



**General Certificate of Education
Advanced**

394/01

**ENGLISH LANGUAGE
ELang4: Demonstrating
Expertise in Writing**

A.M. WEDNESDAY, 23 January 2008
(2 Hours)

ADDITIONAL MATERIALS

In addition to this examination paper, you will need a 12 page answer book.

INSTRUCTIONS TO CANDIDATES

Answer **one** question, completing all three tasks: **(a)**, **(b)** and **(c)**.

INFORMATION FOR CANDIDATES

Both questions carry equal marks.

In this unit you will be assessed on your ability to:

- communicate clearly the knowledge, understanding and insight appropriate to the study of language, using appropriate terminology and accurate and coherent written expression;
- demonstrate expertise and accuracy in writing for a variety of specific purposes and audiences, drawing on knowledge of linguistic features to explain and comment on choices made;
- apply and explore frameworks for the systematic study of language at different levels commenting on the usefulness of the approaches taken.

Remember that marking will take into account the quality of written communication used in your answers.

Answer one question only.

Either,

1. Answer tasks (a), (b) and (c).

Note that (a) and (b) each counts for a quarter of the marks, and (c) counts for half: you should divide your time accordingly.

Read Texts W-Z on pages 4 and 5, and then complete the three tasks which follow.

Texts W, X, Y and Z provide information about Charles Blondin, the French nineteenth century tightrope walker, (1824-1897), who became famous after crossing the Niagara Falls in America on a tightrope.

Tasks

- (a) Imagine that you work for a nineteenth century American newspaper (US or Canada), and have been assigned to cover one of Blondin's tightrope crossings of the Niagara Falls. **Write an account of this crossing for your newspaper.** You should use modern English, but should keep the original setting: do not try to update any of the details.
- You should use appropriate details selected from Texts W, X, Y and Z, but you may invent and add extra details if you wish. You do not have to include all the details given.
 - You should include a personal approach in your account, with some personal reflections, reactions, etc., as well as conveying information and atmosphere.
 - The crossing should include a number of stunts.
 - You should include some brief background information about Blondin, but the main emphasis should be on the Niagara Falls event.
 - Use a suitable headline, with language and features appropriate for a newspaper account.
 - Use your own words as far as possible.

Write the account for the newspaper in at least 200 words.

(25%)

(b) Imagine that a British group or organisation has invited Blondin to perform some tightrope stunts/feats in order to raise money for a charity. You have been asked **to produce the text for an advertising flyer** for the event that will attract a large crowd to attend.

- Choose an appropriate setting that would offer excitement, challenge, and thrills, and would attract a large crowd.
- You should make some references to past achievements/feats by Blondin, and any details of his life and personality that might interest readers, but the main emphasis should be on the coming event and what Blondin might be attempting to do.
- You should select appropriate details from Texts W-Z, but you may use your imagination and invent extra details if you wish.
- You may suggest simple features of layout, but bear in mind that this is the text for the flyer, rather than the completed printable version.
- Give brief practical details of the event for your potential audience.
- Write in modern English, but keep a 19th century setting, and use your own words as far as possible.

Write the text for the advertising flyer in at least 200 words.

(25%)

(c) **Analyse and comment on the main features of language and style** in the texts you have produced. You should use appropriate terminology and draw on your knowledge of linguistic features and frameworks to explain and comment on your language choices and features of appropriate style. Comment very briefly on any features of language in any of the Texts that may have influenced you in any way.

Write at least 400 words.

(50%)

Charles Blondin

Blondin was born Jean Francois Gravelet in St. Omer, France in 1824. He saw his first rope-walker at the age of five when a travelling circus troupe pitched camp near his home. He came home after the show and immediately strung up a makeshift rope in his back yard between two chairs and started to practise rope-walking. Blondin's father was a gymnast himself and took the rope-walking interest seriously. He sent the six year old Blondin to the Gymnastic School in Lyon. After only six months' training, Blondin made his debut as 'The Little Wonder'. At the age of nine he was orphaned and began performing professionally.

In 1851 Blondin joined the Ravel family of acrobats. It was while he was with this company that he devised the show-name of Charles Blondin. He chose "Blondin" for the colour of his hair. On their American tour he found his way to Niagara Falls, and his greatest fame.

Blondin became obsessed with the idea of crossing the falls the first time he saw them in 1858. A year after his initial visit, he returned to accomplish the feat. The stunt was not without controversy. Many people felt that a stunt like Blondin's would trivialize the falls, turning them into a backdrop for a circus act, and should not be allowed.

Blondin's original plan was to string his rope to Goat Island, but the owners supported the opposition and denied him permission. Eventually, Blondin was allowed to string his wire a mile further down-stream and on June 30, 1859, he was the first man ever to cross Niagara Falls by tightrope. A large crowd of 100,000 people watched him walk on a single three-inch hemp cord, 1,100 feet long and 160 feet above the falls at one side and 270 feet at the other.

Blondin made many more trips across the gorge during the next year and became popularly known as "the Prince of Manila" (the rope he used was made of Manila.) Each time, he thrilled larger crowds with more exciting acts. He balanced a chair on the rope and stood on it. He took pictures of the crowd while he balanced on the rope. He cooked a meal on a small portable cooker and lowered it to amazed passengers on the Maid of the Mist below. He crossed blindfolded, in a sack, on stilts, and trundling a wheelbarrow. On August 17, 1859 he increased the risk by carrying his manager, Harry Colcord, across on his back. When the Prince of Wales visited in September, 1860, Blondin carried his assistant, Romain Mouton, across and performed antics on the way. The prince, like other spectators, was left breathless and asked Blondin never to do it again. Imagine the Prince's reaction when Blondin offered to carry him across on his back or in a wheelbarrow!

Everyone who encountered Blondin found him to be a charismatic, confident, powerful man. He was a showman at heart and everything he did was dramatic. He seemed to have a very large ego, but received only admiration for this quality. Blondin loved his work, and the people loved 'The Great Blondin'.

The First Tightrope Walker of Niagara.

On June 30, 1859 the rope was in position and at five o'clock in the afternoon Blondin started the trip that was to make history. Incredulous watchers saw him lower a rope to the Maid of the Mist, pull up a bottle and sit down while he refreshed himself. He began his ascent toward the Canadian shore, paused, steadied the balancing pole and suddenly executed a back somersault. Never content merely to repeat his last performance, Blondin crossed his rope on a bicycle, walked blindfolded, pushed a wheelbarrow, cooked an omelette in the centre and made the trip with his hands and feet manacled.

Yet even these stunts failed to satisfy Blondin's urge to test himself. He announced that on August 19 he would cross the gorge carrying his manager, Harry Colcord, on his back. It was to be the supreme test of Blondin's skill and stamina. According to Colcord, the trip was a nightmare. In the unguyed centre section, the pair swayed violently. Blondin was fighting for his life. He broke into a desperate run to reach the first guy rope. When he reached it and steadied himself, the guy broke. Once more the pair swayed alarmingly as Blondin again ran for the next guy. When they reached it Blondin gasped for Colcord to get down. Six times in all Colcord had to dismount while Blondin struggled to gather his strength. In the end Blondin had to charge the crowd on the brink to prevent the press of people forcing them back in the precipice.

The Great Blondin had done it again, but this time he had only just made it.

TEXT Y

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CHARLES BLONDIN IN SCOTLAND

When Charles Blondin, the 'Daredevil Wirewalker', arrived in Edinburgh, he was already a legendary figure due to his tightrope crossing of the Niagara Falls.

His two appearances in Edinburgh were at the Royal Botanic Garden, in September 1861. A grandstand was erected for the performances and, long before the advertised time of Blondin's arrival the arena was packed with 'an assemblage of 5,000 spectators, to witness his world famous feats of skill and daring'.

He immediately 'grasped his balancing pole and, after a few cautious steps, he literally ran across the rope in the almost easy and apparently nonchalant manner imaginable'. He performed a number of acrobatic feats the second time on the rope: lying on his back, standing on one leg, hanging by his legs, turning a somersault and finally 'producing a thrill by standing on the rope on his head'. All this was done with 'apparent unconcern, as freely as though he were on the ground'. Blondin was then blindfolded and a canvas sack, reaching to his knees, was put over his head, leaving only his arms free to use the balancing pole. 'After a few feigned slips, which were greeted by the painful apprehension of the crowd, he proceeded on his course steadily, as if he were walking on a broad plank close to the ground'. His arrival at the other end of the rope 'produced a sigh of relief, in addition to great applause'.

In his final performance, he 'carried on his back, with careless freedom, the same gentleman that he did at the Falls of Niagara. The conclusion of each of his exploits was greeted with outbursts of applause, and this final act astonished the multitude who had assembled and was met with audible expressions of gratification that it was safely completed'.

TEXT Z

Reproduced from <http://www.peopleplay.org.uk>

LATER PERFORMANCES

Blondin appeared in the UK in 1862 at the Crystal Palace, where he walked on a tightrope 55 metres (180 feet) above a concrete floor. He pushed his five year old daughter in a wheelbarrow as she scattered rose petals on the crowd below. The press and audience were aghast at such obvious danger to a child and the Home Secretary intervened to stop him repeating the performance. Blondin altered his act to cook an omelette, turn somersaults and still walk across the rope instead. These performances were the talk of London, and Charles Dickens proclaimed: 'Half of London is here eager for some dreadful accident'.

Blondin toured to other venues round the country and was met by vast crowds in Birmingham, Sheffield, and Liverpool (where he pushed a lion strapped into his wheelbarrow across the tightrope, a feat which nearly ended in disaster when a guy rope became entangled around the barrow).

Performing until he was in his 70s he later developed a cycling act on the tightrope. He died aged 73 in Ealing, near London, having settled in the UK many years earlier, after living in America for some years.

Or,

2. Answer tasks (a), (b) and (c).

Note that (a) and (b) each counts for a quarter of the marks, and (c) counts for half: you should divide your time accordingly.

Read Texts X, Y, and Z on pages 8 and 9, and then complete the **three** tasks which follow.

Texts X-Z provide information about Buffalo Bill and his Wild West Show.

William Frederick “Buffalo Bill” Cody (1846-1917) was an American soldier, buffalo hunter and showman. Born in the American state of Iowa, he was one of the most colourful figures of the Old West, and mostly famous for the shows he organised with cowboy themes.

Text X shows typical items from the show’s programme. **Text Y** outlines Buffalo Bill’s life and the development of his Wild West Show. **Text Z** is about the show’s visit to the English city of Coventry in 1903.

Tasks

(a) You work as a theatre critic in 1903 for a local newspaper in an English city which is going to be visited by Buffalo Bill’s show. You normally write reviews of theatrical productions and Music Hall shows, but you have been asked to attend the Wild West Show and to **write a review of the show** for your paper.

- You should use appropriate information and details from Texts X - Z, but you may use your imagination and elaborate on details or invent extra details if you wish.
- You must be selective: you cannot include all the details given.
- The show must be set in a major English or Scottish city, which may be Coventry, or another of your own choice.
- Write your review in modern English.
- You should give your opinions (e.g. of what was most successful and enjoyable, or if any acts were less impressive), and some impression of audience reactions. Remember that you are writing to interest and entertain your audience, as well as to inform them.
- Use an appropriate style and tenor (register) for a review, and use your own words as far as possible.

Write your review of the show in at least 200 words.

(25%)

- (b) Imagine that you work for a national or local newspaper or magazine in the very early 20th century, and have been fortunate enough to obtain an interview with Buffalo Bill (William F. Cody) himself during his tour of England and Scotland. You intend to publish this interview in your paper or magazine.

Write the magazine or newspaper interview.

- You should use appropriate information, facts and details from Texts X - Z, but you are free to interpret and present these as you wish, and you may add some details of your own.
- You should begin at the start of the interview, but you do not have to bring it to a conclusion, and you do not have to use all the information provided.
- Your main aim in the interview should be to get Buffalo Bill to ‘open up’, and reveal his personal thoughts, opinions, views, reflections etc., about areas that will interest your readers. These could include such areas as: his own life and experiences, the American West, cowboys, Indians, the buffalo, beliefs, outlooks, intentions, etc. You may touch on the Wild West Show, but you must avoid either merely giving an account of it or producing a review such as you have produced in Task (a).
- Your written version of your interview should be a ‘tidied-up’ version (omitting non-fluency features for example), but should consist mostly of your questions, and Buffalo Bill’s answers. You do not need an introduction.
- Use an appropriate style and tenor (register), and use your own words as far as possible.

Write the interview in at least 200 words.

(25%)

- (c) **Analyse and comment on the main features of language and style** in the texts you have produced. You should use appropriate terminology and draw on your knowledge of linguistic features and frameworks to explain and comment on your language choices and stylistic features. Comment very briefly on any language features in Texts X - Z that may have influenced you in any way.

Write at least 400 words.

(50%)

TEXT X (from a website)

A few selected items from the programme for a typical Buffalo Bill show

GRAND REVIEW, introducing the ROUGH RIDERS OF THE WORLD – Indians, Cowboys, Mexicans, Cossacks, Arabs.

MISS ANNIE OAKLEY, celebrated shot, who will illustrate her dexterity in the use of firearms.

A COW OUTFIT STARTING ON ITS ANNUAL ROUND-UP, CROSSING THE PLAINS, and while camping is attacked by marauding Indians who are repulsed by “Buffalo Bill” and a number of cowboys.

PONY EXPRESS. A former Pony Express Rider will show how letters and telegrams were distributed across our Continent previous to the building of railways and telegraph.

COSSACKS, from the Caucasus of Russia, in feats of horsemanship, native dances, etc.

COWBOY FUN. Picking objects from the ground, lassoing wild horses, etc.

INDIANS from the Sioux, Arrapahoe, and Cheyenne tribes will illustrate the Indian mode of fighting, war dances and games.

HOLD-UP OF THE DEADWOOD STAGE COACH. Being an exact reproduction of an event in the history of this coach.

COL. W. F. CODY (Buffalo Bill) in his unique feats of sharp-shooting while riding at full speed.

BUFFALO HUNT, as it was in the Far West of North America, by “Buffalo Bill” and the Indians, exhibiting the last of the only known herd of buffalo.

TEXT Y

Reproduced from <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wild-West-show>

William Frederick Cody (Buffalo Bill) got his nickname for supplying Kansas Pacific Railroad workers with buffalo meat.

In addition to his documented service as a soldier during the Civil War and as a Colonel, Chief of Scouts for the Army during the Plains Wars, Cody claimed to have worked many jobs, including as a trapper, a Pony Express rider in 1860, wagonmaster, stagecoach driver, and even a hotel manager, but it's unclear which claims were factual and which were fabricated for purposes of publicity. He became world famous for his Wild West show.

At the age of 14, Cody signed with the Pony Express, and was soon given a job as rider. Shortly after the death of his mother in 1863, Cody enlisted in the 7th Kansas Cavalry Regiment and fought with them on the Union side for the rest of the Civil War.

From 1868 until 1872 Cody was employed as a scout by the United States Army. Part of this time he spent scouting for Indians, and the remainder was spent gathering and killing buffalo for the army and the Kansas Pacific Railroad.

After being a frontiersman, Buffalo Bill entered show business. He formed a touring company called the Buffalo Bill Combination which put on plays (e.g. “Scouts of the Prairie”, “Scouts of the Plain”) based loosely on his Western adventures.

It was the age of great showmen and travelling entertainers, like the Barnum and Bailey Circus. Cody put together a new travelling show based on both of those forms of entertainment. In 1883 in Omaha, Nebraska he founded “Buffalo Bill's Wild West,” (despite popular misconception the word “show” was not a part of the title) a circus-like attraction that toured annually.

As the Wild West toured North America over the next twenty years it became a moving extravaganza, including as many as 1200 performers. The show began with a parade on horseback, with participants from horse-culture groups that included US and other military, American Indians, and performers from all over the world in their best attire. There were Turks, Gauchos, Arabs, Mongols and Cossacks, among others, each showing their own distinctive horses and colourful costumes. Visitors to this spectacle could see main events, feats of skill, staged races, and sideshows. Many authentic western personalities were part of the show. For example, Sitting Bull and a band of twenty braves appeared. Cody's headline performers were well known in their own right. People like Annie Oakley and her husband Frank Butler put on shooting exhibitions. Other

well-known contemporaries such as ‘Calamity Jane’ (Martha Jane Canary-Burke) toured frequently. Buffalo Bill and his performers would re-enact the riding of the Pony Express, Indian attacks on wagon trains, and stagecoach robberies. The show typically ended with a melodramatic re-enactment of Custer’s Last Stand in which Cody himself portrayed General Custer.

Many historians claim that, at the turn of the 20th century, Buffalo Bill Cody was the most recognizable celebrity on earth and yet, despite all of the recognition and appreciation Cody’s show brought for the Western and American Indian cultures, Buffalo Bill saw the American West change dramatically during his tumultuous life. Buffalo herds, which had once numbered in the millions, were now threatened with extinction. Railroads crossed the plains, and the once-threatening Indian tribes were now almost completely confined to reservations. In contrast to his image and stereotype as a rough-hewn outdoorsman, Buffalo Bill pushed for the rights of American Indians and women. In addition, despite his history of killing the buffalo, he supported their conservation by speaking out against hide-hunting, and pushing for a hunting season.

Having been a frontier scout who respected the natives, he was a staunch supporter of their rights. He employed many more natives than just Sitting Bull, feeling his show offered them a better life, calling them “*the former foe, present friend, the American*”, and once said, “Every Indian outbreak that I have ever known has resulted from broken promises and broken treaties by the government.”

While in his shows the Indians were usually the “bad guys”, attacking stagecoaches and wagon trains in order to be driven off by “heroic” cowboys and soldiers, Bill also had the wives and children of his Indian performers set up camp as they would in the homelands as part of the show, so that the paying public could see the human side of the “fierce warriors”, that they were families like any other, just part of a different culture.

TEXT Z

Reproduced from <http://www.stevegraphs.com>

Buffalo Bill’s Wild West Shows visit to Coventry in 1903

For a few short hours that sunny June day, a field in a sleepy Coventry became the rip-roaring Wild West of every schoolboy’s dreams.

Real Indians attacked a wagon train, cowboy marksmen downed targets at the gallop, cavalrymen wheeled and charged. And at the centre, astride a prancing stallion and dressed in buckskins, sat a real life living legend, Buffalo Bill.

Indian killer, buffalo hunter and self-proclaimed Grand Ruler of the amusement Realm, William Cody was still a commanding figure at the age of 57. And his travelling Wild West show mesmerized thousands as it rolled into Coventry on June 20, 1903.

It arrived as dawn was breaking - four special trains puffing into the city’s goods yard with 800 people and 560 horses aboard. It was unloaded with military precision and moved to a field. And by 2pm it was rootin’tootin’ready for the first of two performances.

There was space for 14,000 spectators in the oblong arena, lit by arc lamps and cleverly created from tiered seating and canvas screens. And almost every seat was taken as Cody’s Cowboy Band launched into the opening bars of the Star-spangled Banner.

The great man himself introduced his celebrated Congress of Rough Riders of the World, a breathtaking display of horsemanship that featured Mexican vaqueros, Russian Cossacks, English cavalrymen, even Arab Bedouin.

But it was the rough riders of the old West, Indian and otherwise, that most had come to see.

For two hours the good, the bad and the ugly of Coventry sat entranced by their attack on the Deadwood Stage, scenes from Indian life, the battle of San Juan Hill and a demonstration of rodeo skills from Mexican cowboys.

It all went like clockwork and reports spoke of special applause for Cody himself, who showed off his marksmanship by riding round the arena shooting chunks off balls thrown into the air by an assistant.

The famous cowboy marksman Johnny Baker got a big hand too, for performing a similar trick while standing on his head.

But in terms of excitement the true stars of the show were undoubtedly the Indians.

Their leader, Chief Sand Rock of the Oglalla Sioux, had fought against Custer and among the band were many with a mysterious and exotic past.