

Examiners' Report
November 2014

GCSE English Language 5EN2F 01

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Paper Introduction

This report will provide exemplification of candidates' work, together with tips and comments for a selection of questions. The exemplification will come from questions which were the most popular choices for candidates.

The entry was very small for this series.

On this tier, candidates 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. On the writing task, there was an emphasis on transactional writing, again requiring candidates to follow a series of bullet points.

The responses of candidates had many strong features.

Examiners were impressed by:

- evidence that the candidates 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 writer's ideas
- 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
- wrote reasonably about a topic, but without a secure control of language or ideas.

In the Reading section (Section A) the overwhelming majority of candidates chose to respond to Question 5, 'Of Mice and Men'.

Section A (Reading)

All comments made by examiners relate to Question 5 as there were very few responses to other texts. The majority of candidates 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.

Section B (Writing)

The majority of candidates 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.

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 candidates to permit any general comment.

Question 3

Balzac and the Little Chinese Seamstress

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

Question 4

Heroes

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

Question 5

Of Mice and Men

The majority of responses were to this question.

- ai) This short starter question requires candidates to focus on specific language features, either grammatical features such as parts of speech or devices such as imagery or sound effects. The majority of candidates were awarded 3 marks for this question. Not as many candidates this series just selected three of the same feature (such as nouns) and there seemed to be more of a variety of features identified. There also seemed to be fewer long examples given from the text - examples tended to be individual words. Candidates' performance on this question did not necessarily correlate at all closely with their responses elsewhere on the paper.
- aii) On the whole, candidates seemed to be well prepared for the question. Better candidates had a secure focus on language and the intended effects. Most responses selected relevant references from the extract and better candidates were able to make a range of points about Lennie. Better responses moved beyond the literal interpretation of references from the extract and considered implicit meaning. These responses focused on Lennie's child-like nature with reference to Lennie wearing his 'denim coat over his shoulders like a cape'. There were some individual interpretations of this quotation, including this representing how strong Lennie was (like a superhero). There were some interesting comments on how Lennie was 'hunched' over and how this represented his size perhaps/how it showed he was hiding something using his body. Better candidates were able to comment on the use of the adverb 'breathlessly' and how this showed his excitement - like a child gets over excited. Weaker responses made limited comments often simply repeating the reference they had selected from the extract. Weaker responses tended to focus on literal meaning with responses centred on Lennie being 'dumb' and 'strong'. There were a few candidates who didn't base their answer on the extract provided to them. Some candidates used ai) as a step into the question but this only really worked if the techniques had been correctly identified in ai).
- b) Most candidates were able to choose an appropriate extract e.g. the opening of the novel and the fight with Curley which were the most popular. Other popular choices for the second extract were when Lennie is in the barn with Curley's wife/the killing of Curley's wife and when Lennie is in Crooks' room.

There were many reasonably sound responses which engaged fully with ideas of the chosen extract and offered personal comments on language and what it showed. Better responses were able to explore the implicit meaning of the individual words and develop points made by adding further references from across the chosen part of the text to support their points. This approach showed candidates' overall understanding of the text, writer's ideas and use of language in a rather sophisticated way. Better responses to the opening of the novel commented on how Lennie copied George's behaviour, how George had to keep reminding Lennie of what he had been told and how Lennie was like a child as he got excited by the smallest of things (such as making circles in the water). Better responses to the scenes with Curley's wife tended to move beyond just focusing on the physical description of Lennie and explored the relationship between the two characters, commenting on how Lennie was adamant he didn't want to talk to Curley's wife, how Curley's wife was encouraging Lennie to touch her hair and also how Lennie felt once he had killed Curley's wife focusing on Lennie's guilt and regret and the reasons for this and what this showed about Lennie. Better responses to the fight with Curley were able to make a point about Lennie and then support this point using references from across the chosen part. For example, when suggesting that Lennie relied on George, candidates were able to select references to Lennie looking to George for help at the start of the fight but then also how, towards the end, George was reassuring to Lennie. Better responses sometimes included reference to Slim and his reaction to what happened (and consequently what this showed about Lennie). Weaker responses offered a rather generic, narrative overview of what happened in the part selected. Some of the weaker responses did not develop their ideas and often just made a point and a reference but did not offer explanation or develop ideas.

Some candidates appeared to have problems with timing and their response for part (b) was rather brief with perhaps only a couple of basic points made.

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

7(ii)

John Steinbeck has used language in this extract to influence my views of Lennie such as, "he just scared her." This influences my ~~view~~ view by making me think Lennie is scary therefore I become a little afraid of him until Steinbeck gets George to say "like he wants to pet them pups all the time" this makes you start to think maybe Lennie is just a teddy bear on the inside. This is also proven when Slim says "He ain't mean".

I think Lennie is just a big kid in a man's body. Steinbeck has shown this by using language you would connect with a child, "he wore his blue denim coat over his shoulders like a cape." This has indicated Lennie is simple minded like a child and still acts like one. "he wants to touch everything he likes" this shows Lennie is still child like because children tend to want to feel everything that catches their eye or

takes their fancy, but Steinbeck also shows that Lennie isn't a child and is actually a strong man. "he's so God damn strong". This shows that Lennie is mature in some ways more than others because a child couldn't be so strong and couldn't have the strength George describes.



ResultsPlus
Examiner Comments

There is generally sound understanding of the extract and the writer's ideas with mostly appropriate reference to the text to support the comments made. Mark: 11 out of 13, band 4.



ResultsPlus
Examiner Tip

A more developed response to language would push this into band 5.

This is the final part of a candidate's response to Question 5(ii).

Steinbeck shows that Lenny is very careless this is because of the use of similes and adverbs. The simile 'coat over his shoulders like a cape' indicates Lennie doesn't wear his clothes properly and the adverb 'hunched' to show how careless Lennie walks. Lennie seems very childlike in the extract, this is because Steinbeck uses adverb such as 'breathlessly' to show how Lennie spoke about the puppy. It shows how childlike he is because he is losing his breath by the excitement of talking about the pup. This is also proven near the end of the extract, because like a child, when Lennie shouldn't be doing something, he tries to deny the fact of doing something wrong, this is shown when Lennie says 'what pup George' when trying to sneak the pup into the bunk house.



ResultsPlus
Examiner Comments

The response shows sound understanding of ideas in the text with clear reference to the extract to support the comments made and a word level focus on language.
Mark: 13 out of 13, top of band 5.



ResultsPlus
Examiner Tip

Candidates should pick out individual words or short phrases to comment on, and focus on the writer's techniques and the effects that these have on the reader.

This is part of a candidate's response to Question 5(b).

"drank with long gulps, snorting into the water like a horse." This reference to Lennie behaving like a horse and doing the actions of a horse. This behaviour also makes his partner, George, anxious to be around him "The small man stepped nervously beside him".

Other points where Steinbeck makes references to Lennie being an animal or behaving like one also show other sides about Lennie and influence your thought of how Lennie will be throughout the novel. "Lennie dabbled his big paw in the water and wiggled his fingers" this could be taken in many ways such as Lennie being like a bear, that be a cuddly teddy bear or strong like a wild grizzly bear. For now Steinbeck leaves you to make that choice on how his language influences your thought.



ResultsPlus
Examiner Comments

The response shows generally sound understanding of the chosen extract with relevant reference to the extract to support comments. Mark: 18 out of 24, 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).

b) Another part on the book that conveys Lennie to be scared and innocent but that can soon be changed when George tells him to stand up for himself on page sixty nine. At the beginning of the page it says "Lennie gave a cry of terror", the verb "cry" suggests that Lennie is scared and he doesn't know what to do in this situation, also the adjective "terror" suggests that Lennie himself ~~knows~~ knows that it's a bad situation and you doesn't like it.

Furthermore, Lennie then goes on to ^{cry} screams for "George", Lennie is ^{known} crying to get help from George because he doesn't want to do anything and get into trouble for it, and he knows that if George helps or commands him something to do, it's probably the best thing to do.

Another part is where "Curley followed, slugging him in the face. Lennie's hands remained at his sides", the verb "slugging" conveys that Curley is being violent and is punching Lennie in the face. However it then says "he was too frightened to defend himself", this goes on to imply even though Lennie is danger and in pain

things that have occurred and the consequences, and the adjective "frightened" suggests ^{that he} ~~that~~ is just too scared to do anything.

However, ~~at~~ all this soon changes when George commands Lennie to do something, for example "He cupped his hands around his mouth and yelled 'Get 'im Lennie!', the verb "yelled" suggests the upset and anger that he is feeling for what is happening to Lennie, Lennie then soon reacts to George and "Lennie reached for it. The next minute Curley was flapping like a fish on a line", in this quote it is shown how powerful Lennie really is and if George tells him to do something he will, since George is a father like figure to him. Also the metaphorical phrase "flapping like a fish on a line" is used to convey how Lennie can reduce someone like a man who thinks he's powerful and ~~is~~ dominant, into something like a harmless fish.

Towards the end of ~~the~~ the page even after Lennie has seen the damage that has occurred he still doesn't know when to stop. This is shown where it says "Lennie let go of him, Lennie let go." But Lennie watched in terror the flapping little man whom he held", this goes on to suggest even

though George is telling him to do something he doesn't always listen, the verb "watched" suggests that he was just starting at what he'd just done and the adjective "frozen" connotes that he's in shock with his actions and doesn't know what to do, he's just ~~free~~ frozen ~~freeze~~ paused and thinking about what he's done.



ResultsPlus Examiner Comments

There is sound understanding in a clear response. There is a range of sound points supported by clear references to the chosen text. There is some word level focus on language. This was given full marks: 24 out of 24, top of band 5.



ResultsPlus Examiner Tip

Note how the candidate 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 candidates to permit any general comment.

Question 7

Riding the Black Cockatoo

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

Question 8

To Kill a Mockingbird

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

Question 9

Suggestions to improve the school.

The majority of the candidates chose this question.

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

The topic was accessible and all candidates including the weaker ones had something to say. Stronger responses were able to use cohesive devices successfully and their personal voice was apparent (through ideas and also vocabulary used). 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 candidates simply listed everything that should be improved in the school/college, without mentioning the idea that money had been awarded to the school.

AO4 (iii) Spelling, punctuation and grammar:

Better candidates were able to use a range of sentence types (for effect) and were also able to use a range of punctuation appropriately. There were some responses in which it was clear that candidates had been taught about using a range of punctuation but were not able to use punctuation successfully (in some cases lots of semi-colons and commas were misused). Weaker candidates had problems with spelling, sentence structure and demarcation and some inconsistent use of capital letters. Apostrophes were often missed (even in better responses).

This is part of a response to Question 9.

I'm writing to let you know
that ~~too~~ what you're doing
for the college is really
great because we heard a lot
of complains about it.

firstly - The girls would like to
improve the toilet and also
provide ~~the~~ a mirror, because girls
are looking at the mirror and
wanting to improve better.

Secondary. I really, I really! would love the college to be more clean and better looking also would love you to put out recycling bins. Not just to improve the college but to also help the environment and green house landfills.

finally. The boys changing room need to be painted. because I can't stand of what they've ~~use~~ written in there, it's like a diarybook.



ResultsPlus
Examiner Comments

There is a generally sound grasp of audience and purpose with generally appropriate ideas. Mark: 10 out of 16, band 4.

The writing is sometimes accurate but there are errors. Mark: 5 out of 8, band 2.



ResultsPlus
Examiner Tip

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

This is part of a response to Question 9.

I think that the outside appearance of the college could be re-painted or re-designed giving it a more modern and aesthetically pleasing display. I think the college could use the college colour (purple) more around the college to give it more colour, because the inside of the college is slightly dull.

I think this would help the college, because it would possibly attract students looking for a new college and create a better atmosphere for the current students.

I would also recommend the college making a lounge area with features such as a pool table, football table, games console and seating areas.

I think this would be good for the college, because during break time there is nothing to do so I think this idea will benefit lots of students and please them during break-time.



ResultsPlus Examiner Comments

The ideas are clear and appropriate and there is a clear sense of audience and purpose. Mark: 14 out of 16, band 5. There is sound control of expression and meaning with a reasonable range of sentence structures. Occasionally the sentences are rather long. Mark 7 out of 8, band 3.



ResultsPlus Examiner Tip

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

Question 10

What I feel strongly about.

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

As candidates chose the topic themselves, it was evident that most candidates wrote about something they actually knew about and therefore were able to use vocabulary appropriate for the chosen topic. Although some of the subjects chosen were quite sensitive, candidates did tend to handle the topics well. The range of topics was wide e.g. bullying, stereotypes, sexism and racism. Better responses were well organised with clear ideas, often presented in a lively response. Compared to Question 9, it was felt that weaker candidates found it harder to structure their responses but most used paragraphs appropriately.

AO4 (iii) Spelling, punctuation and grammar:

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

This is the first part of a response to Question 10.

What I feel strongly about.

Racism. It's probably the word I hate most and I wish it had no reason to exist. Fights, Brawls and even Wars have been started over the colour of someones Skin. No wars ~~are~~ ^{were} started fought because someone has an ideal hair or eye colour (well, except Hitler, but we can hope no one that mad can get into power again). So why should a war be fought over the colour of someones skin?

I have friends, work colleagues and even family of different races and so I feel offended myself when people mention things like "they should go back to their own country" in a malicious way.

Now I'm English born and "extremely pale white skinned boy" but I listen to a lot of Hip-Hop and rap music which is one genre mostly produced by darker skinned people. I've been listening to this sort of music since around the age of 11. My first realisation of how bad racism is was one day in school, back in year 7, when I repeated a certain word beginning with the letter 'N' which I had heard in a song.

A teacher had overheard and I was reported to the head for racism. At this time I had no idea what racism was, I thought it was a word to describe ~~me~~ a close friend as this is how it is used in music. I was suspended for the ~~uses~~ use of the word and my mother was distraught as I have 4 mixed race cousins who are half black, half white. The domino effect of me saying the word was big and I realised what racism was, and how serious it was (and still is).

I want things to change in a way that never will. I want all racism to be eradicated but with the way the world is this appears to be impossible.



ResultsPlus Examiner Comments

This is quite a lively response with a clear sense of purpose and audience and evidence of crafting. It is quite engaging and well controlled. Mark: 16, top of band 5.

There is sound control of expression and meaning and a reasonable selection of sentence structures are used. Punctuation and spelling are mostly accurate. Mark: 8 out of 8, top of band 3.



ResultsPlus Examiner Tip

Notice how the candidate has used a range of techniques to produce a lively and engaging response.

Paper Summary

Candidates 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 candidates wrote was evident, although some candidates 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, candidates are advised to:

- make sure they clearly underline the chosen word/phrase and correctly identify the language features for part (a)(i)
- 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
- keep focusing on language and techniques and how effective the language is in influencing their views of the writer's presentation of ideas.

Section B (Writing)

Based on their performance in this section, candidates 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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