

# Principal Examiner Feedback

## Summer 2010

GCSE

GCSE English A (1203)  
Paper 3F Media unseen (foundation)

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## GCSE English 1203 3F

### Section A (Reading)

#### Question 1:

Both texts were accessible to candidates in this range, though weaker candidates struggled to discriminate between the two or to write about both of them. The majority made useful comments on the content of both texts, and some adopted a comparative approach, though often at a fairly limited level, for instance identifying the features which one text had and the other lacked, and then making qualitative judgements based on this. Weaker candidates tended to describe the content of each text in terms of 'There is...' or 'It has...' (e.g. "it has a web-site" or "it tells you the prices") without commenting on the relevance of these features. However, stronger candidates focused clearly on how the articles would appeal to different age groups, and were able to relate at least some of their comments back to this question, with some speculating about the differing target audience of each text. There was a range of comment on graphical features. Most candidates were able to make simple points about photographs and the colour scheme of each text. Stronger candidates referred to the use of layout features, (e.g. sub-headings) and commented on their effect in overall text organisation. By the far the most significant discriminator was the level of comment on language. Weaker candidates simply described or identified generic features (e.g. "there are paragraphs" or "straightforward English adults could understand") but more successful responses identified and commented on language features, for instance the use of rhetorical questions and their effects in the texts, and the use of exciting, appealing words and phrases, particularly lists of three. A few high attaining responses developed and sustained a more detailed and focused analysis of language and presentational features.

### Section B (Writing)

#### Question 2:

This was the more popular question in this section and, overall, it produced some competent answers, which gave clear advice, using the bullet points as a structure. Most candidates also showed a grasp of an appropriate letter structure, with clear introduction and conclusion, and ideas developed in linked paragraphs. A key discriminator was the extent to which the candidate directed their writing to the specified audience of friends. Many used an engaging and appropriately informal style, though some weaker candidates resorted to street language, which, at worst, was incoherent. Candidates frequently (and not inappropriately) drew on the Section A texts for details of their activity and for specific points of advice, though some weaker candidates simply copied sections from them. There was also a range of original and imaginative ideas for locations and itineraries from candidates who often drew effectively on their own experience.

#### Question 3:

This was also a generally competently answered question, with most candidates choosing to agree with the statement presented ("Young people spend too much time watching rather than participating in sport") and to argue the need for more exercise. More successful candidates supported and developed their arguments by drawing on personal experience of the benefits of exercise and a healthy life-style in general, presumably gained from PE and other lessons in school, and many were

further bolstered by appropriate use of the bullet points. Many candidates, even those whose responses had limited content, made good use of persuasive language devices, such as rhetorical questions and referred to 'statistics' and expert opinion, showing a good understanding overall of the purpose of the task. The strongest responses, however, showed an awareness of the need to engage the readership of the magazine by writing in an appropriate style.

### Section C (Writing)

#### Question 4:

This question was the least popular in the section but those who chose it produced lively answers, usually characterised by the use of an appropriate range of technical vocabulary related to the gadgets and their specifications. Stronger answers - and there were quite a few of these - drew on their own reading of reviews and tried to replicate the style in their own writing. Such candidates demonstrated an understanding of the requirements of writing in this genre, by an evaluative and balanced approach, which considered both the advantages and weaknesses of their chosen gadgets. A variety of gadgets were reviewed; some candidates invented their own, often very fanciful ones, whilst others wrote about more familiar items, for instance mobile phones, with an equal level of competence. Less successful responses tended to describe or promote gadgets rather than review them.

#### Question 5:

This question was, on the whole, the least well answered in the paper. Weaker candidates tended to struggle for ideas for content, and the structure of responses was loose, though most candidates still tried to consider both sides of the issue. Many responses were also relatively short, suggesting that timing was also an issue.

## GCSE English: 1203 Grade Boundaries

### Option 1 - 1A, 1B, 2F, 3F

C	D	E	F
60	47	34	22

### Option 2 - 1A, 1B, 4H, 5H

*	A	B	C	D	E
82	72	62	52	41	35

### Option 3 - 1AT, 1B, 2F, 3F

C	D	E	F
60	47	34	22

### Option 4 - 1A, 1BT, 2F, 3F

C	D	E	F
60	47	34	22

### Option 5 - 1AT, 1BT, 2F, 3F

C	D	E	F
60	47	34	22

### Option 6 - 1AT, 1B, 4H, 5H

*	A	B	C	D	E
82	72	62	52	41	35

### Option 7 - 1A, 1BT, 4H, 5H

*	A	B	C	D	E
82	72	62	52	41	35

### Option 8 - 1AT, 1BT, 4H, 5H

*	A	B	C	D	E
82	72	62	52	41	35

**Note:** Grade boundaries may vary from year to year and from subject to subject, depending on the demands of the question paper.

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