



General Certificate of Education

English Language 1706
Specification B

ENGB2 Creating Texts

Report on the Examination
2010 examination – June series

Further copies of this Report are available to download from the AQA Website: www.aqa.org.uk

Copyright © 2010 AQA and its licensors. All rights reserved.

COPYRIGHT

AQA retains the copyright on all its publications. However, registered centres for AQA are permitted to copy material from this booklet for their own internal use, with the following important exception: AQA cannot give permission to centres to photocopy any material that is acknowledged to a third party even for internal use within the centre.

Set and published by the Assessment and Qualifications Alliance.

General

This summer's series marked the fourth time that ENGB2 had been externally moderated and the senior moderating team were unanimous in their view that the Unit was settling in well, and that, in general, centres had wholeheartedly embraced both the spirit and the letter of the content and approaches required for success.

Inevitably, however, along with the many examples of good practice seen, there were some examples where, sadly, candidates had not fulfilled the unit requirements. This report aims to reflect on the areas which resulted in the most comments by members of the senior moderating team – hoping to highlight areas worthy of praise as well as those which caused concern.

Task setting

The majority of centres seem to have heeded the message widely promulgated in teacher standardising meetings in relation to the need for candidates seeking marks in the top band to attempt *ambitious/demanding genres* aimed at *challenging audiences*. Any folders containing two texts both aimed broadly at audiences largely consisting of the writer's peers would be very unlikely to be judged as *challenging*, while genres which are easy to duplicate and make few demands on the writer, such as linguistically dull leaflets and travel brochures also fall outside what could be regarded as *ambitious or demanding*.

The following lists examples of text types reported by moderators during this series:

Text types that often produced top mark band outcomes

- ironic or humorous opinion or editorial pieces where the writer deconstructed something (or indeed someone!) they felt strongly about interviews, especially those whose writers talk to a real person, and where the discourse structure integrates narrative, direct quotation and reported speech
- parodies: difficult to do, but when they come off in the hands of an able candidate, invariably and justifiably well-rewarded
- tasks with 'real-life' purposes or audiences such as competition entries, assembly talks where the writers had actually taken the assembly, sketches, scenes etc which had actually been performed.

Text types which frequently fell short of the higher mark bands

- information leaflets which shoehorned information from secondary sources (not always acknowledged) into a template (often courtesy of Microsoft Office) and contained very limited evidence of candidates' ability to craft language for purpose and audience
- stories for very young children which were simplistic (often to the point of being immensely patronising), were often extremely derivative and mostly concerned with graphology and layout
- personal memoirs: while these were often well written and moving, it is difficult to imagine any of them being published anywhere. They were mostly reminiscent of GCSE Original Writing.
- 'first chapters' of novels, submitted without any clear idea as to how the remainder of the story might develop. While to present a single chapter might seem to be a way of

avoiding problems of excessive word count, all too often it seemed more like a convenient means for candidates being able to ignore many issues related to plot, characterisation, discourse structure etc

- 'inform' or 'instruct' pieces which presented basic material with little or no crafting of language apparent thus reducing the chances of a personal voice or any sense of targeting a specific audience

Very short pieces in any genre, or for any purpose or audience: however well written these were, it was always difficult for moderators to accept that these were *sustained* – a key descriptor for pieces awarded 36-40 marks.

Selection and annotation of Style Models

Centres are again reminded of the importance of the appropriate use of style models in the production of candidates' pieces; the judicious selection of suitable texts to act as insights into a whole variety of language skills involved in effective writing brings a genuine sense of focus into the production of texts. They can be used to illuminate so many different aspects of writing – from layout and discourse features, through persuasive techniques, ways of appealing to specific audiences and suitable lexical and/or grammatical choices.

Some centres, successfully, adopted an approach whereby a common, class-based model was introduced by the teacher to highlight a particular style, purpose or genre, and then individual students sought out their own models to support whatever approach suited their own particular text.

The annotations included on style models seen by moderators in folders submitted in this round, varied considerably in both quantity and quality, but the common denominator amongst those that used the system effectively was that the annotations proved helpful to the candidates by informing their linguistic choices in the production of their texts and also gave them a focus in their commentary writing, so that they could fulfil the AO3 requirement that they should make *systematic reference to salient features from ... style models*. Often weaker candidates failed to analyse an appropriate style model and launched into poor imitations without much idea about the finer points of register, genre etc.

One major problem encountered by moderators was the AO3 requirement for this genuine and sustained analysis of style models. The most widespread shortcoming was to virtually ignore the style models, and only to make use of surface features such as graphology or to refer in the commentary to a feature in a vague and general manner.

In order to make best use of style models in the writing process, it is essential that centres impress upon their candidates the importance of the deconstruction of the 'salient features' of their style models to show how they can emulate the most significant characteristic features.

There was also an issue in a number of centres where there seemed to be some confusion between style model and source material: indeed, one senior moderator reported that in one centre, not only did candidates produce a source and annotate it as though it were a style model, they all had one of these (non)-style-models doing duty for both pieces.

Commentaries

A very pleasing feature to report following this round of moderation is that the number of candidates submitting excessively long commentaries was significantly less than last year and that there were fewer instances of centres significantly over-rewarding commentaries which tended to describe rather than analyse.

However, there were still some candidates who seemed to think that quantity equalled quality, with one candidate's commentaries totalling nearly 3000 words. It is worth reminding centres that although there is no pro-rata reduction in marks applied to candidates who exceed the recommended word allocations for either texts or commentaries – there are expectations enshrined in the assessment criteria for all Assessment Objectives (eg AO2 talks about a 'judicious range', AO1 and AO3 make use of the term 'systematic' and AO4 talks about writing being 'appropriate' and 'controlled') and this means that these inappropriately lengthy submissions are indeed self-penalising.

There were fewer 'list' or 'template' based commentaries in evidence this series than in the last two years: most candidates' commentaries seem to have been driven by significant features of the pieces rather than by conscientiously following a structure which took them through genre, audience, purpose, register, syntax, rhetorical devices, etc. This meant that the able candidates rightly received high marks as they could show their conceptual understanding of the linguistic issues that underpinned their language by selecting and commenting on the most significant features.

Evidence of Early Planning

Centres are again reminded of the requirement that folders should contain Evidence of Early Planning. This is significantly different from the previous expectation that at least one draft of each piece should be included. Unfortunately, not all centres appear to have taken this on board, and every Senior Moderator reported that some centres in their allocations and those of their teams continued to submit drafts. 'Drafting' tends to be little more than revision and editing of the document in a word-processing application, and increasingly 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 should not to be included.

Centres involved in this round of moderation presented a number of acceptable ways of providing this evidence – including, teacher-produced prompt sheets that candidates had filled in, spider diagrams, mind map, 'thought showers' (sic). One candidate had produced a 'pitch' sheet clearly designed to convince the supervising teacher of the viability of the task.

Annotation

The Code of Practice for GCE, states that 'the awarding body must require internal assessors to show clearly how credit has been assigned in relation to the criteria defined in the specification'.

Candidates' 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
- summative comments on the work, referencing precise sections in the work.

Most centres provided detailed annotations on the work submitted and usually linked these to the AOs. In most cases both pieces and commentaries were commented on, though in a small number of cases centres still seemed to see the candidate as being the primary audience for the comments and made comments about the candidate's attitude, behaviour, personality etc,

Other issues

This final section deals with some other areas of the moderation process.

Bibliographies and lists of sources

Concerns were expressed relating to areas of factual/informative writing where research and even direct quotation were not acknowledged in the bibliography, if indeed there was one.

Submission of folders

Some centres submitted immaculately presented folders with internal cover sheets, totally applicable and relevantly annotated style models and evidence of early planning, all held together by a single treasury tag thus ensuring easy access for Moderators. Others, unfortunately, had little or no discernible organisation, no way of determining the genre, audience or purpose of texts, several early drafts but no Evidence of Early Planning, with the work included in difficult-to-open transparent pockets, plastic zip wallets or envelope files.

Conclusion

Once again, much good practice was seen in terms of providing valid and challenging opportunities for candidates to produce effective and at times highly expert writing. The assessment criteria appear to provide clear guidance for teachers to produce largely accurate assessments and the majority of centres have adhered to the administrative procedures. AQA would like to thank all those teachers who worked hard to produce these successful outcomes.

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

Grade boundaries and cumulative percentage grades are available on the [Results Statistics](#) page of the AQA Website.