audience while clearly taking a side in the debate.

Section B overview

The Section B texts focus on power (Question 2) and gender (Question 3) and this year there were significant differences in the texts themselves. The power text featured a print letter produced by the police for witnesses while the gender text was an Open University website related to women in engineering.

There was no evidence of candidates infringing the rubric by comparing the two texts in this section or by answering both questions.

Several candidates seem to have struggled to engage with language use as the driving focus of this question and there was a return, for the first time since the 2016 series, to a significant number of responses that presented tangentially linked (or entirely unlinked) theory at the expense of actual analysis. The question and all three bullet points direct candidates to focus on language as the vehicle through which power/gender is represented and meaning constructed. Candidates who missed this focus struggled to meet the requirements of the question.

Both questions also saw candidates attempting to apply conversational theories to written texts with limited success and there continues to be a pattern in candidates' over-simplification of contextual factors which limits the clarity and depth of analysis they are able to reach.

Key point: Focusing on the Mark Scheme
Candidates and centres should pay careful attention to the level descriptors which all explicitly refer to either language or patterns of language. As such, language must be the main focus when exploring concepts and contexts.
The ability to identify and explore patterns of language goes to the very heart of the subject and is a key discriminator of candidate performance.

Question 2

2   **Language and Power**

Read **Text A** in your **Resource booklet** and answer the following question.

Using appropriate terminology, examine **Text A** in the light of the ways in which power is represented. In your answer you should:

- analyse the relevant language features of the text
- explore how contextual factors and language features construct meanings
- consider the ways in which your understanding of concepts and issues relating to power in language use illuminates the representation of power within the text **[36]**

The text featured an edited extract of a letter given to witnesses by the police and, as such, embodies both influential and instrumental power types. Many candidates were able to identify this and relevant patterns of language in which the types of power were to be found. Strong responses focused on shifts in tone across the text which were signalled across multiple language levels, including lexico-semantic, syntactic and discoursal levels most prominently.

The question-answer structure provided candidates across the ability range with a way into discussing structure and this was often done well. The strongest responses drew links between this, sentence functions and tone of the text to create strong, pattern-focused analyses of a range of interlinked linguistic features which contribute to the representation of power and the positioning of the audience in an asymmetrical power relationship with the producer. When it was done less well, candidates simply analysed this portion of the text as featuring genuine adjacency pairs, leading to inappropriate use of Grice's maxims and face-theory.

Exemplar 2

One feature of this text is its strong, authoritive tone. We can see examples of deontic modal verbs used such as "you should tell" used when informing the witness on what to do. We can also see a Deontic modality is often used to represent power, as it has a similar function to imperitives as it tells the reciever what to do. Declarative sentences are also frequently Wareing suggests that this feature can mark evidence of instrumental power. Unlike influential power, this instrumental power is enforced by the law. In this

The section, while far from perfect, illustrates the interweaving of all three aspects of a good response and shows the focus required on the text and its use of language. The response identified a pattern in the tone of the text. This could be exemplified in any number of ways and a good approach can be to draw together multiple examples; however, in this case we still see a clear move from pattern identification to exemplification and labelling which is clearly linked to purpose and, to a lesser extent audience, before being linked relevantly to types of power.

Question 3

3   Language and Gender

Read **Text B** in your **Resource booklet** and answer the following question.

Using appropriate terminology, examine **Text B** in the light of the ways in which gender is represented. In your answer you should:

- analyse the relevant language features of the text
- explore how contextual factors and language features construct meanings
- consider the ways in which your understanding of concepts and issues relating to gender in language use illuminates the representation of gender within the text **[36]**

This question featured an online text from the Open University. The text itself focused on gender and the issue of women's under-representation in the field of engineering. There was a focus on 'myths' which the producer sought to debunk across the article and many candidates were able to identify the ways in which the language use in the text represented both male and female gendered perspectives. The strongest responses were able to engage with a number of representations, including the text's unintentional reinforcing of traditional gender norms, the representation of the OU as producer and even the traditional binary approach to gender. Less successful responses focused on an overly simplified conflation of spoken and written gender theory without any real consideration of the contextual factors at play in a written text.

As in previous series, this text's explicit focus on gender caused some candidates to stray into narrative accounts of content. The 2019 report stated:

"[An issue was] the tendency of responses to engage almost solely with the content of the text rather than its language use. These responses became largely discursive rather than analytical and in ignoring the language or patterns of language use in the text, limited the examiner's ability to credit responses under AO1, AO3 and the bottom two bullet points of AO2. This is potentially the result of the text's topic and centres should remind candidates that the focus of this question, regardless of text, is analysing how language creates representations of gender."

Exemplar 3

Throughout this article, women are represented as being different to men, at first to relate to the reader, but then to empower them. In the article heading, the text producer uses the phrase "female engineer" to specify who the article is aimed at (women in the engineering profession), however the use of a marked term acknowledges the stereotype that only men are engineers, which relates to the reader as they would have heard this phrase used often. This emphasises

There is a clear example of a response which focuses on a pattern before exemplifying it and drawing links to theory and to context, in this case audience. While it is possible to imagine more detailed analysis, the structure of this section of the response is a good model when considering how to approach the question.

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