

**A LEVEL**

Examiners' report

**ENGLISH  
LANGUAGE AND  
LITERATURE (EMC)**

**H474**

For first teaching in 2015

**H474/01 Summer 2022 series**

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## 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.

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## Paper 1 series overview

Paper 1 contains one question, asking candidates to write a comparative analysis of the ways meanings are shaped in one of the twenty spoken and written texts from the OCR (EMC) Anthology and an unseen passage of spoken or written non-fiction.

To do well, candidates need to be able to:

- Make relevant and accurate use of their study of the Anthology text, including its context, audience and purpose.
- Understand the unseen text, and make sensible inferences as to its context, audience, purpose, genre and mode.
- Apply specialist knowledge about language to both texts, selecting appropriate frameworks and using a range of terminology accurately.
- Be genuinely comparative in their thinking, exploring connections between the texts which enrich the meaning they make from each.

Candidates who did well in this series were confident in their discussion of the extract from the Diary of Samuel Pepys, and grasped the intended audience and purpose as well as the tone of Greta Thunberg's speech.

In general, candidates had little difficulty in making connections between the two texts. Most candidates explored productive connections, often contrasting aspects of language or by comparing aspects of meaning.

Many responses were seen from candidates who were less secure with, or offered less convincing readings of, the extract from Pepys' diary.

Some lower-level responses were less sensitive to the occasion on which Thunberg's speech was delivered, and misunderstood aspects of its audience and purpose.

Candidates who did well on this paper generally did the following:	Candidates who did less well on this paper generally did the following:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• understood Text A as a product of Pepys' commitment to routinely recording events, bearing witness to the times in which he lived</li> <li>• focused on the way Pepys' language depicted the scene before him, including his own and others' emotional responses to the fire</li> <li>• paid close attention to the information given about Text B, understanding Thunberg's immediate audience of policy makers and seeming to hear the speech as it might have been delivered</li> <li>• explored each text selectively on the basis of meaningful comparisons, of aspects of language (e.g. sentence structure, pronoun reference) or meaning (e.g. a sense of urgency, hopelessness vs hope, criticism of authority's response to a crisis)</li> <li>• used terminology accurately and purposefully, selecting terms and frameworks which suited this pairing of texts</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• focused more on Pepys himself than the text, for example asserting that he should have been putting out the fire himself rather than recording what he saw</li> <li>• struggled to overcome a remoteness from Pepys' life and times, for example using much of their response to describe his 'archaic' language</li> <li>• seemed not to notice the information given about Text B, making no specific reference to the make-up of Thunberg's audience and sometimes referring to her 'readers'</li> <li>• wrote about each text much as they would have done in isolation, making few meaningful connections between the texts in between passages of analysis of each</li> <li>• used terminology unselectively or inaccurately, either taking every opportunity to use as much terminology as possible regardless of relevance, or misusing terms so as to reveal partial understanding of the related concepts.</li> </ul>

## Question 1

**Text A** from the anthology is an extract from Samuel Pepys' diary from September 1666 describing the Great Fire of London.

**Text B** is an extract from a speech given by Greta Thunberg (a Swedish teenager who campaigns for climate change awareness). She delivered this speech at the World Economic Forum's Annual Meeting in 2019. This is an annual event where influential world leaders, business leaders and government representatives from 117 countries meet to discuss global issues.

- 1 Carefully read the **two** texts and compare the ways in which the writer in **Text A** and the speaker in **Text B** use language to convey meaning.

In your answer you should analyse the impact that the different contexts have on language use, including, for example, mode, purpose and audience. [32]

### Understanding of the significance of contexts (AO3)

The ambiguity of Pepys' exact sense of audience tended to work in candidates' favour. A minority of responses stated confidently that Pepys had no intended audience beyond himself, and supported this with extratextual references to his short-hand cipher. Others touched on this before suggesting that he was likely aware that his diary would be read by others, and was consciously creating an eye-witness account for future historians. The second of these positions was more popular and tended to support more convincing textual analysis. However, both were valid and neither was treated as correct or incorrect.

Understanding of the *significance* of context was evidenced by the integration of such inferences with textual analysis. Some responses began with clear and sometimes lengthy accounts of contextual factors, sometimes showing insight which was then lacking from the subsequent analysis. In some lower-level responses, references were made to Pepys' attempts to 'shock the audience' and Thunberg's desire to 'target the reader', with the words 'audience' and 'reader' used in entirely generalised ways.

Higher-level responses quickly and confidently grasped the context, audience and purpose of Text B, in ways that permeated their interpretation of the text. A small number of lower-level responses were made by candidates seemed not to have read the information given. Some, for example, referred to the speech as an 'article'. Others assumed that Thunberg's intended audience were people interested in her topic and people similar to her, making statements such as 'The audience of this speech are also likely tired of hearing politicians talk'. A number of responses began by discussing Thunberg's secondary audience, as her speech would likely be broadcast on television and social media. Although this was valid, the strongest responses were invariably those that analysed her language in light of her primary audience and purpose: to persuade a roomful of policy makers to change their policies.

### The centrality of context to interpretation

Levels of understanding of the significance of contexts are likely to be demonstrated in the analysis itself, in the selection of points made and the quality of interpretation. Inevitably, richer meaning is made from a text which is read with sustained sensitivity to its intended audience and purpose than from texts which the candidate does not successfully slot back into its original place in the world.

## Interpretations of Text A

A number of candidates appeared unable to draw on strong interpretations of the Anthology text, instead producing responses which made tenuous or unconvincing points about Text A. Some used the reference to 'Lords' Day' and the mentions of churches to focus their response on how religious Pepys was. Others argued that his extensive use of the first person showed how self-centred he was, or that he used 'archaic language' to 'show off his class'. A few lacked basic comprehension of the text, for example explaining that illiterate poor people in the 17<sup>th</sup> century didn't know that water would put out fire, or that Pepys was mocking the poor for not realising that pulling down houses helped the fire to spread. Other aspects of textual insecurity included attributing the Lord Mayor's direct speech to the King.

Many candidates struggled to reconcile the opening of the extract, when Pepys records how he first heard of the fire and did not appreciate the threat it posed, with the later passages when he has realised its significance and places himself amongst the panic. There was considerable condemnation of Pepys for going back to bed, and the inference that he was 'nonchalant' or 'unbothered' skewed many candidates' reading of the entire extract. For some, a little biographical knowledge seemed to have reinforced a personal antipathy towards Pepys. One candidate wrote, 'Samuel Pepys shows his privileges in which he can write about the disaster as it's occurring and the most meaningful thing to him is to hide his wine and cheese.'

Often, social class was the key issue in responses which focused more on the writer of Text A than the text itself. Pepys, many candidates argued, was protected from the fire because he was posh; the people fleeing from the fire were poor; and Pepys did nothing to help them because posh people in the 17<sup>th</sup> century cared nothing for those of a lower social class.

Such readings of Text A often contained internal inconsistencies. For example: many candidates argued that, throughout his diary entry, Pepys was unmoved by the fire because his own house wasn't in danger; of these, some went on to suggest that the main reason he tried to advise the King was because he didn't want his own house to burn down. In many responses, every detail was pressed into the service of this class-based criticism. Of Pepys' use of place names, one response said, 'he mentions street names which the upper class are familiar with'. Another candidate argued that the possessive determiner in the phrase 'our maids' 'could highlight a sense of ownership and an uncaring attitude ... it appears as though Pepys may only value the maids for the labour they provide rather than as human beings'. Pepys' word 'creatures' was said by many to show his contempt for the poor, without acknowledgement of the religious connotations which are likely to have been prevalent at the time. Many of the candidates who quoted the reference to 'poor pigeons' used the phrase as evidence of Pepys 'dehumanising' the people whose houses were being burned, for example: ' "poor pigeons" ... is a negative semantic used to evoke the social economic state of a class system Samuel Pepys participated in'. One candidate wrote: 'the word "nobody" implies that Pepys isn't trying to "quench" the fire because he is used to having other people do things for him, since he is a wealthy upper class man with maids. This suggests that even though the wealthier are watching the fire rage and burn, they aren't helping to put it out as it is not worth their time'.

Whatever the historical accuracy of these claims, or the validity of their identification of social inequality, responses which saw Text A in these terms were generally less grounded in the text and less convincing in their handling of textual detail. For example, many argued that Pepys doesn't take an interest in the fire (despite his actively making his way towards the flames, and intervening in decisions about how to stop its spread) and doesn't feel any emotion himself (despite his expressions of pity and his stating that his heart was 'full of trouble'). Often, these responses seemed to evidence a partial grasp of the extract.

In general, the emphasis on social class and the judgemental focus on the writer seemed to obstruct rather than facilitate secure engagement with or understanding of the text. In higher-level responses, there tended to be a more nuanced appreciation of Pepys' purpose and genre.

Exemplar 1 is an extract from the second half of a response which was placed in Level 6.

## Exemplar 1

	<p>However, similarities can also be found, such as their use of statistics to validate their message. In Pepys this includes numerical values of "above 300 houses" and proper nouns like "London Bridge" and "Sir J. Robinson" - the purpose of these are to evaluate the damage of the fire and place the events in the context of his time. Pepys may have been especially aware to include these in case his diary ever became published - although that was not his original intention, he left his diary to be found, and has since been used as</p>
	<p>a historical source. <del>As a result</del> Thunberg also uses statistics to evaluate the damage of climate change and proper nouns to validate them, such as "the IPCC" and "at least 50%". However she is using them in the context of persuasion, trying to convince adults, who may otherwise ignore the pleas of a teenage girl, to take action on the climate crisis.</p>
	<p>Both writers convey emotion or aim to evoke an emotional response in their texts. Pepys recalls an anecdote of "the poor pigeons [...] they burned their wings". The pre-modifying adjective "poor" creates a sense of pity, accentuated altogether by the proximity of "poor pigeons". The imagery of "burned wings" is also rather striking, as it creates a juxtaposing image of the power of nature and the fragility of it. <del>As</del> It feels appropriate for a diary, like a random detail</p>

		Pepys would have been haunted by in the chaos.
		Thunberg also tries to evoke an emotional response, but a harsher one. She uses the imperative "I don't want your hope (-) I want you to panic." The contrast of "hope" and "panic" is stark, the latter abstract
		narrating as a harsh truth to her audience - they may not have been expecting Thunberg to be so blunt, but her imperative shows her taking control as the next generation and demanding an urgent, active response to climate change.

The understanding that Pepys may be consciously producing an eye-witness account for future generations helps this candidate to connect the use of facts and figures in the two texts. The detail of the 'poor pigeons' is interpreted convincingly as 'a juxtaposing image of the power of nature and the fragility of it'. Crucially, 'It feels appropriate for a diary, like a random detail Pepys would have been haunted by in the chaos'. This exemplifies the way in which the strongest responses to Text A came from candidates who were able to empathise with Pepys rather than judge him, partly through their sensitivity to his use of the diary genre.



**Concepts, methods and terminology (AO1) and Analysis of ways meanings are shaped (AO2)**

Exemplar 1 also includes an example of inaccurately used terminology which was seen in many responses: the declaratives in Text B, 'I don't want ... I want you to...', are referred to as imperatives. Other, similarly common errors included confusion between simple and minor sentences, between first- and third-person reference, between pronouns and possessive determiners, and of word class more generally (e.g. 'rage' identified as an adjective, 'fire' as an abstract noun, 'now' as verb, etc.). Although it is not expected for candidates to use terminology perfectly, the higher levels of the mark scheme describe high levels of accuracy with regard to AO1, and some candidates are able to demonstrate this consistently. There is value in candidates forming grammatical concepts fully, so that linguistic knowledge can provide genuinely purposeful frameworks for making meaning from texts, rather than a number of terms tagged on to points that could be made equally well without them.

Pronoun reference was explored to good effect by many candidates, particularly in relation to Text B. Very many responses commented on the sense of unity created by Thunberg's use of the first-person plural (with most referring to 'we' and 'our' as 'collective pronouns'). Some developed this into a discussion of the shift to singular pronouns towards the end of her speech, with the strongest responses identifying the generational divide implied at this point of her discourse.

Other frameworks used well included Aristotle's modes of persuasion: the concepts of logos, ethos and pathos were applied productively to Text A as well as to Text B, and facilitated some developed exploration of connections. Thunberg's use of parallel structures, including anaphora and epistrophe, were identified confidently and explored effectively by some candidates. Many candidates discussed sentence structure, contrasting Pepys' long, accumulative sentences with Thunberg's short simple sentences, crafted for impact.

Less comparative but nonetheless strong points were made about Pepys' lexical choices, particularly in his depiction of the immensity of the fire and the ensuing panic. Many candidates explored his personification of the fire, focusing on words such as 'rage', 'running' and 'touched'; many also commented effectively on verb choices and progressive forms such as 'endeavouring' and 'flinging'. Thunberg's central metaphor, of the burning house, was understood and explored to good effect by some candidates. Fewer were sensitive to other instances of figurative language in her speech, such as 'black or white ... no gray areas' or 'We still have everything in our hands'. A greater number explored her foregrounding of the word 'failed'; many more made convincing points about use of subject-specific lexis. Lexical choice was examined more superficially by some lower-level responses, with comments such as 'both texts have a semantic field of fire' supported by a series of one-word quotations which illustrated the topics of the texts rather than making any meaning from them.

Most attempts to deploy a phonological framework were ineffective, such as the identification of a crackling sound in some of Pepys' plosives or the sounds of flames in his fricatives. However, some responses commented convincingly on the connection between sound patterning and pathos in 'a disaster of unspoken sufferings' (Text B) and 'poor pigeons' / 'poor people' (Text A).

Sociolinguistic theories were deployed with varying effectiveness. The most convincing examples noted Thunberg's bald on-record willingness to threaten her listeners' face. Attempts to see Pepys's diary entry through Grice's maxims or Thunberg's speech through genderlect theory tended to feel less apt in their selection of concepts and handling of terminology. The concept of formality also tended to be used ineffectively with this pairing of texts, which use different kinds of mixed register in very different contexts. In some lower-level responses, 'formal' seemed to be indistinguishable from 'archaic', with each term essentially being used to describe lexis and syntax with which the candidate felt unfamiliar.

Some lower-level responses used a range of linguistic terms accurately but in superficial ways. One common approach was to organise paragraphs around an identification of features in each text which were to be expected from its genre (for example: Text A starts with a date, which is typical for a diary schema; Text B uses personal pronouns, which is expected from a speech). These responses tended to lack the required focus on meaning. Other ways of describing the texts rather than making meaning from them included responses which emphasised the 'archaic' lexis of Text A, or explored the contrast that Text B was 'more modern' than Text A.

#### **Connections and comparisons (AO4)**

As with the selection of terminology and frameworks for AO1, the best approaches to exploring connections between the texts were those which most facilitated the making of meaning. Language-based connections, such as those mentioned above which focused on pronoun reference and sentence types, often facilitated developed analysis of the ways meanings were shaped. Connections based on meanings also worked well for many candidates, such as comparison of the sense of urgency created in each text. More creative connections also worked well, for example: the language that suggested Pepys' sense of hopelessness was contrasted with Thunberg's attempt to instil hope; Thunberg's investment and passion were contrasted with Pepys' relative pity and detachment. Some interpretive connections included the idea that both Pepys and Thunberg criticised the ineffectiveness of those in power, or both appealed to authority for help, or both sought action or change. Discourse structure was also a meaningful point of contrast in some responses: while Pepys' account describes his shift from blasé to troubled, Thunberg moves from inclusive terms of reference to being deliberately divisive. In each case, the key to achieving highly was less the connecting idea itself than the way it was developed. Candidates who organised their responses around meaningful connections, and held both texts in mind such that they made further connections within their subsequent analysis, generally reached the higher levels of the mark scheme.

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