

Examiners' Report January 2013

GCSE English Language 5EN2H 01

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Introduction

This report will provide exemplification of candidates' work, together with tips and comments for Questions 1–10.

Examiners are looking above all for signs that candidates are responding in a mature and reflective way to the language and ideas of prose writers and are communicating effectively on the selected topic.

The responses of candidates had many outstanding features such as:

- evidence that candidates knew how to deal precisely with the language of the extract they were faced with and concentrate on the author's purpose and methods of presentation
- the widespread ability to select an appropriate passage from another section of the text and offer informed comments, exploring a wide range of language features and linking these to ideas and themes
- personal writing which showed a strong sense of purpose and used a register which engaged effectively with the specified audience.

Less successful responses:

- relied heavily on narration of events
- showed an insecure grasp of language (for example, confusion over terms) or failed to support points with appropriate examples
- struggled to sustain ideas or develop arguments in any depth and did not demonstrate a secure control of language.

Overall, it was felt that the candidates had responded well and appropriately to the tasks. They had engaged effectively with the chosen prose text and wrote detailed, perceptive answers, which explored ideas, themes and language techniques. There was excellent quality in some of the writing responses. Many candidates showed a strong sense of purpose, and it was clear that centres had devoted time to developing the skill of writing in particular registers and for specific audiences. The more successful responses were hence clearly differentiated from those where the candidate offered a personal opinion or viewpoint, but seemed to forget about writing for an audience.

Section A

Question 1

Touching the Void

1(a): From the small number of responses, there were some effective answers which discussed the range of emotions experienced by Joe. Some of the more successful candidates were able to highlight his determination and explore the sense of anti-climax experienced at the end of the passage. Less successful responses showed generally sound understanding of his character and feelings, but without developing in any depth the connection made between techniques and presentation of ideas.

1(b): The choice of an appropriate second section of the book was made by most candidates. The most popular choices were Chapter 9, where Joe attempts to climb the slope, and Chapter 10, where he crawls across the ice. Candidates could usually provide clear textual references to illustrate the strength of Joe's character in tackling the difficulties he faced. They were able to identify and explore a range of techniques, and link them to ideas and feelings.

This is an extract from the central part of a detailed response to Q1(b).

At first you are hit with the image of a man doing what he loves, but as the story progresses you see how he is starting to resent everything; he begins to question himself "what now?", as he asks himself that question he may begin to realise there isn't anything else for him.



ResultsPlus examiner comment

The candidate sees how Joe has a sense of anti-climax from having achieved his aim, but this is not explored in any depth and there is little attempt at language analysis.

The response was awarded 1 mark out of 16, a Band 1 response.



ResultsPlus examiner tip

The answer would need more development to qualify for a higher band.

This is an extract from the central part of a detailed response to Q1(b).

Secondly we know Joe is really determined and good at fighting fear. Despite 'the desire to stop abseiling' being 'unbearable' he continued to do it and battled himself to get the job done. This tells me Joe has a very strong mind as he can fight his instinct and keep control despite staring death in the face. The adjective 'unbearable' suggests he is having to concentrate really hard as it is a very powerful adjective and makes it easier for the reader to understand how difficult it is for him.



ResultsPlus
examiner comment

This is an extract from a well developed response, which consistently used convincing, relevant quotations to support a sustained interpretation of Joe's strength of character. It was awarded 22 marks out of 24, a Band 5 response.



ResultsPlus
examiner tip

Note how the candidate explores the effect of a key word from the text.

Question 2

Anita and Me

2(a): There were a limited number of responses to this question. These did, however, indicate that candidates had engaged well with the extract and had an understanding of Meena's feelings about her grandmother. Many candidates were amused by her possessiveness and the phrase 'sodding granny' was the one most frequently quoted. One examiner wrote that 'Candidates were more alert to the use of humour in the text than seen previously'. Meena's fury that Pinky and Baby were greeted before her was frequently mentioned and some candidates were then able to explore her pleasure at noting Nanima's confusion over their identity.

Some answers, however, did not focus on Meena's reaction and gave a general account of the importance of Nanima to the whole family. Less able candidates simply narrated events and used quotations to support comments on these events, rather than to explore the effects of the language techniques used.

2(b): Candidates usually chose an appropriate extract to discuss how Meena was influenced by her family in another part of the novel. Chapter 5, where Meena dances, elicited some sound comments and language choices, as did Chapter 6, the arrival of Sunhil.

This is the opening section of the response by one candidate to Q2(b), focusing on how Meena is influenced by her family in one other part of the novel.

(Section A continued)

The beginning of chapter 6 Page 131, This is where Meena first encounters ~~a~~ the new member of the family, her new baby brother ~~Sunil~~ Sunil. Her first impressions of meeting Sunil ~~were~~ ^{were} ~~not~~ not what a normal 10 year old girl would ~~truly~~ mention. "I disliked him on first sight" This is a very strong and vicious ~~and~~ phrase after ~~she~~ just the first glimpse of Sunil. "a scrawny yowling thing with a poached egg ~~as~~ of a face" The ~~technique~~ techniques that she has used to describe her brother, ~~is~~ ^{are} ~~by~~ ^{by} using metaphors.

By saying his head takes up the shape ~~of~~ ^{of} a "poached egg" really implies that ~~she~~ ^{she} ~~is~~ ^{is} not a ~~family~~ ^{family} ~~person~~ ^{person}. She liked being the only child because ~~everything~~ ^{was} ~~was~~ the attention she received from her parents was ~~from~~ ^{all she could've wanted} ~~from~~ ^{from} ~~her~~ ^{her} ~~parents~~ ^{parents}, but ~~now~~ with the birth of her brother, her parents are going to have to look after Sunil.



ResultsPlus
examiner comment

This is a sound response, with points clearly made, and there is sound understanding of how techniques contribute to the presentation of ideas. This was not sustained throughout the answer, however, and it was awarded 6 marks out of 24, a mark in the Band 2 range.



It is important to sustain coverage of the passage by discussing a range of techniques.

Question 3

Balzac and the Little Chinese Seamstress

This text was not chosen by many candidates.

3(a): Those candidates who attempted this question often sustained a range of points on the terrible effect that working in the coal mine had on the boys; for example, 'There was a distinct awareness of the misery of the conditions suffered by the narrator and Luo' and 'This infernal ordeal' was frequently quoted and the image of the game of Russian roulette was explored in detail.

3(b): Candidates were able to choose a relevant extract relating to another of the narrator's experiences in the novel. The most popular was when the boys hide in the house of Four-Eyes. There was emphasis on the use of short sentences to create tension, and more able candidates also pointed out the underlying humour of the episode. The traversing of the perilous ridge was also an appropriate choice of passage as it provided many opportunities for language analysis.

This is an extract from a sustained response to Q3(a), where the candidate makes a good range of points, which are supported by relevant textual details.

The coal mines are described as ancient and ingested with fear, uncertainty and the sense of impending doom. Sijie's use of the word "ruin" portrays the image of uncertainty, as old places provide the least amount of evidence for their creation; these coal mines are a mystery. They are given a sense of emptiness, void of life with the quotation "disuse", this creates an intimidating atmosphere for both the characters in the novel and the reader.

In the mines the idea of life becomes a

(Section A continued)

game. There are no evident variables, it is merely life or death. This feeling is perfectly described with the use of the simile "Russian roulette". A game renowned for its dependance on chance alone, the comparison with the mines portrays the experiences as pure danger and reliant on luck. One more example is



ResultsPlus
examiner comment

The candidate makes a good range of points and detailed analysis of language is shown, although there is an unfortunate error in identifying 'Russian Roulette' as a simile. This was awarded 9 marks out of 16, a high Band 3.



ResultsPlus
examiner tip

Look closely at the way this response explores the impact of key words.

Question 4

Heroes

4(a): This was a slightly more popular choice this series. Candidates recognised the strained nature of the relationship between Francis and Nicole and there were many references to Francis' guilt and how he is unable to put this into words. Many candidates also commented on Nicole's anger and lack of forgiveness for Francis, which was shown by the harshness of her voice. There were also many comments on the use of repetition, short sentences and descriptions of Nicole's body language, to create tension. There was considerable sympathy for both characters. Several candidates used brief quotations very effectively to explore the resonance of the religious imagery in the passage.

Less able candidates understood the question but worked through the passage describing the dialogue, rather than commenting on language.

4(b): Responses tended to focus on the relationship between Francis and Nicole in another part of the novel, although this was not specified in the question. The most popular extracts were their first or last meetings. Some candidates struggled to sustain language development but there was thorough understanding of ideas and themes. The choice of the rape extract provided some confident explorations of Francis' reactions as he hid outside. Another popular choice was when Francis returns

to visit Larry LaSalle. However, a common problem here was that some candidates focused on the reactions of Larry rather than on Francis.

Some of the less successful responses tended to narrate the table tennis victory.

This is an extract from a response to Q4(a), showing the tension between Francis and Nicole.

After hearing that from Francis, she just wanted ^{him} Francis to leave. Francis: "What can I do?" Nicole replied "Poor Francis" with absolutely no pity in her voice. She then told Francis to "go away". This suggests that she could never trust him again, so she could no longer see him again. Francis waited for her after she'd gone, hoping that she would come back that didn't happen, so she left. Francis still loved her as he was waiting for her, hoping that she would appear again and forgive him. "I waited ~~through~~ for her to appear



ResultsPlus
examiner comment

The candidate shows generally sound understanding but there is some narrative. This was awarded 2 marks out of 16, a Band 1 mark.



ResultsPlus
examiner tip

The answer would need more interpretation of language to qualify for a higher band.

This is an extract from a response to Q4(b), discussing the visit of Francis to Larry LaSalle.

(Section A continued)

p 78 + 79

This is when Francis comes to kill Larry ~~for~~^{for} what he did to Nicole before Francis went to war. It's also the first time Francis has seen Larry since he raped Nicole.

"Francis, Francis Cassavant" I announce" Francis wants Larry to know it's him so that Larry will know that he's no longer shy and timid, Francis almost seems to be putting on a tough front before Larry has even said anything.

'we shake hands. At the last minute, when it seems we might embrace, as old friends and comrades, teacher and pupil, I pull away. Francis doesn't want anything to do with Larry anymore even though when he was younger Larry was his idol. 'At the last minute' shows that Larry is obviously so charismatic that Francis very nearly forgets everything that he went there to do and that it was almost like before all the bad stuff had happened. "I don't move, I don't take off anything. I don't plan to stay long" when Larry pretty much tells Francis to make himself at home, Francis is very defiant and remembers exactly why he's there and is determined not to let Larry get to him.

'Marvelling again how Larry LaSalle was always one step ahead of us' even though Francis is raging at what Larry did to Nicole and how Larry is so unfazed by it, Francis is still slightly in awe of Larry and how clever he is.



ResultsPlus
examiner comment

There is a developed interpretation of ideas and sustained relevant quotations to support the response. It was awarded a mark of 13 out of 24, a Band 3 mark.



Candidates should consider how, with a slightly stronger interpretation and focus on the effects of language, this response could have moved into Band 4.

Question 5

Of Mice and Men

This was by far the most popular question.

5(a): The full range of ability was encountered and there were candidates who commented with insight on a wide range of techniques. Most candidates understood the awkwardness of the atmosphere and were able to discuss how this was presented. They were able to identify how tension was created by use of the repetition of 'silence' and through short, abrupt sentences. More able candidates offered perceptive analysis of the responses of individual characters, such as the way Slim tries to make conversation and the way George cannot bring himself to deal the cards. Some of the less successful answers, however, dealt only with the reader's reactions. There was also, sometimes, little distinction made between the individuals and they were grouped together as 'the ranch workers'.

There was a great deal of empathy for Candy and, at the stronger end, a detailed distinction was made between Carlson's apologetic tone, when he leads the dog away, and his lack of subtlety when he questions Slim's comment about the shovel. There was some misunderstanding in the less successful responses of his 'evil intentions'. Many candidates were confident in identifying language features but there was the usual spotting and mixing up of simile and metaphor, not to mention verb, adjective and adverb.

5(b): The most common choices of passage for this answer were the fight between Lennie and Curley and the death of Curley's wife. The shooting of Lennie was also popular. On the whole, candidates demonstrated a really confident understanding of the text and of how Steinbeck presents people's reactions to an event. There was a high degree of engagement across the ability range and considerable empathy with the characters, linked with a good understanding of the themes and the text as a whole.

A common pitfall, however, was to discuss only George's reaction or, as in Section A, focus solely on the reader. There were also several candidates who chose the passage immediately after Curley's wife's death and wrote convincingly about the atmosphere in the barn but without any focus on the reaction of a person. This illustrates the danger posed by preparing a particular passage without close reference to the question.

This is an extract from a response to Q5(a), where the candidate discusses a number of language techniques.

calming imagery and ~~the~~ conveys the stillness of the atmosphere. The reason George lays the back down gently is because everyone is scared to break the silence. The reason they don't want to break the silence is because they are trying to not to disturb Candy in his fragile state. The use of the calming adjective 'gently' shows how the farm hands are trying to tip-toe around Candy so as not to disturb him in these emotional times.

~~##~~

~~##~~ Candy seems to be melancholy for a long time and Steinbeck uses repetition to show how passing. A minute passed, and another minute. Though only two minutes pass in this sentence, it feels painfully long and Steinbeck uses a comma in the middle to drag it out. This implies the minutes in the ranch house were felt like hours because of the still atmosphere.



ResultsPlus
examiner comment

This is a sharply-focused answer, with embedded quotations used effectively, although the adverb 'gently' is incorrectly named as an adjective.



ResultsPlus
examiner tip

This answer has an assured focus on language techniques but candidates should make sure these are correctly identified.

This is an extract from a response to Q5(b), where the candidate writes about the end of the novel.

Carlson approaches ~~ago~~ George and questions him on how he just killed his best friend, after such a terrible ~~in~~ incident I believe the last thing to do is ~~put~~ pile on the quilt by asking George to explain how he kill his best friend. Also you could see that George was still trying to realise what he had done, because he was now whispering back answers as though he was fading away.

~~Carlson~~ The only person that understood George at that time was Slim, the godly figure, he seemed to forgive George for killing Lennie straight away

(Section A continued)

When he ~~repeats~~ repeats ↑ "You hadda, George. I swear you hadda." which is true because that was his only choice and even the all mighty slim could not do anything to help other than asking George to go get a drink "Me and you'll go in and get a drink. However that was all it took to get George back on his feet showing that all ~~of~~ George even wanted was company.

On the other hand, the book ends on a negative with Carlson saying "Now what the hell you suppose is eating these two guys" which reminds the reader again of the horrible truth that people while living in the great depression were pretty ~~selfish~~ selfish and ~~did~~ ^{don't} really take in thought of ~~the~~ other.



ResultsPlus
examiner comment

The candidate shows a generally sound understanding but tends to generalise and there is little language analysis. This is a Band 1 answer and a mark of 4 out of 24 was awarded.



ResultsPlus
examiner tip

This was an appropriate choice of passage but there needs to be a much closer focus on language.

Here is an extract from a response to Q5(b), where the candidate discusses the men's reactions to the death of Curley's wife.

(Section A continued)

John Steinbeck uses colloquial language to show us Curley's ~~angry~~^{furiously} reaction. This is shown where it says 'That big son-of-a-bitch done it'. This shows us that Curley is ~~is~~ fuming about his wife's death and that he knows who done it. Curley goes on to say 'I'll shoot him in the guts'. This further expresses his anger and his determination to ~~find Lennie~~ hunt Lennie down as soon as possible.

John Steinbeck uses short sentences to show another reaction to the killings. 'I'll get my Luger'. This is the ~~very~~^{first} thing Carlson seems to say after Curley's wife's death. From section 3 we already hear of Carlson and his Luger killing the dog. This could show us Carlson is maybe eager to kill. ~~Other~~ ~~peop~~ The other ranch workers had furious and angry reactions while Carlson just seemed interested in getting his Luger.

(Section A continued)

John Steinbeck ~~also~~ uses short sentences again to show us Whit's reaction.

'I ain't got a gun.' This implies the fact that Whit seems excited about the fact that they are going out to hunt Lennie. It also shows us he doesn't really care about Curley's wife dying. This is also the only thing Whit says.



ResultsPlus
examiner comment

The response is a confident one, with a good range of points and an assured understanding of how techniques are used to present the men's reactions. It was awarded 17 marks out of 24, a Band 4 mark.



ResultsPlus
examiner tip

For a Band 5 response, candidates need to think about how comments could have been developed yet more fully so as to demonstrate a really perceptive grasp.

Question 6

Rani and Sukh

This was not a popular choice.

6(a): The answers on the extract provided were sound or better, with few at the top or bottom end of the range. Most candidates recognised that the passage built up to a climax and there was good discussion of what led up to this. Some less able candidates tended to describe the extract, with frequent references to the text but little analysis of the effects of techniques. However, the most effective responses dealt well with the priest's and Resham's initial lack of understanding of the activity with the police cars, enhanced by the use of dramatic irony in the dialogue between them. There were also many comments on the description of Resham's body language as he moves towards his home and on the use of abrupt sentences and short paragraphs to create the tension and horror of the death at the end.

6(b): The most popular extracts chosen to illustrate the importance of violence were Billah's death or the football match. Both were appropriate choices and provided ample opportunity to explore language techniques. Although this was done thoroughly at the top end, as in part (a) there was also a tendency to narrate events.

This is the first part of a response by one candidate to Q6(a), looking at techniques used to influence the reader's view of the events leading up to Sukh's death.

Write your answers to Section A Questions (a) and (b) here:

6a. In this extract Rai expresses to the reader how Resham feels ~~and~~ about the violent events that happened before he arrived. The extract is an intense ^{and} fast-pace; this helps build up tension. Rai uses ~~first~~ ^{third} person to convey to the reader what Resham is doing and how he deals with the events leading ^{up} to Sukh's death.

Rai uses verbs to convey to the reader that something serious has happened in the novel. "More police cars sped by" The verb "sped" conveys to the reader how serious the police are and makes them ^{intrigued to know what} think what has happened. Moreover, short sentences are used to build tension throughout the extract. "Then a van,"

Furthermore, Rai uses the priest's dialogue to be indirect with the reader. "There must be something very serious up ahead." The use

(Section A continued)

of indirect speech not only builds more tension; it also makes the reader more excited to read on. In addition, this helps the reader to become more ^{nervous to} intrigued ~~on~~ what has happened.

Albeit Resham Bains is less traditional, he still believes that everything happens ~~for a reason~~ because "It is the will of Our Lord". Rai uses religious connotations to suggest to the reader how the tragedy that follows is due to "kismet" (fate). This evokes the emotion of sympathy towards the reader because they learn that history can repeat itself.



ResultsPlus
examiner comment

This is an assured response which explores a range of techniques and makes pertinent comments on how these are used to present ideas and atmosphere. The response sits comfortably in Band 4 and was awarded 11 marks out of 16.



ResultsPlus
examiner tip

Note the way the candidate identifies a number of language features and also shows the effects of their use.

Question 7

Riding the Black Cockatoo

7(a): There were few very responses to this text. Most candidates were able to select relevant quotations to support a sound understanding of the reactions to John's story about the skull 'Mary'. Almost all responses commented on Craig's amusement by John's confusion about the tribal map and then went on to consider Rob's reaction to being informed about the skull having been kept on the mantelpiece.

7(b): There were a number of possible extracts to choose from in order to show different attitudes towards Mary in another part of the book. One appropriate example chosen was from the end of Chapter 2, where Danalis looks back over the forty years that Mary had sat on the mantelpiece. Another which worked well was from the ceremony in Chapter 11. Both extracts provided a variety of attitudes to comment on.

This is an extract from the middle of a response to Q7(a), exploring how language influences the reader's view of the reactions to John's story.

When Rob found out about the story, his reactions were quite different. Danalis recalls the story Rob 'inched' into the room, this metaphor can show Rob as interested, but to emphasise his interest Danalis uses a metaphor 'like a bear' to compare his interest with the story to that of an animal drawn to food. This

~~This idea~~

Again referring to animals when referring describing Rob's reaction Danalis says Rob 'flinched' as if he had been 'stung'. The simile of 'stung' is a hyperbole of Rob's reactions. ~~and could show the feelings of~~

(Section A continued)

~~of a original~~
Another ~~reaction~~ reaction of
Craig's 'shrugged' which a verb
showing again of his calmness
to the situation and of that
he is just glad May is coming
home.



ResultsPlus
examiner comment

There is a thorough understanding of the use of imagery to present a character's reactions to John's story, although there is incorrect labelling of one of the devices. The candidate was awarded 8 marks out of 16, a Band 3 response.



ResultsPlus
examiner tip

Candidates should make sure that language features are correctly identified.

Question 8

To Kill a Mockingbird

A variety of responses to this text was evident.

8(a): This section offered candidates a number of language features such as repetition, short sentences for dramatic effect, adjectives, adverbs and dialogue. The more able candidates engaged with the extract in detail and analysed how tension had been built by the author's choice of language. Candidates commented, not just on the setting, but on the change in atmosphere and perception of the place and the social context it depicts. There were some assured responses which used embedded quotations effectively and were able to recognise more subtle points, such as that 'bullet-headed' suggested that Lula was aggressive and the implications of the roses 'trembling' on Calpurnia's hat.

8(b): Choices of suitable places were fairly limited, with most candidates selecting the jailhouse, court room, Mrs Dubose's or the Radley house. Some of the less successful responses dealt only with the characters, without discussing the environment itself. There were, however, some confident and perceptive answers, especially on the jailhouse, which linked character and place. One candidate pointed out that Atticus was as lonely as 'the solitary light'. Another candidate wrote extremely well about Mrs

Dubose's house, discussing the children's reactions to the sights and smells, as well as to the grotesque description of Mrs Dubose herself.

This is an extract from a very sustained response to Q8(a), focusing on the visit of Scout and Jem to the church.

When they enter the Church, the use of the dynamic verbs 'stepped' and 'look' show that in the society, the black men know how they should respect white people, even if they are children Scout and Jem show no sign of surprise.

(Section A continued)

and see this as 'respectful'. The reader can then see how the writer is portraying the social class stances in the community; Jen and Scout accepting the respect but not reciprocating it. Even though Scout can be particularly naïve at some points, at this time she shows her maturity by realising what the socially accepted thing to do is.

Throughout the scene, Calpurnia is very protective. The writer conveys this by using the ^{preposition} ~~preposition~~ 'between' ~~with~~, ~~the~~ Calpurnia wanted to make sure she could defend the children if she needed to. This shows the reader that Calpurnia was expecting there to be some controversy, even if Scout and Jen couldn't sense it.

When they are confronted by 'a voice', the reader can see that Scout and Jen are ~~it~~ intimidated by this unknown ~~man~~ person, as the writer has used this man to convey tension. The description of this 'voice' is one that ~~conveys~~ makes the reader sense threat. The metaphor 'bullet-headed' that describes Lula immediately ~~to~~ makes the reader think of war and danger, ~~which is what Lula has~~ ~~was~~ ~~connotations~~

(Section A continued)

of danger, which is in effect what Lula is trying to cause. Scout then uses the static verb 'seemed' to imply that Scout finds her threatening. This is further proved with the hyperbole of 'seven-foot high'. Clearly this woman isn't that tall but ^{because} Scout is ~~totally~~ threatened by her, ~~and she~~ her personality and demeanour change Scout's perception of her.

The use of the dynamic verb 'dig' in the next paragraph, shows that Scout can sense Calpurnia is alarmed by the situation and makes the reader think Calpurnia will stick up for her the children. This is further ~~emphasised~~ emphasised by Calpurnia using tones Scout 'had never heard her use'. Scout's ~~own~~ naivety is shown again here, with her not considering how Calpurnia ~~acts~~ ^{or what she'd make them} around her own community and friends. This also changes the reader's view of Calpurnia, realising there's a lot more to Calpurnia than we see at the lads' home. —



ResultsPlus
examiner comment

This is a very perceptive response at the top of the expected range. The candidate uses the text aptly to make confident language points. It was awarded 16 out of 16.



ResultsPlus
examiner tip

Note the excellent use of embedded quotations.

This is a paragraph from the early part of a candidate's response to Q8(b), exploring how Jem and Scout react to the house of Mrs Dubose.

Furthermore, Scout and Jem react with repulsion towards Mrs Dubose and her house which they visit. This is evident through the phrase: "An oppressive odour met us when we crossed the threshold". The alliteration of 'oppressive odour' shows the reader that Scout and Jem have come to a disgusting environment, and therefore imagery is created of what the children are experiencing. Through the personification of the odour, "an oppressive odour met us", shows that this smell was almost as if waiting for them to arrive. Due to the collective pronoun, of 'us', the reader is included in Scout and Jem's reaction to their arrival at Mrs Dubose's house. ~~Consequently~~



ResultsPlus

examiner comment

This response shows assured understanding of how techniques contribute to the presentation of atmosphere and feelings. It was given 17 out of 24, a mark in the middle of Band 4.



ResultsPlus

examiner tip

When thinking about the language features of an extract, candidates should consider why the writer has chosen particular words and phrases.

Section B

Question 9: Designer clothes

AO4(i)+(ii) (Content and ideas)

This was the most popular question in this section and candidates were very well informed on the subject, which added to the effectiveness of their response. Some candidates fell into the trap of repeating the same argument, usually a simple statement that too much money was wasted on designer labels. There were many lists of these labels, often from the less able candidates. However, there were also more thoughtful answers which mentioned the use of cheap labour in third world countries to produce the clothes. Some were laced with sarcasm and one pronounced that designer labels were 'infesting the most stalwart of homes'. Candidates were usually aware of the importance of putting forward a sustained line of argument and using rhetorical devices. The more successful responses crafted their writing for the appropriate audience and purpose and often had a clear personal voice. Humour was used to good effect, such as the answer entitled 'Brandalism'.

Many of the views were strongly expressed and enjoyable to read, with candidates using a number of intentional techniques to engage with the subject and the audience. The form was an article for an online magazine and in most cases, the register reflected this. There were good signs of clear planning, to produce well structured responses which considered form, purpose and audience.

The question allowed candidates to enthuse about their favourite clothes and they did so with flair and enthusiasm. There was also a strong concern about the peer pressure to spend excessively to impress and even an acknowledgement of how this impacts upon parental pockets. One examiner commented that, 'It was heartening to see that most appreciated it was parents who paid.'

A frequent device, and clearly a taught approach, was to introduce made-up statistics or interviews with young people, to back up points.

AO4(iii) (Spelling, punctuation and grammar)

Many responses were impressive in their accuracy, using sentences which were convincingly structured, and imaginative and entertaining vocabulary. There were problems, however, with the use of commas instead of full stops. Spelling of common homophones was erratic and there were numerous misplaced or missing apostrophes. One examiner lamented the 'significant crop of the lower case versions of the pronoun, I.'

This is the first half of a candidate's response to Q9.

Write your answer to Section B here:

9) Young people today are blinded by brands, designer clothes, celebrity inspirations, which makes them spend a lot of money to get them to the latest trends.

Did you know, 70% of young adults spend a lot of money! (and not just their money). Young people believe the majority of young people do not understand the meaning of hardship, due to jobs being harder to find which doesn't pay for their designer brands. Most young people then throw out their 'not-so-trending' items in the bin which wastes a lot of money!

I believe young people should invest or save their money ~~for~~ for

(Section B continued)

~~Focus~~ the future.

It should be the way of life.

~~Imagine~~ Just imagine, being a ~~successful~~
successful businessman/woman
and having a nice house.

That's the life we all want; in
order to get it, you need to work
for it.

I understand: money = Designer brands
but designer brands = money.



ResultsPlus

examiner comment

The candidate writes an article with a clear register and purpose and points are soundly presented. This was awarded 5 marks out of 16, Band 2.

Spelling, punctuation and grammar are mostly accurate but there are flaws in expression (4 marks out of 8, Band 2).



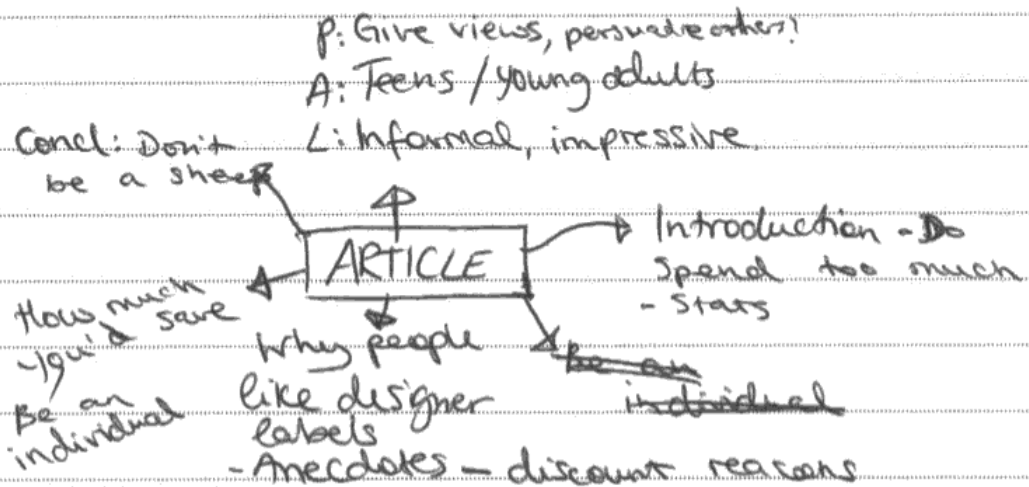
ResultsPlus

examiner tip

Note the strong personal voice of the writer, showing a clear sense of purpose and audience.

This is the start of a very lively response to Q9.

Write your answer to Section B here:



Don't be a sheep; be unique.

Are you reading this article after arriving home from some 'retail therapy'? I thought so. How much did you spend? Over one hundred pounds - I hope it was worth it. Did you know, that over 85% of 14-25 year olds spend £50 every weekend. That means that we spend over £1000 a year on clothes... ^{That's ridiculous.} ~~You're probably thinking~~ Not only this, but ^{- yes wasted} this money is being wasted on brands like 'Jack Wills' and 'Hollister'. This is

(Section B continued)

a world where a pair of socks costs £10 - ^{why} ~~what~~
~~on earth~~ do we do that, ^{we hide these 'designer}
^{for should I say (Converses)} ~~you cover them~~ socks'
with ~~see~~ shoes anyway. So why are we so
mesmerised by designer phenomena?

I've been 'sober' from visiting these shops for
a year - but ^{what's causing some of us to get}
~~what convinced me to stop?~~
drunk on designer labels? Investigating this
further I talked to ^{17 year old} Rosie (self-confessed shopaholic).
Covered in brand-clad clothing, she told me:
"I love clothes from 'topshop' and 'Jack & Jill' - you
could say they're my kryptonite. Everybody knows
that these are fashionable brands, so people think
that I'm fashionable too. Also, ~~even~~ although they're
more expensive, you know your paying for quality".
Interesting views, but is what Rosie thinks
actually true...



ResultsPlus
examiner comment

This candidate expresses a strong viewpoint. The response demonstrates precision and control, with some interesting crafting of ideas. It was given 14 out of 16, Band 5 and 7/8, Band 3.



ResultsPlus
examiner tip

Candidates should choose a style of writing that is as well suited to the task as this - one which engages effectively with the readers.

Question 10: The text for a speech to the school council

AO4(i)+(ii) (Ideas and content)

There were fewer responses to this question but, when handled correctly, they were an excellent showcase for candidates to promote themselves and their skills. Most candidates were able to strike an effective tone for their speech and promoted suitable qualities for the role – leadership, confidence, and understanding. What they would actually *do* in such a role was often less successfully developed, however, and it was this part of the response which often differentiated the more able candidates.

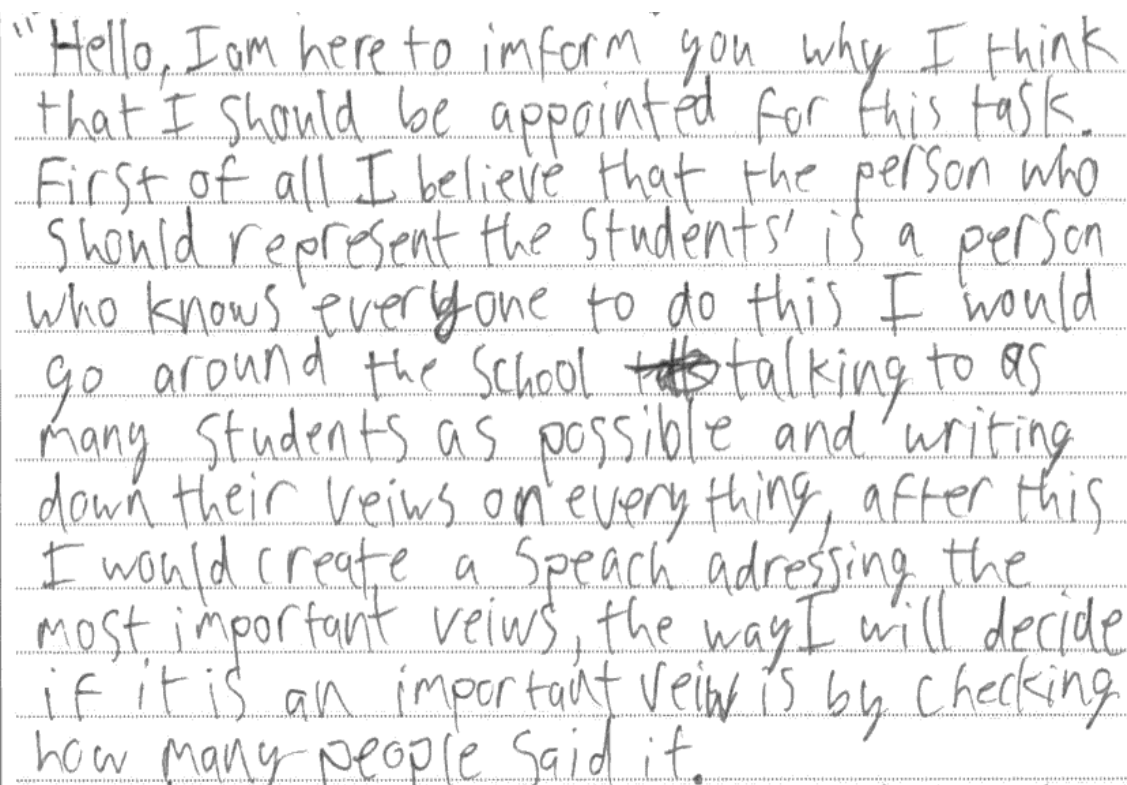
Even at the lower end a persuasive tone was established, if not necessarily maintained. The more able candidates, meanwhile, used rhetorical devices, anecdotes from their school life and even flattery of the current council, to good effect. Some candidates were able to employ various strategies that they had been taught and produce some engaging and effective writing.

Occasionally candidates took the task as an opportunity to launch into a criticism of their own school, which was not particularly successful, and there were also one or two letters from candidates who did not check the requirement of the question.

AO4(iii) (Spelling, punctuation and grammar)

It was noted that some candidates could spell correctly all manner of complex words, while tripping up on 'they're, there and their'.

This is the opening paragraph from a speech written in response to Q10.



"Hello, I am here to inform you why I think that I should be appointed for this task. First of all I believe that the person who should represent the students is a person who knows everyone to do this I would go around the school ~~to~~ talking to as many students as possible and writing down their views on everything, after this I would create a speech addressing the most important views, the way I will decide if it is an important view is by checking how many people said it.



ResultsPlus

examiner comment

This is a generally appropriate answer, with some register. There are, however, technical weaknesses, especially in sentence punctuation. It was given 2 marks out of 16, Band 1, and 1 out of 8, also Band 1.



ResultsPlus

examiner tip

Candidates should make sure they write in complete sentences, correctly punctuated.

This is a section from the middle of a response to Question 10.

My fellow students... my friends. I held my hand up right ~~to~~ ^{now} in the promise that I will work for you. I too, am tired. I'm tired at spending 30 minutes waiting to buy lunch and then having to pay prices which are close to extortion. I'm tired of carrying 5 books and a P.E kit to school without having ~~anyplace~~ ^{anyplace} to put them apart from my painful back. We're all tired from spending everyday complaining about things that never get fixed. In fact hands up, who's tired? I thought so; but you know what, let that tiredness strike you, let it inspire you, drive you to change.

(Section B continued)

I'm hungry friends. I'm starving. I'm craving for change! I can feel it on the tip of my tongue, taunting and teasing me, but I can't get to it without you. You vote for the council members and you decide what you want from them. You put your faith and trust into them; but how can you be assured you get what you want? Vote for the right person. Vote for me.



ResultsPlus

examiner comment

This is an assured response, with a clear sense of purpose and a strong use of rhetoric. There are a few errors but the answer communicates engagingly. It was awarded 16 out of 16, Band 5, and 7 out of 8, also Band 5.



ResultsPlus

examiner tip

Candidates should consider how rhetoric is used effectively to address the audience.

Paper summary

Candidates' work often reached a very high standard. There was evidence of strong personal response to the prose texts, dealing precisely with the language of the extract provided and focusing well on how this presented the writer's ideas. Candidates also demonstrated the ability to write with clarity and engagement on the writing tasks, often producing witty and sophisticated answers, with a strong awareness of their audience.

Based on their performance on this paper, candidates are offered the following advice.

Candidates should ensure that in Section A (Reading), they:

- engage in a sustained manner with the writer's use of language
- avoid lapsing into narrative and describing events.

In Section B (Writing), they should:

- address the audience, which was clearly specified in the two questions
- use a range of sentences, correctly punctuated, and check work for common errors.

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