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Examiners' Report

Principal Examiner Feedback

January 2019

Pearson Edexcel International GCSE

In English Language (4EA0) Paper 02

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Publications Code 4EA0\_02\_1901\_ER

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Paper 2 of International GCSE English Language 4EA0 lasts ninety minutes and is equally divided between reading and writing. Question 1 is a reading question, based on a text drawn from the Edexcel Anthology. Candidates would have seen the text previously. This year the text was a story, *A Hero*. For Question 2, candidates have a choice of three writing questions, of which they choose one. Question 2a was a letter with ideas on organising an event to celebrate the local area, Question 2b was a talk persuading students to raise money for a charity and Question 2c was a story entitled with "The Visit".

4EA0 02 has now been replaced by the new specification, so this was the last sitting of this legacy paper. The candidature was very small and was entirely composed of overseas centres in this final sitting. Examiners reported that there were more candidates than usual performing at the lower levels, with few higher level candidates. This perhaps accounted for the higher than usual number of candidates who seemed to misunderstand the purpose of writing for the various Question 2 options, although in other respects all questions worked well and were in line with previous series.

## **Reading**

### **Question 1**

Generally, candidates performed within the range Level 1 to Level 3. The weakest, were unable to do more than repeat the text, often in such a confused manner that it was debatable whether there was rewardable material, even when two to three pages of writing were submitted. Some of these candidates, however, did manage to lift their achievement into low Level 2 by at least commenting on the father's relationship with the son. High Level 2 to low Level 2 candidates were able to sequence their answers in line with the bullet points, but nevertheless relied on 're-telling' rather than commenting on the way the fears were presented. Many understood that the basic message of the story was to do with courage, but failed to link the events of the three main parts of the narrative to this concept. Nevertheless, a minority were able to work steadily through Swami's experiences, with constant and supported reference to the question theme, 'fears', enabling them to achieve at mid-Level 4. Overall, candidates understood the story's events and meaning but were not always able to express this understanding accurately.

## **Writing**

### **Question 2a**

Although some candidates misunderstood the part of the question relating to 'organising an event...', and usually simply described the area, ideas and points were often sufficiently accurately developed and described to merit at least Level 3. As with the other writing options, there was a commendable grasp of structure and paragraphing throughout the range, even within the weakest answers. In higher level answers, descriptions were often interesting, showing candidates' genuine appreciation of the positives and negatives of their areas. The range of vocabulary, accuracy of spelling and punctuation were generally accurate, but lack of control of grammatical expression, particularly tense and

verb forms, was a frequent feature of the scripts. Those at the bottom were only able to construct confused lists of English words.

### **Question 2b**

This was the least popular of the writing options. The problem for some candidates here was how to address the audience, with some candidates appearing to think that the purpose was to explain why teenagers should help charities, not encouraging them to do so. As with Q2a, the phrasing of the question posed difficulties for some candidates. In this case, some candidates ignored the word 'talk' and interpreted the word 'them' as meaning an answer should be written in the third person. Many were critical of 'idle' youth for spending too much time and money on social media use instead of thinking about those less fortunate and concentrated on setting out reasons for raising money, rather than focusing on ways to do it.

### **Question 2c**

This was the most popular option, but was nevertheless was misinterpreted by some candidates. They wrote about personal experiences of 'visits' instead of stories. Consequently, answers tended to be formulaic with overuse of connectives such as 'then'. Where stories were constructed, these tended to achieve Level 2/low Level 3, not because of incredibility, but usually because they lacked conclusions or ran out of time. A minority were able to write effectively, whether about real or fictional experiences and develop well-organised accounts. This option was marked by a generally weaker grasp of structure and technical control than the others.