



**General Certificate of Education**

**English Language 1706**  
*Specification B*

**ENGB2      Creating Texts**

**Report on the Examination**  
*2009 examination - January series*

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## General

The entry for the first series of the coursework unit of the new specification was approximately 450 candidates. Centres had taken on board the guidance and advice given at the 'Preparing to Teach' and Coursework Standardising meetings. Sincere thanks are due to the centres that submitted their work a little early to provide exemplars for moderator standardisation. Most centres had organised their folders in the suggested format, added the annotation required to the folders, and found their way through the new assessment criteria. There was no evidence of any widespread or significant difficulties in applying the criteria.

## Texts

In general the texts submitted followed the patterns of successful submissions from the legacy ENB3 unit. Moderators saw many impressive folders, including, for example, extracts from travel writing (often being developed in a more individualistic way from the base of style models from Bill Bryson), dramatic monologues (increasingly involving personas who were not middle aged to elderly Northern English individuals), opinion-based journalistic pieces based on a wide range of columnists from a wide variety of media sources (*The Guardian* being the most popular), some interesting short stories and imitations of specific genres (including several attempts at modernising the traditional 'Mills & Boon' genre).

Information and Persuasion texts, perhaps quite predictably, seemed to home in on social issues in the news with particular resonance for the young people who form the majority of the entry. Such topics included the effects of eating disorder and knife crime. Instructive and advisory writing often concentrated on unravelling the mysteries of such wonders of the technological age as *Face Book*, *My Space*, and even the *iphone* and *itunes*, for those of us not fortunate enough to have been born into the correct generation! Overall, a high proportion of the texts submitted were firmly based in a viable and credible context – they could exist in real life and in the majority of cases would be likely to be successful in achieving their stated purpose and would reach the perceived target audience. Much of this sharper focus is attributed to the careful selection of relevant and accessible style models by teachers to use as the focus of the development of writing skills in their candidates.

## Commentaries

It is in this area that the greatest changes from the legacy specification have occurred, and it is gratifying to note that not only have centres taken the changes on board, but that the new approach is succeeding in bringing a sharper focus to the analytical comments made by candidates. There was a distinct lack of the leisurely and anecdotal accounts of how the pieces had been thought of and produced, and a notable increase in the number of incisive comments related to each of the three specific areas identified by the Assessment Objectives for the commentary. Those centres that had clearly used the mark scheme as an overt framework for the teaching the skills of commentary writing, invariably produced high scoring and well-rewarded commentaries. The reduced word count (now a maximum of 500 per commentary) caused some difficulties but there was clear evidence that the new, leaner, more sharply focused version, allowed candidates to make the same number of relevant points, illustrate them, and dispense with unnecessary descriptive parts. Centres are reminded that it is not necessary to count quotations presented to exemplify points made, do **not** need to be counted as part of the 500 word allocation.

## Bibliography/resources lists

It was extremely pleasing to see that the requirement to cite sources (paper and web based) was widely heeded. It is a requirement that has two important purposes: to instil in candidates good habits for Further and Higher Education and to act as a defence against plagiarism or the over-dependence on the writing of others. The vast majority of submissions contained clear and well

presented lists which allowed moderators to establish the provenance of the texts that they were examining. Centres are reminded that it is good practice in cases of citing website addresses for students to include the date and time the sites were accessed, as content, potentially, could change considerably. Centres are also reminded that a failure to submit bibliographies, resource lists, etc as part of the submission, could bring into doubt the originality of parts of the submission and thus lead to further investigation.

### **‘Evidence of early planning/preparation’**

This ‘replacement’ requirement for the previous demand for ‘draft’ versions, is included to take account of the fact that ‘drafting’ is almost invariably little more than revision and editing of the document in a word-processing application. Increasingly, the drafts submitted were little more than a second, virtually identical, print out of the final text. As the purpose of the requirement is to provide ‘evidence of the process of writing’, it is clear that such so-called drafts are virtually worthless. Centres involved in this moderation series presented a number of totally acceptable ways of providing this evidence – including amongst others; teacher-produced prompt sheets that candidates had filled in, spider diagrams, mind map, ‘thought showers’ (sic), a candidate produced ‘pitch’ sheet clearly designed for the candidate to convince the supervising teacher of the viability of the task. There is no one single way of fulfilling the requirement. If candidates are told that they should submit some evidence of the on-going process of writing relating to each piece, then this should fit the bill!

### **(Annotated) style model(s)**

This was another clear success of the new requirements. As mentioned above, the judicious selection of style models to act as insights into a whole variety of language skills involved in effective writing seems to bring a sharp sense of focus into the production of texts. Coursework advisers have reported that the question that they have been asked most relating to the new specification is ‘How many style models are needed?’ This is not a question that has a simple or a universal answer. By definition, the **minimum** number is one but as they can be used to illuminate so many different aspects of writing, eg layout, discourse features, persuasive techniques, ways of appealing to specific audiences, suitable lexical and/or grammatical, the requisite number could be several. There is also the consideration that a common, class-based model could be introduced by the teacher to introduce a particular style, purpose or genre, and then individual candidates might seek out their own models to support whatever approach suited their own particular text. The annotations seen on style models in folders submitted in this series, not surprisingly, seemed to focus on the Linguistic Methods which form basis of teaching towards task one on the ENGB1 examination. The second most frequently asked question of advisers is ‘How much annotation is necessary?’ and here there is not a simple answer either! The key is that annotations on style models are primarily meant to be helpful to the candidates and to inform their linguistic choices in the production of their texts, so if it does this, then that is quite sufficient!

### **Annotation of work submitted**

The new specification now demands that both the texts and the commentaries submitted for moderation must be annotated to demonstrate how the assessment has been arrived at. The specification itself states, ‘Work could be annotated by either of the following methods: *key pieces of evidence flagged throughout the work by annotation either in the margin or in the text or summative comments on the work, referencing precise sections in the work*’. Centres who submitted work in this series made use of both these methods and both worked successfully. From a moderator’s point of view, the clearest method seemed to be as follows: summative comments on each of the texts presented either at the end of each piece, or, increasingly frequently, on a separate covering sheet and annotations in the margins or in the text for the commentaries relating to each the specific Assessment Objectives for Commentary Writing. In all cases comments

**relating to** the Assessment Objectives, rather than merely quoting them verbatim, seemed to be the most effective.

To sum up the lessons from the first round of moderation for the New Specification it is quite clear that the modified assessment system and submission requirements work well. Much good practice was seen in terms of valid and challenging opportunities for candidates to produce effective and at times highly expert writing. The assessment criteria provide clear guidance for teachers to produce accurate marking and administrative procedures were largely adhered to. The thanks of the moderating team are due to all those centres who worked hard to produce these successful outcomes and we look forward to seeing this repeated on a larger scale in the summer.

### **Mark Ranges and Award of Grades**

Grade boundaries and cumulative percentage grades are available on the **Results Statistics** page of the AQA Website.