



GCSE EXAMINER'S REPORTS

WELSH SECOND LANGUAGE GCSE

SUMMER 2023

Introduction

Our Principal examiners' reports offer valuable feedback on the recent assessment series. They are written by our Principal Examiners and Principal Moderators after the completion of marking and moderation, and detail how candidates have performed.

This report offers an overall summary of candidates' performance, including the assessment objectives/skills/topics/themes being tested, and highlights the characteristics of successful performance and where performance could be improved. It goes on to look in detail at each question/section of each unit, pinpointing aspects that proved challenging to some candidates and suggesting some reasons as to why that might be.ⁱ

The information found in this report can provide invaluable insight for practitioners to support their teaching and learning activity. We would also encourage practitioners to share this document – in its entirety or in part – with their learners to help with exam preparation, to understand how to avoid pitfalls and to add to their revision toolbox.

Further support

Document	Description	Contact
Professional Learning / CPD	WJEC offers an extensive annual programme of online and face-to-face Professional Learning events. Access interactive feedback, review example candidate responses, gain practical ideas for the classroom and put questions to our dedicated team by registering for one of our events here.	https://www.wjec.co.uk/home/professional-learning/
Past Papers	Access the bank of past papers for this qualification, including the most recent assessments. Please note that we do not make past papers available on the public website until 6 months after the examination.	www.wjecservices.co.uk or on the WJEC subject page
Grade boundary information	<p>Grade boundaries are the minimum number of marks needed to achieve each grade.</p> <p>For unitised specifications grade boundaries are expressed on a Uniform Mark Scale (UMS). UMS grade boundaries remain the same every year as the range of UMS mark percentages allocated to a particular grade does not change. UMS grade boundaries are published at overall subject and unit level.</p> <p>For linear specifications, a single grade is awarded for the overall subject, rather than for each unit that contributes towards the overall grade. Grade boundaries are published on results day.</p>	For unitised specifications click here: Results, Grade Boundaries and PRS (wjec.co.uk)

Exam Results Analysis	WJEC provides information to examination centres via the WJEC secure website. This is restricted to centre staff only. Access is granted to centre staff by the Examinations Officer at the centre.	www.wjecservices.co.uk
Classroom Resources	Access our extensive range of FREE classroom resources, including blended learning materials, exam walk-throughs and knowledge organisers to support teaching and learning.	https://resources.wjec.co.uk/
Bank of Professional Learning materials	Access our bank of Professional Learning materials from previous events from our secure website and additional pre-recorded materials available in the public domain.	www.wjecservices.co.uk or on the WJEC subject page
Become an examiner with WJEC.	We are always looking to recruit new examiners or moderators. These opportunities can provide you with invaluable insight into the assessment process, enhance your skill set, increase your understanding of your subject and inform your teaching.	Become an Examiner WJEC

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Subject Officer's Executive Summary

For Unit 1 this year, a total of 24,922 candidates were entered (15,797 were 15 years old and 9,125 were 16 years old). For Unit 2 this year, a total of 21,997 candidates were entered (2,390 were 15 years old and 19,607 were 16 years old). There was an increase in the number of 15 year olds sitting Unit 2 this year.

There were 12 Unit 1 papers and 18 Unit 2 papers this year as usual. Unit 1 assessments were conducted on 19-21 April and Unit 2 assessments on 24-26 April. A fair cross-section of topics are offered on each of the assessment days based on the specification's three broad themes of employment, Wales and the world and youth. No adaptations were made this year to Units 1 and 2. In their reports, the Principal Standardisers refer to the most popular papers/topics in centres this year. Once again this year, both emphasise in their reports the need to select the most accessible and suitable topic for each group in each assessment session in order to get the best from every candidate. They also emphasise the need to group candidates according to their ability and to do so in advance to give them plenty of opportunities to practise in their groups. Both refer once again to the need to follow the instructions given by WJEC in the oral booklet and on the mark sheet to ensure that every centre's administration work is correct before being uploaded to Surpass. The role of teachers features prominently once again in the Unit 1 and Unit 2 reports as well as the need to refer to the stimuli (DVD/candidate's preparation sheet in Unit 1 and the various stimuli on the Unit 2 papers).

According to the Principal Moderators, there has been a general increase and improvement this year in the standard of candidates' speaking and listening skills which shows that the topics in the papers are accessible and within candidates' experience. It also shows that centres are using the resources available (e.g. past papers, resources on the WJEC digital resources website etc.) in lessons when practising and preparing for the assessments.

For Units 3 and 4 this year, 21,020 candidates were entered. This is an increase on 2019 and is in line with the growth in cashing-in grades. Candidates sat the Unit 3 paper at the start of the examination period when they were still attending Welsh Second Language lessons in their centres. Candidates did not sit the Unit 4 paper until 8 June, a month later. The lack of contact with teachers and Welsh Second Language lessons certainly had an impact on the standard of candidates' language and their confidence by the time they sat the Unit 4 examination. Advance Information was published in February of this year outlining the writing format and theme of the extended writing question in the Unit 3 and Unit 4 paper.

The Principal Examiners refer in their reports to the effort made by the majority of candidates across the questions in both of these non-tiered papers. The questions in both papers were based on the three broad themes of the specification and the topics of these questions were seen to be within the candidates' experiences.

The least accessible questions in Unit 3, according to Item Level Data, were questions A5 and C10 but this year's rate of response and statistics had improved and increased compared to 2019.

The least accessible questions in Unit 4, according to Item Level Data, were questions A5, B6 and C7, which were two of the most ambitious writing questions and the most ambitious reading question on the paper. However, this year's rate of response and statistics for A5 and C7, which were the questions with 15 and 25 writing marks, had improved and increased compared to 2019.

Thank you very much to all the Welsh Second Language teachers and departments in the centres for all your hard work teaching, preparing, encouraging and inspiring the candidates who sat the qualification this year.

Areas for improvements	Classroom resources	Brief description of resource
Unit 1 and Unit 2: Administrative work; grouping candidates; the teacher's role; internal standardisation	GCSE Welsh Second Language Oral Booklet. Unit 1 and Unit 2 bands	Both of these can be found on our page on the WJEC website.
Units 1 – 4: Standard of candidates' language	Unit 1 and Unit 2 bands Unit 1 and Unit 2 past papers Unit 3 and Unit 4 mark schemes and past papers Blended learning resources, exam walk-through and knowledge organisers	All of these can be found on our page on the WJEC website, on the WJEC secure website or on the WJEC digital resources website.

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UNIT 1: ORACY RESPONSE TO VISUAL STIMULUS

Overview of the Unit

The main objectives of this unit is that candidates are able to demonstrate their ability to communicate and interact effectively as well as understand and respond to different types of spoken language in different situations and various contexts.

The assessment will address one or more of the broad themes of youth, Wales and the world, or employment. Therefore, during the assessment, we expect candidates to be able to participate in a group discussion responding intelligently to the visual stimulus, communicating and interacting spontaneously with others, listening and responding to contributions from others and expressing opinion on a range of topics giving sound reasons.

The standard in the different centres varied this year with a number of candidates discussing the stimuli intelligently and wisely using polished and purposeful language, while others misunderstood the nature of the assessment and persisted in discussing their own choice of topics instead of adhering to the requirements of the task.

Concern was expressed last year about candidates' confidence, particularly given the impact of lockdowns and the subsequent lack of opportunities for group work. This certainly had a negative impact on the development of any oral work. However, it must be acknowledged that there was an improvement this year with candidates appearing to be more confident and willing to use the language to discuss the various topics. This clearly demonstrates the importance of the preparation periods and the need for regular engagement with the language to enable candidates to develop and fulfil their potential.

Comments on individual questions/sections

Reference must be made first of all to the administrative element of this year's assessment. A number had followed WJEC's detailed instructions submitting neat forms, the necessary details and clear recordings. This naturally supports the standardisation process greatly but unfortunately, this did not happen in all cases. This year a higher number of erroneous or even incorrect forms were submitted than usual. There was also information missing from some or the information on Surpass was inconsistent with the information on IAMIS. Given the importance of this element of the work, this was disappointing to see at the outset of the standardisation period.

Centres must be encouraged to take care and ensure fairness for their candidates. It is unacceptable for us to receive recordings for another unit instead of the unit in question, or even blank recordings. We acknowledge that uploading work can be time-consuming but care must be taken in future.

There were twelve stimuli again this year and each clip included a range of topics for discussion. There was a choice of two clips for each assessment period as we returned to the usual assessment requirements instead of allowing centres to select any clips like last year. The most popular choices this year discussed the new timetable, the capital city Cardiff, celebrities and careers, holidays and new clubs. The best candidates used the stimuli as a basis for their discussion and therefore the importance of always choosing the appropriate stimulus cannot be overstated.

Candidates were expected to sustain a spontaneous discussion based on the stimulus referring to the different characters and responding to their comments. The best candidates certainly conversed naturally and worked together intelligently raising points from the text, agreeing and disagreeing with effective reasoning. The natural nature of the discussion is now so important and there is no time or space to script. Therefore, understanding what is required is crucial. The best candidates were confident and had clearly practised many times using exemplary materials or past papers. Their language was polished as they used a wide range of sentence patterns and varied the tense and person of the verb consistently. Their use of idioms is to be applauded as was their eagerness to respond eloquently to each other. It was pleasing to listen to these examples and to hear candidates take pride in their ability to sustain a conversation in Welsh. The preparation time is insufficient to plan a full answer and therefore this is also a test of candidates' ability to recall previous learning and to respond sensibly to the opinion of others and the content of the various clips. This is an opportunity to identify candidates' progress in learning Welsh as a second language and preparing to be members of our bilingual community.

As mentioned previously, the preparation periods in the classroom provide a very sound basis for the outcome of the final assessment. Understanding the potential of the grid is so important as it lends structure to the conversation as well as useful vocabulary and phrases. These are the important points for the moderator and therefore candidates must be coached to use them sensibly. However, candidates must do more than simply repeat words from the grid without giving the name of the character or the context for the comment. This was a weakness for many this year. Understanding must be demonstrated in order to gain marks. Candidates must also have clear pronunciation. A number this year struggled to pronounce familiar words correctly which reflects once again the need for regular practise and to ensure that pairs / groups are in place in good time to enable them to work together confidently.

There is also a tendency for teachers to interpret "spontaneously" in a number of different ways. We can certainly take this to mean a group of candidates speaking enthusiastically and intelligently without any support but this does not always happen and it does not mean that we cannot advise candidates to move on to another topic or to discuss a new element and even ask questions to try to expand their linguistic skills and better demonstrate their standard. The word has different meanings in different situations and teacher intervention should not be limited.

However, the role played by a number of teachers this year was extremely weak. The best provided help and support, encouraging and enriching the candidates' experience. However, there were too many examples this year of teachers talking too much, translating needlessly, speaking English regularly, guiding candidates towards irrelevant topics or failing to provide any guidance at all as candidates struggled or lost the flow of their conversation. These facts are disappointing but unfortunately that was the reality this year.

Basic sentence patterns required revision in a number of cases as candidates struggled to form simple sentences, offer opinion and respond to each other. The crucial solution here is to provide opportunities to practise as well as ensure that candidates understand the importance of integrating skills and how their oral skills can reinforce their comprehension and writing skills.

A number of candidates demonstrated poor questioning skills this year, particularly at the lower levels and once again, this is a crucial skill for the reading and writing units.

Therefore, in summary, the need to ensure that candidates respond to the topics of the stimulus in question, and are encouraged to do so during the test by teachers, must be reiterated. Centres have a responsibility to prepare candidates thoroughly to enable them to undertake the tasks confidently, but centres must also ensure effective internal standardisation to provide consistency across the department as well as fairness for candidates.

Candidates' oral skills certainly improve as they start conversing naturally forgetting the temptation to script excessively. We would therefore like to thank centres for their efforts as they change the focus of the learning so that our candidates understand that the goal is communication, not perfection. There was a strong element of enjoyment this year and this is one of the most important steps towards successfully learning a new language. We therefore look forward to the potential of the future.

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UNIT 2: COMMUNICATING WITH OTHER PEOPLE

Overview of the Unit

No adaptations were made this year therefore everyone sat Unit 2 tests. This unit requires candidates to respond orally and listen to peers by interacting with a partner (6-8 minutes) or in a group of 3 (8-10 minutes). Candidates are expected to express and support opinions. WJEC will provide the material to stimulate discussion. This material can include a range of graphs, pictures and short reading texts.

As seen in the specification and the mark bands/scheme, this unit focuses on communication and interaction and candidates are expected to demonstrate this through speaking and listening. Marks are awarded for both skills individually. This unit's teaching aim is to give candidates the opportunity to develop skills and strategies for learning the language confidently and to be able to speak the language naturally and freely.

As with every external assessment, the test involves administration work and work had to be uploaded to Surpass again this year. In addition, it is crucial that the mark sheet is uploaded and completed correctly. The name and mark of every group member must be included on these sheets, in order of merit. This did not happen in every case. There were also examples of centres who failed to include the mark sheet at all and other centres had produced their own sheet; this again is not acceptable. You must ensure that you record the AO1 Listening and AO2 Speaking marks in the correct columns. It also facilitates the work of the moderator if recordings are also uploaded in order of merit / order of the sample, following the instructions noted on the mark sheet. This was done for the majority of the work.

The test and the task must be noted at the beginning of the recording. These details are noted clearly on the front page and inside pages of each test. By failing to do this, the work of the moderators is complicated greatly as they must often try to guess which triggers are being discussed. Unfortunately, this year there were several examples of this. It is easy to adopt the habit of noting these details immediately after the candidates have introduced themselves. It would be a natural starting point to begin the assessment.

Although signs of the turbulent Covid period remain, it is encouraging to note that general performance was better this year and I would like to thank centres for their effort and hard work in returning to normality. Undoubtedly, our young people suffered during lockdown and it will take time for the impacts to recede. Looking forward to the Curriculum for Wales and the Government's target for 2050, we must remember that our aim remains the same, to give all individuals the opportunity to develop into natural and confident Welsh speakers.

Comments on individual questions/sections

There were eighteen stimuli again this year split across the three test days. There was a range of topics within the tests based on the three broad themes of Employment, Wales and the World and Youth. The most popular questions were 'Ysgol – gormod o bwysau?' (School – too much pressure?); 'Oes digon i'w wneud yn eich ardal chi?' (Is there enough to do in your area?); 'Chwaraeon o bob math – ydych chi'n gwneud digon?' (Sports – are you doing enough?) and 'Amser hamdden – ydyn ni'n ymlacio?' (Leisure time – are we relaxing?). Selecting the right topic is extremely important. In some cases, groups had selected a topic in which they clearly had little interest and very little to say, e.g. Test A task 3. 'Cael profiad o weithio – ydy e'n bwysig?' (Experience of work – is it important?) Some groups who selected this task found it difficult to expand the discussion by expressing opinion maturely. They also had difficulty presenting both sides of the argument for working while at school. They could have discussed task 2 'Oes digon i'w wneud yn eich ardal chi?' (Is there enough to do in your area?) much easier and probably gained more marks.

The best candidates used the stimulus sheet appropriately referring to the sheet regularly and reinforcing what they saw using their own experiences. They could use appropriate vocabulary when referring to the different features, such as images, statements, graph/chart and comments, and they could also use the third person of the verb when referring to the speech bubbles. This cohort interacted with their group / partner and were clearly familiar with the activity and the structure of the sheet itself. Evidence demonstrated that the best candidates could ask for each other's opinion, add to comments made by others and also use a wide range of simple language patterns correctly. They could also use a range of different verb tenses.

It must also be said that it was pleasing to hear a significant number from the lower bands making an effort to show that they can use some strategies to support and sustain a conversation. However, the standard of the weakest candidates' language was very uncertain and limited in terms of their ability to expand the conversation by making links to their own experiences. Across the bands, young people were heard communicating and although the language was not perfect, it was a joy to hear their enthusiasm and confidence. Once again unfortunately, candidates in a large number of groups hardly referred to the stimulus sheet at all choosing instead to discuss the subject generally. Frequent examples of this were seen in Test A task 1 'Ysgol – gormod o bwysau?' (School – too much pressure?) A large number of candidates discussed school in general ignoring the question 'is there too much pressure?'. In some cases, teachers tried to guide them towards this element but unfortunately in other cases, teachers encouraged them to discuss in general terms. There were also discussions where no reference was made to the stimulus at all and although the conversations were good in many cases, this must be penalised.

It must be emphasised again this year that the role of the teacher in this assessment is crucial. It is you as teachers who know your pupils and have the ability to move the discussion forward and show the groups at their best. You can ensure that all members of the group are given a chance to express themselves by asking a few questions when the group is quiet or the conversation begins to drift. There were examples again this year of teachers intervening needlessly and at other times, failing to interject when it was clear that the group / pair needed guidance. Take care also to ensure that you are not translating unnecessarily rather than simplifying the Welsh or paraphrasing the question. Remember that examples of questions are available to use or adapt in the 'Teacher's Copy'.

Any kind of assessment work must be standardised. Unfortunately it was very clear that this did not happen in all centres which led to difficulty when we requested additional samples. A great deal of the marks awarded within both skills were too generous. On the other hand, there were some examples where the marking was too harsh. We are aware that centres have very little time but we implore you to prioritise this core element to ensure fairness for candidates and staff. It would be helpful to look at standardisation during the year; not only before submitting samples; as an activity to share good practice and focus on the requirements of the mark scheme criteria.

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UNIT 3: NARRATIVE, SPECIFIC AND INSTRUCTIONAL

Overview of the Unit

This unit requires candidates to respond to a range of questions. The reading will be assessed through a range of structured questions and the writing for different purposes including narrative, specific and instructional writing. The types of questions change from year to year offering a new challenge and a sense of freshness to the exam paper. However, the questions will always be based on the three broad themes of youth, Wales and the world and employment, and candidates of all abilities will be able to access to every individual question. This element is so important for a non-tiered paper in order to ensure fairness for everyone and the opportunity to venture and succeed in all aspects of the tasks.

There was certainly clear progress this year reflecting the consistency of the learning and teaching across the academic year. There was time and opportunity to introduce, learn and reinforce important linguistic skills without the pressure of previous years. It was easier to prepare candidates for the individual units and ensure they had access to purposeful revision material.

Comments on individual questions/sections

There were questions on a range of topics this year focussing mainly on sport, Welsh produce, holidays and technology. The stimuli and the information were current and relevant to the candidates which is such an important element of this unit. This gives them the opportunity to respond to topics within their experience and understanding.

Question 1

The vast majority succeeded in recording the relevant information in the grid easily. Once again, some need to take care when recording specific years as marks were lost for a wrong digit. The only difficulty with this question was the word “gwefan” (website). Although we identified an issue with the same word in our report last year, a number of candidates did not understand the word again this year and often recorded the post code in the grid instead. It is regrettable that a previously identified issue remains unresolved in centres.

Question 2

Again, very many candidates had succeeded in gaining full marks here, understanding how to interpret the percentages easily. Very few candidates mixed up “hanner” (half) and “chwarter” (quarter) with a small minority using English labels and therefore losing precious marks. It is vitally important to teach candidates to read the question carefully and respond correctly.

Question 3

The effort made to answer this question must be applauded with candidates attempting to respond to the information about the three clothing companies. There was confusion between looking after the planet and liking humour but very few ignored the questions and left them blank.

The second half of the question was also successful with the majority choosing the correct columns in the grid. The need to practise questions like this must be emphasised again so that candidates are confident in undertaking similar tasks and understand how to interpret the correct answers.

Question 4

There were four parts to this question but it is important to note that the majority of candidates responded better to the short questions rather than the longer ones. The variety of the questions also helps to maintain interest and the vast majority had certainly made a great effort here again.

Firstly, candidates had to record the main facts about the fashion show in the grid, which is a familiar task. The only issue here was the need for specific details i.e. November was insufficient as a date. Additionally, following on again from last year's report, candidates were not familiar with the word "lleoliad" (location). We cannot overemphasise the need to read the examiners' report carefully and take action as required.

Identifying the correct images was a success although some candidates thought that the suit was suitable for the beach or for Christmas.

The last part gave candidates their first opportunity to express opinion. Candidates could not generally provide the appropriate answer which was "Ydw" (Yes) or "Nac ydw" (No), but their reasons were clear and very intelligent. A number had been coached to answer using "wrth gwrs" (of course) or "yn bendant" (certainly) which is acceptable. Popular answers referred to reasonable prices or that they enjoyed fashion, but there were some ambitious answers that referred to the need to support local events and to consider that the price included food.

Question 5

This was the weakest element of the paper last year but it was pleasing to note while marking that standards had improved in this part of the paper in general. This question gives candidates the opportunity to use their practical skills to translate a short piece of text into Welsh. Indeed, the vast majority succeeded in translating the first two sentences with relative ease but some difficulty was seen after reaching "we have raised". It must be remembered that this is a non-tiered paper and that there are challenges for all abilities, therefore not everyone was expected to be able to translate this phrase. However, a large number had succeeded in creating the command, "Cliciwch" (Click) or had made some modifications and used "Ewch" (Go) or "Edrychwch" (Look). Candidates are free to paraphrase the piece as long as they do not change the meaning of the message and it was pleasing to see individuals using their initiative in doing so.

Some candidates had problems spelling adjectives, which are familiar words. The message to examiners was that they could accept any positive adjective to denote "amazing" but that they must be spelled correctly. It was therefore sad to see answers such as *gret*, *benedgedig*, *arderchog* and *gwich* where marks could not be awarded. Revising the use of prepositions will also improve the standard of the best candidates.

Question 6

This is an opportunity to compare two centres along with different types of holidays, which included staying in a yurt or staying in a caravan park. Forming questions was a challenge for a number of candidates but again, as there were no marks for expression with the emphasis being placed on communication, answers that were intelligible and communicative could be accepted. The majority could compare without difficulty and understood the main differences between both places, and they were decisive about their preferences referring to the importance of offering holidays for pets as part of the family and the need for quiet time away from the hustle and bustle of the city and the pressures of technology.

Lack of attention was the only weakness here at times e.g. answering “caravan” in English instead of “carafan” in Welsh and losing a mark, identifying differences that did not exist in the text or copying slavishly from the text itself without attempting to make some modifications to demonstrate understanding.

Question 7

This question is now familiar and therefore it was disappointing to see that it had caused so many problems last year. However, this year, the majority succeeded in correcting over half of the errors accurately. Once again, there were ambitious errors to correct as well as common errors such as *grŵp*, *Hydref* and *mwynhau*. Only a small minority corrected “naw merched” successfully but it was surprising to see that the biggest problem was the need for a soft mutation after an adjective, “yn perffraith”. There was a cross-section of answers including *yn prffraith*, *yn Perffraith*, *yn perfaith*, *yn befaith* but as this was one of the immutable rules this year, candidates were expected to be able to correct the mutation with greater ease.

Question 8

This question was successful at all levels as candidates selected the relevant information to provide positive feedback on the company's website. The majority could identify positives and negatives relating to mobile phones and could select valid comments to improve Glan Mydyr's website. Once again, there were times when candidates needed to read the rubric of the question carefully e.g. the first part asked for positives but “mae eisiau newid hyn” (this needs to be changed) is not positive. The last part asked for comments that included at least three words each and therefore “gallu cerdded” or “yn wych” were not sufficient to gain the marks.

Question 9

The responses here varied greatly but it was pleasing to note that the vast majority had tried their best. There were no images or grids and therefore the nature of the questions appeared more difficult for some. However, reasonable attempts were made particularly with the last part of the question interpreting the graph results and expressing personal opinion. A number succeeded in gaining full marks here as they explained the graph's purpose and statistics clearly and responded personally.

More problems arose with the first part as a number of candidates did not understand the word “gwlad” (country) in the context of the first question, others failed to answer closed questions and some listed school subjects in English. Candidates are not expected to answer in English on the paper at all, therefore it is difficult to understand this practice unless it was done in school as part of their preparation. If so, the need to avoid this type of preparation was demonstrated as too many candidates lost too many marks needlessly across the paper.

Question 10

The broad theme and form of the extended writing question were given in advance as part of the advance information this year and these options were the short article (on fashion) or the letter (to the local council requesting a grant). It was pleasing to see that one topic did not appeal to candidates more than the other. It was clear at times that they had practised the form and then selected the context but others had focused solely on the context forgetting about the fundamentals of the form to a degree.

The standard of answers to this question certainly improved again this year. The majority had followed the bullet points understanding that these form the basis of the mark scheme but some centres had not coached candidates to cover all the points which led to marks being lost for content and expression.

There were examples of candidates following the bullet points in an orderly manner and responding to each one in turn to win the highest marks. This gave structure to the work and it is an example of good practice to candidates under exam conditions, particularly given the time restrictions.

The letter was a popular choice but unfortunately some centres had done too much preparation with candidates discussing a past trip and disregarding the need to request a grant and propose activities for the next trip. Candidates must read and respond to the question on the exam paper and understanding this is crucially important during the preparation time. The majority could use a range of language patterns intelligently but there was a tendency at times to adhere to the present without demonstrating their ability to change the tense of the verb. This then affected the mark for expression.

The fashion articles demonstrated candidates' personality with the best candidates writing enthusiastically and confidently sharing current fashion problems, particularly from the perspective of young people. Some blamed celebrities and expressed opinion that the pressures of fashion had a negative impact on people's well-being. Indeed, their comments and their method of expressing opinion were exceptional. Others followed expectations but again succeeded in discussing concerns and proposing improvements for the future. The content was of a higher standard than expression and a focus on language accuracy is needed to improve the standard of extended writing in future.

To close, two problems must be highlighted. Firstly, there was a tendency this year to include English phrases and even some occasional sentences within paragraphs. We have seen examples in the past but there were many more this year and we are not talking about isolated words. Candidates must understand that no marks will be awarded for English content. Once again, the use of English when preparing for the GCSE units must be considered.

Secondly, there were several examples of illegible handwriting. Some sentences or words often cause problems but this year there were examples of entire paragraphs and answers that were impossible to read. The influence of technology has naturally meant that candidates may write less frequently, but the impact is significant and an urgent response is required.

The progress made this year in terms of effort and standards in this unit was encouraging and we greatly hope that we will see more opportunities again next year with the return to normal learning.

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UNIT 4: DESCRIPTIVE, CREATIVE AND IMAGINATIVE

Overview of the Unit

In this unit 60% of marks are awarded for writing and 40% for reading.

Due to the weighting, candidates' ability to express themselves in a communicative manner using a wide range of syntaxes was vitally important and use of grammatically-correct language was awarded in the writing questions and within a number of the reading questions too.

As in previous series, the reading pieces were answered in a variety of ways.

Additionally, there was a variety of written questions to ensure accessibility to candidates of all abilities, and an appropriate level of challenge across the range of abilities.

The paper provided candidates with opportunities to discuss a wide range of topics within the three broad themes specified in the specification.

Evidence was seen during the marking period that a significant number of candidates submitted good and confident responses. This cohort of candidates used correct Welsh syntaxes in their responses with a higher standard of language than seen in previous series.

However, this exam was held on a later date in the examination timetable which had an impact on the standard of candidates' language in general due to a lack of contact with teachers after candidates in a large number of centres had left for independent study leave and due to the timing of the Whitsun half term holidays.

In general, the efforts of candidates of all abilities – low or high – are to be applauded. The best candidates' use of language bodes well for their use of the Welsh language in the future in AS Welsh Second Language lessons and in their use of the language in the wider community.

It was clear that less able candidates were frustrated with their inability to respond to simple pieces and especially the more challenging ones. Very few of them answered the questions that were in Welsh only. These candidates often struggled to use simple syntaxes and of course, this is not due to a lack of commitment or enthusiasm from their teachers, but is often due to a lack of contact hours on the school timetable.

Comments on individual questions/sections

Question 1

A1a

- The majority of candidates completed this basic, non-verbal task by proving an understanding of simple words on familiar topics such as personal details and hobbies. Rather than ticking the correct answers, a small number of candidates identified words from the reading extracts in the answer grids and therefore failed to gain any marks.

A1b

- Overall there was a good response to this part of the question. Clearly a large number of candidates were used to asking questions in Units 1, 2 and 3 and have therefore been able to ask communicative questions. A number of candidates wrote questions that were quite error-prone but communicative enough to gain a mark.

A1c

- There was a good response to this part of the question with a significant number of candidates able to respond sensibly although some discussed their personal friends instead of discussing one of the characters from the reading extracts.
- One content mark could be awarded for a correct communicative answer and an additional expression mark could be awarded for the use of grammatically-correct syntax within the answer.

A1ch

- The majority of candidates completed this basic, non-verbal task by proving an understanding of familiar words and identifying whether the statements in the table were true or false. Rather than ticking the correct answers, a small number of candidates identified words from the reading extracts in the answer grids and therefore failed to gain any marks.

A1d

- There were very few English answers, but it wasn't possible to award a mark to those who did provide English answers. Some had a tendency to identify jobs, in English, that were not relevant to the reading extract. A large number of candidates identified relevant jobs and were awarded a content mark for their efforts. The best candidates succeeded in identifying suitable jobs using correct syntaxes and therefore won the mark for expression.

Question 2

A2

- Five marks were awarded for presenting five facts in response to the three discussion points in the question. Five marks were awarded for the correct use of syntaxes with reasons to support opinion for the second discussion point. In order to gain the five marks for expression, candidates were required to use three different syntaxes, including two verb tenses.
- The question ensures that three different syntaxes are required in order to answer the question correctly. In terms of awarding marks for language, the emphasis is on using basic sentences correctly and due to the introduction of the five immutable rules this year, correct use of the soft mutation after *am, ar, i* and with adjectives after *yn/n* was required to be able to award marks for expression. A number of candidates were able to respond to each discussion point in the question quite successfully, gaining marks for content and expression.

Question 3

A3a

- This question was generally answered quite well with a number of candidates attempting to fill the gaps with the correct names. Similar to question A1, the paper contained a relatively simple reading piece, using simple vocabulary on the familiar topics of television and technology.

A3b

- The following answers were rewarded with a mark: *ydw, nac ydw, ydw a nacydw, wrth gwrs, yn bendant, yn sicr, heb os, weithiau, Rydw i'n gwyllo ffilmiau, Dydw i ddim yn gwyllo ffilmiau.*
- Examples of answers where a mark could not be awarded: *ydy, nac ydy, ydyn, nac ydyn, ydych, nac ydych, oes, nac oes, ie, tebyg,*
- A number of candidates still have difficulty using the correct question-answering words and therefore lost out on marks.
- Due to the question being in Welsh only and misuse of question-answering words, a number of candidates struggled with this part of the question.

A3c

- Once again, a large number of candidates failed to gain marks for this part of the question. A number of candidates had difficulty with this question as it was in Welsh only but this was part of the challenge. Candidates must practise how to respond in Welsh to simple Welsh questions which include familiar vocabulary such as *tebyg/gwahanol* (similar/different).

A3ch

- Candidates were required to use information from the piece to explain how the character named by them in part c of Question 3 was similar or different to them. A large number of candidates struggled to gain marks in this part of the question due to the increasing level of challenge and often because they had not given the right answer in part c.
- The following answers were rewarded with a mark (if the candidate had named one of the characters from the text and the information corresponded):

Examples:

Henna – Dydw i ddim yn hoffi gwyllo ffilmiau.

Sion – Fel Sion, dwi'n hoffi gwyllo Netflix.

Emma – Yn wahanol i Emma, dydw i ddim yn hoffi bwyta popcorn.

Carlos – Rydw i'n cytuno efo Carlos achos rydw i'n offi gwyllo pethau ar fy ffôn hefyd.

- Marks could not be awarded if the answers did not correspond to the names, if no name had been given in part c and if correct syntax was not used in their responses because only marks for expression were available in this part of the question.

Question 4

A4a i,ii,iii,iv

- Although the text was more ambitious than text A3, the candidates' response to this part of question 4 was better than A3, probably because the method of answering was more familiar to students with candidates underlining the correct answers. A small number of candidates underlined more than one answer out of the three options so it wasn't possible to award marks.

A4b

- Here too, there was a good response to this part of the question and a significant number of candidates understood the requirements and wrote facts from the text on the lines. Although not everyone answered correctly, it was very encouraging to see that so many candidates had attempted to meet the requirements of the task.

A4c

- Once again, praise must be given to candidates and their efforts to respond to this question. A large number of candidates responded successfully although misuse of response words (*Ydy/Nac ydy/ Ydw/ Nacydw*) meant that a number lost one mark for expression.

Question 5

A5

- Eight marks were awarded for presenting eight facts in response to the four discussion points in the question. Seven marks were awarded for correctly using syntaxes in sentences.
- The question ensures that five different syntaxes, including three verb tenses, are required in order to answer the question correctly. In terms of awarding marks for language, the emphasis is on using basic sentences correctly and as with A2, due to the introduction of the five immutable rules this year, correct use of the soft mutation after *am, ar, i* and with adjectives after *yn/n* was required to be able to award marks for expression.
- It was very encouraging to see a number of candidates trying their best to respond fully to this question.
- The ability to respond effectively and use grammatically-correct syntaxes in relation to discussion points in the past tense continues to cause difficulty to a number of candidates. It was often impossible to award marks for content or expression to responses on the second discussion point due their inability to use concise past syntaxes correctly.

Question 6

B6

- This was the most ambitious reading question on the paper but the responses of a number of candidates were commendable.

B6a

- Positive efforts were seen in this part of the question with candidates completing the grid to the best of their ability and succeeding in gaining marks. It is clear that teachers need to teach the adjective “pwysig” (important) in their classes.
- Candidates who understood the adjective “pwysig” succeeded in agreeing/disagreeing effectively with Gareth Bale's opinion in the third part of this section.

B6b

- Here too, a number of candidates did their best to respond but there was a tendency to discuss style and fashion instead of languages as was required in this task. It is therefore clear that candidates need to be coached to read questions carefully and to not assume that each grid or part of a question discusses the same topics.
- A small number of candidates attempted to answer every question using full sentences but as there were no expression/language marks available for these, it was a waste of time in this case. Candidates therefore need to be coached to know when to respond using full sentences and when not to do so.

B6c

- Candidates' efforts were hampered by the word “eilun” (idol) in this part of question 6 even though a translation was provided on the paper. The standard of responses to this question was lower with several examples of blank tables. The best candidates succeeded in responding fully and expressing opinion effectively in the third part of the question.

B6ch

- This is where the majority of candidates gained marks and, quite often, full marks. Regardless of whether that was due to the fact that ticking the correct answer in a table was more familiar or that the language within the table was easier, it was pleasing to see so many candidates doing so well.

B6 d, dd, e

- These questions generally saw good responses with candidates attempting to underline the correct sentences. A small number of candidates underlined more than one sentence out of the three options so it wasn't possible to award marks.

Question 7

C7

- (12 marks for content and 13 marks for expression – maximum of 25)

- There were interesting responses to the two optional texts on the paper, which included the blog comparing how much money is spent on Cardiff compared to their areas and a story about a special event in their lives. Of course, the standard varied due to the wide range of linguistic ability sitting this non-tiered paper. The work of the best candidates was excellent and it was pleasing to read the candidates' views and to test their ability to use language freely, confidently and creatively. A number had a firm grasp of the basics of the language and it was often possible to see that they had carefully planned their work. However, the effects of the later date, the lack of contact with teachers, independent revision without Welsh lessons and the Whitsun half term holidays could be seen clearly in the general standard of responses to this question.
- In terms of content we were searching for:
 - interesting and comprehensive treatment of the text
 - logical progression of ideas and opinions
 - an effort to express opinion and support their views with various and ambitious answers
 - an effort to be ambitious in terms of ideas and responding creatively to the chosen text.
- In terms of expression we were looking for:
 - the ability to convey ideas and views successfully
 - the ability to vary the pattern of a sentence for a purpose
 - suitable and qualified vocabulary to deal with the text
 - accuracy and an attempt to ensure consistency in terms of verb tenses
 - an attempt to create appropriate mood and atmosphere through the use of idioms, comparisons and rhetorical questions.
- To raise standards, candidates should seek to improve the accuracy of their basic syntaxes by avoiding mistakes such as:

Dw i'n ddim yn . . .

Fi'n dwlu ar . . .

Achos mae'n rydw i'n hoffi . . .

Roedd teimlais i

Es i mynd i

Mae ganddo Caerdydd

Dydy Caerdydd ddim yn efo/cael

- Teachers need to embed the five standard rules within their classes to ensure a higher level of language accuracy and to ensure that more expression marks are accessible to more candidates.

Supporting you

Useful contacts and links

Our friendly subject team are on hand to support you between 8.30am and 5.30pm, Monday to Friday.

Tel: 02920265162 /02920265480

E-mail: sian.llewelyn@wjec.co.uk amanda.griffiths@wjec.co.uk

Qualification webpage: [Welsh Second Language \(wjec.co.uk\)](http://Welsh Second Language (wjec.co.uk))

See other useful contacts here: [Useful Contacts | WJEC](#)

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ⁱ ***Please note: where overall performance on a question/question part was considered good, with no particular areas to highlight, these questions have not been included in the report.***