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# Moderators' Report Principal Moderator Feedback

Summer 2018

Pearson Edexcel GCSE (9-1) English  
Language (1EN0)  
Paper E Spoken Language Endorsement

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Publications Code 1EN0\_E\_English Language\_1806\_ER

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## **Introduction**

A number of monitors commented on the overall improvements made by centres in assessing their candidates. It seems that there were fewer instances of candidates reading from scripts or not being asked questions at the end of presentations. Nevertheless, the number of centres being recommended for intervention visits is similar to the 1706 series. It is pleasing to note that the necessary improvements had been made by the majority of centres visited after the last series. Regrettably, a small number will receive a second visit.

When centres apply the assessment criteria accurately and prepare their students well, the results are very gratifying indeed and it is often a pleasure to see candidates rising to the challenges and opportunities provided by the endorsement.

## **Administration**

Most centres sent their sample by the due date. Almost all centres included a signed Head of Centre Declaration sheet. In the cases where it was omitted, most sent it promptly on request. Many centres also included a list of candidates and marks, indicating those that had been selected for the sample. This was helpful when it came to selecting which recordings to view for monitoring, particularly when the submission spanned several DVDs. Candidate record forms were also included by some centres and, although these are not required by the specification, they are very useful to monitors in indicating which criteria have been met by the candidates at each grade.

Most centres selected an appropriate sample and sent the correct number of examples at Pass, Merit and Distinction as appropriate. A small number of centres sent an incorrect distribution of grades. Files were often labelled clearly with name, candidate number and, sometimes and most usefully, the grade awarded. Many centres organised the files by grade on the USB or DVD which was very helpful. Centres are reminded that the specification requires each candidate to state their full name at the start of each presentation and it also useful if they state their candidate number.

Some centres used password-protection for their USBs and there were instances of an incorrect password being provided. A small number of centres had not submitted grades onto the system by the time monitoring was carried out. Others submitted a number of NC grades and it would be helpful if centres which do this include with their samples a covering letter explaining their reasons.

## **Recordings**

Most centres provided recordings that were very clear in sound and with good picture quality. Candidates were usually audible, as were audience questions. Quite a number of centres, though, provided videos with images that were sideways on or upside down, making viewing difficult. In some cases, candidates were not clearly audible, often due to the positioning of the recording equipment. On occasions, background noise was a distraction to both candidate and audience. Centres are reminded to check the quality and accessibility of their video recordings before sending to the monitor.

## **Presentations**

Monitors reported fewer instances of candidates presenting in groups or pairs. Experience strongly suggests that these are rarely successful: in those circumstances, some candidates are unable to make sustained contributions and some are not asked questions.

In general, candidates gave the impression that they had chosen their own topics, with fewer examples of every candidate in a centre speaking on the same subject, presumably as directed by their teacher. Candidates are frequently disadvantaged when they do not have ownership of their topic and are required to talk about a set text, for example. On the other hand, it is often advisable for teachers to discuss topics with candidates and ensure that they choose subjects which carry an appropriate degree of challenge. Some very promising candidates were held back by speaking on subjects that were predominantly factual and straightforward. Topics based solely on factual research rarely enabled candidates to qualify for a Merit or Distinction unless there was an element of personal experience or opinion involved alongside an appropriate level of challenge or sophistication. One candidate spoke very movingly about the effects of cancer and was able to do so not only because she had researched the subject but also lived with a family member who suffered from it. Another's presentation about the Grenfell Tower fire was informed by her witnessing the disaster at first hand.

Candidates tend to perform better when their topic involves an element of controversy or debate and engage with it by offering their own developed opinions. Some of the most popular topics this series were concerned with I.T. and social media, transgender challenges, climate change, gender equality, the importance of education and the refugee crisis. Other candidates tackled current affairs: Donald Trump, Brexit, the debate around protectionism and free trade. It is genuinely inspiring to hear young people offering their perspectives on the issues that concern them.

Monitors reported fewer examples of candidates reading from scripts throughout their presentations and it is hoped that this trend continues.

Centres are advised to discourage candidates from relying too heavily on notes or from reading a previously written essay. Candidates who do this often read at too fast a pace, or stumble over the written word. In any case, they make no attempt to meet the needs of their audience, nor do they employ strategies to engage their listeners. The absence of either verbal or non-verbal strategies can prevent candidates from qualifying for a Merit or Distinction grade.

When candidates are not given the opportunity to respond to questions they cannot be awarded any grade at all. Centres are reminded that candidates must meet every criterion for a given grade in order to be awarded that grade. It was pleasing to see samples from a significant number of centres where the question and response part of a presentation was treated with the seriousness it deserves. In such cases, members of the audience asked questions which were open and enabled the candidate to expand on their ideas. It is, of course, a requirement that a Distinction grade candidate responds 'perceptively' and can only do so when a question offers a degree of stimulus. It is suggested that centres actively teach the art of asking questions which are designed to help candidates develop their thoughts. It was noted by a number of monitors that, whereas many teachers asked such questions, others posed very long questions which sometimes evolved into distracting personal anecdotes.

**Further comments:**

Many monitors commented on the increased confidence exhibited by candidates and centres this series, compared to 2017 which was, of course, the year in which the endorsement was introduced.

Teachers are commended for the encouragement they give to their students and for contributing to what is often a very positive experience for all involved. One monitor wrote: 'It is heartening to see the enthusiasm of the students in tackling these tasks. The vast majority of the centres / staff / students took this component seriously and engaged in some interesting, thought provoking presentations.' As the endorsement beds in and progresses, this sentiment will become increasingly prevalent.

