

Examiners' Report
November 2013

GCSE English Language 5EN2F 01

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Introduction

This was a new examination series which was intended to be primarily a re-sit. This clearly affected the nature of the entry, with many borderline students. This led to a relatively small entry. The low numbers who answered on a number of the texts meant that the report is unable to make general comments in those cases because there was too little evidence to hand.

Despite advice given in previous reports it was still the case that some students wrote the answer to the Writing Question immediately after their Section A response whilst others wrote Section A b) responses in the Section B (Writing) section of the answer book.

On this tier, students were required to identify three specific language features from an extract and then analyse the language more widely, following a series of bullet points. They also had to select another extract for detailed analysis. Also, for the writing task, there was an emphasis on transactional writing, again requiring students to follow a series of bullet points.

The responses of students had many strong features.

Examiners were impressed by:

- evidence that the students had understood the content and ideas in the chosen texts
- the ability of many to select suitable examples of the writers' language, with a grasp of a range of language features, and to offer relevant comment that related these examples to the ideas and themes of the texts
- writing on the chosen topic that showed an appropriate form, a suitable register and the ability to engage with the intended readership.

Less successful responses:

- showed an insecure grasp of language (for example, confusion over terms) or of ideas and failed to support their points by appropriate textual evidence
- relied too heavily on narration of events or wrote at length about the background and context of the text
- wrote reasonably about a topic, but without a secure control of language or ideas.

In the Reading section (Section A) the overwhelming majority of students chose to respond to Question 5, 'Of Mice and Men'. This no doubt reflects both the popularity of 'Of Mice and Men' and its familiarity to teachers.

Section A (Reading)

All comments made by examiners relate to Question 5 as there were very few responses to other texts. The majority of students were able to respond to the text and relate their comments to the text with better responses having a clear focus on the language and sound understanding of the text. Some responses to part b) did not focus on one extract or were distracted into comment on context and background.

Section B (Writing)

The majority of students offered, at their level, a good attempt to communicate their ideas in both tasks. The stronger answers were differentiated from the weaker both technically (at the top end, meaning was communicated clearly, with sound spelling) and in terms of the capacity to sustain a clear sense of audience and purpose.

Examiners commented on the enthusiasm of students for their chosen topic and that despite some weak language controls students often presented their ideas persuasively.

It was felt that accuracy and development of ideas was better this series – perhaps reflecting the unusual cohort.

Question 1

Touching the Void

This text was offered by too few candidates to permit any general comment.

Question 2

Anita and Me

This text was offered by too few students to permit any general comment.

Question 3

Balzac and the Little Chinese Seamstress

This text was offered by too few students to permit any general comment.

Question 4

Heroes

This text was offered by too few students to permit any general comment.

Question 5

Of Mice and Men

This was the most popular question.

- ai) This short starter question requires students to focus on specific language features, either grammatical features such as parts of speech or devices such as imagery or sound effects. Most students were able to give their own examples from the given extract but a few lost a mark by copying the one given as an example. There was a full range of marks, with some gaining marks by correctly identifying features in their response to part aii). Some students achieved full marks by using one feature e.g. adverbs and using 3 examples. Students' performance on this question did not necessarily correlate at all closely with their responses elsewhere on the paper. Grammatical terms are clearly not understood by all at this level and examiners commented on this. Some students on a(i) wasted time with elaborate attempts to explain or comment on their chosen features, despite the example given.
- aii) There were some reasonably sound responses to this extract with students making reasonably clear references to the writer's techniques and language choices. Better students had a secure focus on language and the intended effects. Some students used ai) as a step into the question but this only really worked if the techniques had been correctly identified in ai). There were sound comments on loneliness, Crooks' segregation and rights using appropriate references.

Generally, students were able to discuss the use of adjectives to describe Crooks, such as 'crooked' and 'deep black wrinkles' and were then able to say what this might show about Crooks. Stronger responses discussed the use of adverbs such as 'sharply' and also focused on Crooks' 'right to have a light'.

Some students wrote too much about context and background. Weaker responses made limited comments relating solely to Crook's appearance.

This limited the extent to which they could discuss the language used and the meaning conveyed.

- b) The most popular extract was Curley's wife. One examiner commented that every other reference to Crooks had been used in the responses seen.

There were many reasonably sound responses which engaged fully with the ideas of the chosen extract and offered personal comments on language and what it showed. Better students were able to explore in some depth how the writer shows behaviour towards Crooks and the attitudes shown to him as well as Crooks' reactions to the way he is treated. Those who recognised that Crooks had "forgotten" his place, only to be brutally reminded of it, produced the better answers.

Weaker responses tended to narrate or comment on context and background to the detriment of the response. Some students did not focus on how Crooks was treated but on Crooks as a character.

Some students used more than one extract or wrote about Crooks across the whole novel.

This is the first two paragraphs from a candidate's response to Question 5 (aii).

Steinbeck in this extract has used language to influence my view of the character Crooks for example short sentences such as "Crooks sat on his bunk". Steinbeck ~~would~~ ^{has} used short sentences because this is the way Crooks is feeling, he has bottled ~~things~~ his feelings up and is just going to erupt with them. Steinbeck has used the word sat

instead of ~~laid~~ laid ~~of~~ because the word sat shows he is ready to talk and has his mouth open.

Furthermore, Steinbeck used repetition of the word black to influence ~~as~~ my view of the character Crooks. Steinbeck ~~would~~ has used this to emphasise the word, this also shows that Crooks thinks this is the reason ^{for this} and it could well be because this represents ^{him to} ~~left~~ ~~for the~~

1920s America was like the division between white and black people. The word black could imply that crooks is lonely and upset inside

Thirdly, Steinbeck has used Alliteration to influence my view of crooks for example "well, I got a right to have a light" Steinbeck has used alliteration to make me read it over again because it



ResultsPlus
Examiner Comments

There is some understanding shown. The comments are rather undeveloped and not entirely successful in their attempt to focus on language. This was awarded 7 out of 13 marks, Band 3.



ResultsPlus
Examiner Tip

Make sure that all points you make about language are supported by clear reference to the extract.

This is the final paragraphs of a response to Question 5 (a).ii).

Steinbeck in his book also uses light a lot as in he was setting this in a play to create moods and atmosphere. And Crooks use's of light suits who he is, Steinbeck writes "In the stable buck's room a small electric globe threw a meager yellow light." The word "meager" suits Crooks really well because he is very meager and meager which the reader could think of is a very dimmed out light or a flickering bulb you find in a old house or for example, Crooks house.

Steinbeck also Describes to us what Crooks body or face is like and uses words like "lay Deep" and "Deep black" and words like "intensity" which shows that Crooks could hold some "Deep" secrets which "lay Deep" inside him from his life of racism and cruelty.



ResultsPlus
Examiner Comments

The response is generally sound with an appropriate focus on language. It was awarded 11 out of 13 marks, Band 4.



ResultsPlus
Examiner Tip

Notice how the student has selected individual words for comment.

This is a complete response to Question 5 (a).

My view of crooks is influenced by the writer's use of adjectives in the extract. For example: "crooked". The word crooked implies something that is broken that is not, but in need of repair. This tells the reader that the other men on the ranch don't care about crooks as they have left him broken and left him to rot. This links in with the theme of loneliness as crooks is alone with no one.

My view is also influenced by the writer's use of repetition of the word "deep".

The word deep suggests to us that crooks is mysterious and unknown, in contrast to the other characters that we know lots about so in comparison, crooks is deep while the other characters are shallow and selfish. This links in with my last point that crooks is alone and different.

Another language feature that influences my view is personification. For example "a small electric globe light threw a megar yellow light". The word 'threw' is interesting as the writer could have used any word to describe the light e.g: 'spread', 'gave'...

the use of the word 'threw' is a more aggressive choice of verb. In this quote the writer is also using juxtaposition with the two words: 'threw' and 'meager' these two words contrast each other from a very powerful start to a poor finish. In some ways the light is a metaphor for Crooks. He puts in his best efforts but he still has so little. In the extract, the writer tells us Crooks has no door and that everything is open. This tells us that Crooks has no privacy which implies the other ranch members don't trust him. The way the light is an 'open doorway' also tells us about Crooks that he is very vulnerable and open to attack. This links in with the theme of relationship, how the other characters don't like / trust Crooks.



ResultsPlus Examiner Comments

A successful personal response with a strong focus on language. A Band 5 response, awarded full marks: 13 out of 13.



ResultsPlus Examiner Tip

Notice how the student successfully develops comments on individual words and phrases.

This is the whole response to Question 5 (b), from when Candy is telling George and Lennie about Crooks.

On pages 21 and 22, ~~at the~~
~~is~~ Steinbeck shows
how Crooks is treated for
example "An' he give the stable buck
hell, too. Give the stable buck hell?"
he asked "Sure, Ya see the stable
buck's a nigger" This ~~implies~~
~~cannot~~ be treated badly
because he's seen as different
and used as a punch bag
if someone is angry just go
take it out on the stable buck.

Another way Steinbeck has shown
Crooks to be treated badly is
repetition of the word nigger. ~~This~~
The word nigger is a very
racist word but there was
nothing Crooks could do. This
implies Crooks is a very strong
man not physically but mental
having to be put up with all
these racist words ^{and} being
singled out. ~~and~~ ~~have~~ ~~not~~ ~~be~~

The attitude toward Crooks is very bad. Dogs are treated better. Crooks is left out like a homeless dog.

A third way Steinbeck has ~~used~~ shown the way Crooks is treated is how he is treated like a smelly, wet dog you don't let in the house but only on special occasions for example "They ~~even~~ let the nigger come in that night" this suggests Crooks ~~does~~ want to come in but it's up to them when he is allowed. They are acting like his owner. Like a dog has an owner.



ResultsPlus
Examiner Comments

There is generally sound understanding in a personal response. The points made are related to language and there is some development. It was awarded 17 out of 24 marks, Band 4.



ResultsPlus
Examiner Tip

A wider range of points and more developed comments on language would have moved this response into Band 5.

This is the whole of a response to Question 5 (b) about when Curley's wife attacks Crooks.

(b) ~~In the extract from chapter four~~ From the extract given in chapter four, Crooks and Curley's wife has a little argument. My view ^{how} of Crooks is treated is also influenced by the writers use of language features such as, "~~Listen, nigger she said~~" adjectives, for example "Listen, nigger she said." This language feature used is offensive and direct as Crooks is the only coloured person working on the ranch. However, the story being set in the 1930s, offensive words like "Nigger" was a common and natural thing to say. Further the reaction from Crooks tells the reader that even though he knows his rights, unfortunately he is out numbered and un-capable to stand his ground due to bribery "Crooks seemed to grow smaller, and he pressed himself against the wall. 'yes, ma'am.'"



ResultsPlus
Examiner Comments

A limited response to an appropriate extract with a simple relevant reference. Mark: 7 out of 24, Band 2.



ResultsPlus
Examiner Tip

For part (b) make sure you pick out a range of points to comment on and try to develop comments on language.

This is the whole response to Question 5 (b), about when Curley's wife attacks Crooks.

5b) on page 79, the writer uses the adverb ~~and~~ 'coldly' when Crooks is speaking to the Curley's wife, this shows us that Crooks does not feel comfortable around her and that she has treated him in such a way that he is ~~is~~ slightly scared of her. The writer uses a racial term ^(verb) 'Nigger' which back in the days was a very racial term to use and shows us how Curley's wife has no respect for Crooks what so ever just because he is black. The writer presents Crooks in a weak way '~~is~~ stared hopelessly' the writer makes ~~is~~ Crooks look weak because of the way Curley's wife's attitude is towards ~~is~~ him. This adverb is used to show the reaction of Crooks towards ~~is~~ Curley's wife and how scared he is. The writer uses verb 'closed' the reason for this is to tell us that Curley's wife's attitude towards Crooks is so bossy and she is indicating with words and slight movement that she is more than him and she believes she has more power over him. The writer uses the verb 'pressed' when he says 'pressed himself against the wall' this is showing us that Crooks is physically showing her that she is more supreme than him and that she has more power over him, when someone presses there self to the wall in a situation when they are arguing it means that they know already that the ~~is~~ opponent is more

powerful than Ham and usually he oppovent knows maybe won so this shows that Crooks is treated in such a bad and awful way that he is even pressing him self into the water. The writer straight after ~~stars~~ stars Crooks says 'Yes, Ma'am, this is old american dialect and his word 'ma'am' is a respected word to call a women so straight after she has used a racial term, he has been polite back towards her. Crooks' reaction is very un-normal towards her as she insults him and threatens him but ~~he~~ he is still being polite. The writer uses the adjective ~~toneless~~ 'Toneless' so Crooks' is neither saying this in a happy or sad tone here is no tone towards what is being said out of his mouth. The writer uses the adjective 'Over' when she is staring over him. He uses this ~~word~~ ^{word} because it sounds more powerful than next to, she is shown as she is in more control than Crooks as he has no chance of coming to argue back. 'She turned at last' the writer specifically says 'at last' because ~~she~~ after having a go at him she finally stepped and it was so harsh how she treated him that he feels like nothing ~~and~~ and she made him feel like nothing.



ResultsPlus Examiner Comments

A successful response which shows sound understanding and identifies individual words and phrases for language comments. This was awarded full marks: 24 out of 24, Band 5.



ResultsPlus Examiner Tip

Note how the student has selected appropriate quotations and clearly explained the effects of individual words and phrases.

Question 6

Rani and Sukh

This text was offered by too few students to permit any general comment.

Question 7

Riding the Balck Cockatoo

This text was offered by too few students to permit any general comment.

Question 8

To Kill A Mockingbird

This text was offered by too few students to permit any general comment.

Question 9

'Life for today's teenagers is better than ever!'

A04 (i) and (ii) Content and ideas:

The topic was accessible and all students including the weaker ones had something to say. Examiners did comment on the predictable nature of the content. It was felt that the responses to this question were not as strong as those for Question 10. Better responses identified a range of topics and used an extensive range of vocabulary with a clear register.

Students wrote about general problems, although there was a tendency to write more about technology, crime and hooliganism, or educational pressures than produce a well-rounded view of life today. Weaker responses did not have a strong or consistent sense of audience and purpose and sometimes weak language controls. Weaker responses tended to be brief, often lacking paragraphs and clear development of ideas. Some students wrote at length about technology, cyber-bullying or access to inappropriate websites in such a way that it seemed they were answering a different question.

A04(iii) (Spelling, punctuation and grammar).

At the top of the range, students often used accurately such punctuation marks as exclamation marks and question marks. However, on weaker scripts spelling and punctuation was often poor. Also, examiners commented that there were problems with sentence structure and demarcation, subject-verb agreement and some random use of capital letters. One examiner commented that accuracy was better this series.

This is the whole of a response to Question 9.

What was your life as a ~~tee~~ teenager like? Did you have computer games and on the latest technology? Teenage life is now better than ever! Unlike the middle ages where teens would be working their socks off, teens nowadays play computer games and party or go out with friends.

Years ~~ago~~ ^{ago} teenagers would be hard at work ~~to~~ from the age of around 12 such as doing ~~hard~~ ~~at~~ horelessly hard work in the mines or being stuck up a ~~stair~~

Chinney! But now only around ~~70%~~ ~~20%~~ 20% of teenagers have jobs but the ones who have jobs the conditions and pay are alot better. Although only 1 in 5 teens can get a job ~~even~~ even if they want ~~one~~ one!

Nowdays ~~we~~ we have lots of technology to make life alot easier. For example when you have to do some work at home such as washing up for example now all we ~~ex~~ have to do is shove the dirty dishes in the dishwasher when say, 100 years ago you would be there all afternoon washing and dry each ~~ds~~ dish by hand for hours and hours.

To conclude, I think that teenage life now is alot better considering ~~the~~ that the work side of life is better in almost everyway. Almost anyone anywhere would think the same. Life as a teenager is good! what would you say?



ResultsPlus Examiner Comments

The ideas are generally appropriate although slightly limited in scope.
Mark: 11 out of 16, Band 4.
There are some errors. Mark: 6 out of 8, Band 2.



ResultsPlus Examiner Tip

Remember to try to develop your ideas fully and give yourself time to check your work carefully.

This is an extract from a successful response to Question 9.

A problem that has become worse for teenagers is the exam rules, because they keep changing, which means it becomes harder for a student at school to get into college due to the rules changing. How many of you find this annoying? Well, I would because it would just stress me out!

Forget about all the problems for now! So, what has improved? I know education. Yeah, it seems a little boring but teenagers are more intelligent in today's society compared to back in the day. Many other things have improved for teens for example. The music, films and fashion. ^{These are} ~~the~~ way better than the things in the 1900s when your parents ~~were~~ were just teenagers, even your parents would say the same thing!

Overall I'm not sure ~~which~~ whether teenage life is better or worse. Maybe I could hear all your opinions instead?



ResultsPlus
Examiner Comments

A successful response that is quite lively and engages the audience. Mark: 16 out of 16, top of Band 5.

The writing is mostly accurate with some errors. Mark 7 out of 8, Band 3.



ResultsPlus
Examiner Tip

Think about how to demonstrate a secure sense of audience and purpose by using a range of writing techniques.

Question 10

Complaining about a Holiday

A04 (i) and (ii) Content and ideas:

Students who chose this question often had clear ideas about holidays and the pitfalls that can occur, although the weaker responses tended to be rather list like. Examiners felt the responses to this topic were of better quality than those to Question 9. Better responses were well organised with clear ideas, often presented in a lively and/or amusing response. The list of shortcomings often was endless, and amusing too, but almost always very clearly described, and most students were clear what redress was desired. One examiner commented that students had a range of suitable expressions to convey disappointment and demand recompense, perhaps as a result of consumer programmes on the television. It was also felt that this task enabled students to write more clearly and in an organised way as they were familiar with the form. There were some very brief responses which were not able to develop their ideas sufficiently.

A04(iii): Spelling, punctuation and grammar:

Similar points were made by examiners to those on Question 9.

This is a complete response to Question 10.

~~to~~ to the holiday planner at Virgin airways,

This is a formal letter of complaint as I have just got back from your disgraceful holiday package. I was told I would be taken to a exotic, luxurious get away, that would help me to relax, unwind and discover new things. Instead you sent me to Benidorm. Its hard to relax with overweight, drunk, red faced brits screaming at there equally vile offspring. Exotic? Ha. I might as well off stayed somewhere like calne, because the most 'Exotic' thing around that place were the massage parlors, that were right next to my hotel. Not my cup of tea at all but is gets even better! I was under the impression that I would

discover new things yet everything here is British! ~~the~~ Benidorm has warped itself into a fake grotesque Mini Britain. And the only luxury about this holiday was that compared to the rest of the Obese, Size-18-but-dressing-for-size-8, Women who must spend hours trying to shove every single roll of fat ~~to~~ into tight clothes I looked pretty slim, pretty good actually. But this one good perk does not make up for a hellish holiday surrounded by skinnies. I would like a full refund, and a letter of apology. If you consider this request as too much to ask, I suggest you take a trip to Benidorm and try last a week. I will be expecting to be hearing from you soon.

Sincerely

Angry Customer.



ResultsPlus Examiner Comments

A lively, humorous response with a very strong register and sense of audience and purpose which is maintained. Mark 15 out of 16, Band 5.
The spelling of ambitious vocabulary is often accurate and errors do not impede meaning. Mark 7 out of 8, Band 3.



ResultsPlus Examiner Tip

Students should think carefully about the register they choose so that their writing has a clear sense of audience and purpose.

This is the whole of a short response to Question 10.

Dear ~~Hayvent~~ ~~service~~ Hayvant holiday service. Hello i am writing to complain about my holiday. When i turn up on Mon 14th Nov 2013 i check in all not so good because they didnt understand that i booked it on the phone they had no data that not very good poor service. Then after getting that sorted i then had My Key all good but then the Lights when and the facilities worth ^{Nothing} ~~not~~ waste of money no towels Kettle and ask for one they didnt have one so they didnt have equipment for there covers and they didnt give me any information before hand only a information pack what's on site and service around the area i even had some food bro for me from the hayvent holidays people because i had a nuf but the equipment the cooler you had to get a electric light so in the end i ask for the money back because it was poor 4* rating no. And Maybe pay for a more greater and funner holiday and free holiday if i wish to come back. From: A Siclonon holiday customer in shock.



ResultsPlus
Examiner Comments

A limited response with some awareness of audience and purpose. Mark 4 out of 16, low Band 2.

The control of sentence structure, punctuation and spelling is limited. Mark 2 out of 8, Band 1.



ResultsPlus
Examiner Tip

Planning a response will help to develop appropriate ideas.

Give yourself enough time to check your work carefully.

Paper Summary

Students engaged well with the ideas and themes of the texts studied. They were prepared for the tasks and made some attempts to comment on the writer's language and techniques, although not always successfully.

On the writing tasks, the enthusiasm with which some students wrote was evident, although some students did not develop their ideas sufficiently. The better responses were accurate but weaker responses had spelling and punctuation errors.

Section A (Reading)

Based on their performance in this section, students are advised to:

- make sure they clearly underline the chosen word/phrase and correctly identify the language features for part (a)(i)
- focus on the whole extract for part (a)(ii)
- carefully choose a single second extract for part (b) and make sure it is not too long
- keep focus on the task for part (b) – do not slip into narration or comment on the context and background without linking it to the language of the extract
- keep focusing on language and techniques and how effective the language is in influencing their views of the writer's presentation of ideas and themes.

Section B (Writing)

Based on their performance in this section, students are advised to:

- write in the appropriate register with a clear sense of audience and purpose
- focus on expressing their ideas clearly and appropriately
- try to develop their ideas so their responses are not simply a list of points
- focus on accuracy in spelling, punctuation and grammar
- give themselves time to check through their writing for errors.

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