



General Certificate of Secondary Education

English/English Language

Specification 4700/4705

**ENG1H: Understanding and producing non-fiction
texts**

Report on the Examination

2012 Examination – November series

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GCSE English/English Language

Principal Examiner's Unit 1 (*ENG1H*) Report

The entry for this paper was 10,507 and there was no correspondence received. The paper was accessible with straightforward sources and writing titles which allowed candidates to respond effectively.

The source for Question 1, *Street Life* by Sophie Haydock, was accessible to candidates. Examiners reported that the change in the wording of the question from 'learn' to 'understand' resulted in fewer examples of purely information retrieval and a greater propensity to interpret. On the whole, this was successful but candidates need to understand that the question is still tied very much to the source text and that wide generalisations about the topic are to be avoided. There was generally clear understanding of the text by most candidates. However, the need for careful reading was illustrated by those candidates who failed to completely understand that Sophie was a journalist, not a homeless person, and more frequently that she did not in fact herself suffer 'rats, thugs, police officers moving you on'. Furthermore, candidates need to realise that their responses should cover all of the main points made in the whole text.

The source text and picture for Question 2 were generally understood by candidates and most were evidently aware of the requirements of the question. Too many candidates, however, merely described the content of the headline and the picture and made fairly obvious comments about their effects. Candidates also, quite frequently, linked the headline to the picture which was not asked for in the question, or made only general references to where in the text the link was to be found. More successful candidates dealt with the effects of the key words in the headline in an interesting and explicatory way and explained the dramatic affects of the picture on the reader, linking these directly to quoted parts of the article.

For Question 3, it was clear that candidates understood the extract from Michael Caine's book well. However, this question was less successfully answered than equivalent ones in previous series. Candidates were able to identify the main thoughts and feelings concerning Michael's discontent followed by his relief, thus appreciating the change he underwent. However, candidates did not always interpret or explain these thoughts and feelings, contenting themselves with listing what they were. Furthermore, candidates often lapsed into writing a narrative account of the content or events that took place and some wrote, pointlessly, about the effects on the reader. Weaker candidates tended to focus on just one place, usually the 'cruel' house, and ignored the second half of the passage completely, showing at best only some understanding. A few candidates confused Michael's experiences with those of his brother Stanley. Candidates should be aware that, even if a text is immediately accessible, it requires careful reading; as does the question which accompanies it.

This was the fifth series of this exam and therefore the fifth time that the language question, Question 4, had been set. It was clearly the case that many candidates were unsure about how to approach this question. Amongst even those candidates who recognised that the question did not require comments about content, events, purpose or audience, few were able to sustain more than an attempt at analysing the effects of language or make appropriate selections of more than some examples. Generalised and vague comments about language features were sometimes made with no exemplification and so remained empty of meaning. Sometimes opening paragraphs indicated an intent which was simply not fulfilled. Of those who did manage to comment on the effects of language in a clear way, emotive language and descriptive vocabulary were popular choices for comparison. Many selected the 'sunflower'

simile from Source 3 but only the more able could connect this to the idea of the 'weed', or explain that it provided positive connotations of summer and sunshine.

Most candidates responded clearly to the topic presented for Question 5, many with enthusiasm. Responses were essentially descriptive with an implied explanation why others would enjoy the chosen place. Many candidates selected vocabulary for effect and were able to match their writing to purpose and audience, although purpose sometimes veered towards persuasion. There was a tendency to adopt a tone reminiscent of a travel brochure in some cases. However, there were a number of answers which took an individual, evocative and more original approach. The writing was generally accurate with perhaps a noticeable weakness in the demarcation of sentences. Many candidates found it apparently unnecessary to employ a letter frame, some made an attempt and a minority achieved it.

Question 6 was similarly successful, with the majority of candidates achieving marks in Band 3 of the mark scheme. The topic was clearly understood and received a sympathetic response from candidates. Indeed, it was evident from the high level of engagement with this question that candidates possess a genuine interest in, and concern for, the homeless and in particular for the young homeless. The question worked well as a consequence. Material from the reading sources was sometimes employed successfully by candidates, as was usually well judged anecdote. Weaker responses over-employed the rhetorical question in a rather accusative way or made broad generalisations which were not focused on the purpose of persuading or the function of charities.

The writing was generally accurate with some insecurity with sentence demarcation from weaker candidates. Few candidates employed sentence structures in a way which enhanced the meaning of their writing and there were few examples of an ambitious vocabulary being attempted.