



**AQA Certificates
January 2013**

English Language

8705/CP

(Specification 8705)

Coursework Project

Report on the Examination

Further copies of this Report on **the Examination** are available from: aqa.org.uk

Copyright © 2013 AQA and its licensors. All rights reserved.

Copyright

AQA retains the copyright on all its publications. However, registered schools/colleges for AQA are permitted to copy material from this booklet for their own internal use, with the following important exception: AQA cannot give permission to schools/colleges to photocopy any material that is acknowledged to a third party even for internal use within the centre.

Set and published by the Assessment and Qualifications Alliance.

The Assessment and Qualifications Alliance (AQA) is a company limited by guarantee registered in England and Wales (company number 3644723) and a registered charity (registered charity number 1073334).
Registered address: AQA, Devas Street, Manchester M15 6EX.

Report on AQA Level 1/2 Certificate in English Language: Coursework Project

There was a very small entry for English Language. Several centres entering for this series were carrying forward coursework marks from the summer. Those candidates most successfully entering new work were evidently supported by very clear preparation based on previous exemplar material and the Principal Moderator report, and clearly relished the opportunity to choose topics of individual interest.

There was some very impressive work submitted by able candidates. One considered current obsessions with notions of female beauty and the growth of cosmetic surgery, and another considered organ donation. Both based their writing on research which included medical, ethical, cultural, practical and biographical sources ranging from the tabloid feature to the academic. This range provided ample scope for comparing different factual and statistical data as well as values and attitudes associated with the topics. It was clear how the source material had been adapted for candidates' writing and how they had reconciled and evaluated conflictual elements of their reading in their writing. The writing reflected this in a range of sophisticated vocabulary choices, sentence structures and paragraph sequences to sustain, develop and contrast ideas and views. Commentaries on the Reading and on the Writing showed candidates explicitly engaged in judgements of relevance and validity in their sources, and in organisational and expressive choices in their writing. It is a mark of the highest quality work in this specification that the commentaries are as much revealing of candidates' thinking as their main submissions.

Other impressive work was based on evaluation of Obama's influence on the lives of black Americans and an evaluation of Charles Saatchi's influence on the contemporary art world. Both of these were based on a range of challenging, sophisticated and mature sources – and both submissions were, in turn, as challenging, sophisticated and mature as what they had read, with a strong sense of personal voice and attitude.

These features were evident in other successful work on such topics as the relationship between The West and East, and issues involved in developing community websites.

Candidates less evidently skilled, independent and successful in reading and writing tended to submit work based on the "Why I love" suggestion in the launch material of 2010. Whilst this can be an engaging and potentially challenging choice, it is well to bear in mind the message of the 2011 and 2012 standardising meetings, where the potential limitations of this choice were indicated, together with examples of candidates' work which displayed the weakness that this can emerge when candidates write from enthusiasm and personal knowledge, and do not show how their understanding has been developed, challenged or confirmed by their reading.

In this sense, there was some engaging work produced by candidates writing about their favourite sport, with pleasing explanation of what they had personally gained from the regime, comradeship and culture of the sport. However, much of the reading on the topic was unchallenging, drawn from promotional material, popular journalism and Wikipedia and other informational websites. It has to be reiterated, following the last PM report that candidates must show that their reading has required them to negotiate conflicting evidence, conflicting interpretations, and reconcile opposing attitudes and values in what they read. One of the key words in the assessment criteria is "extrapolation" from reading. This requires some ability to explore potential applications and implications in what they have read, and to show explicitly how that reading has influenced (or not) their own thought and feeling.

Some very clear guidance emerges from assessing the strongest and the weakest submissions:

- a) teachers need to ensure that candidates do not expose their own naivety in their choice of undemanding and insufficiently varied sources
- b) candidates need to know that their commentaries are assessed as a part of what they write, and that both Reading and Writing mark-schemes include a specific assessment bullet on the commentaries
- c) teachers need to ensure that they are working to guidelines and advice provided in PM reports and at standardising meetings where exemplar responses provide a measure of success at various levels of attainment.

- d) annotation needs to help the moderator to confirm the centre-awarded marks by making realistic use of key terms in the assessment vocabulary – the most important of which are “sophisticated”, “analysis” and “perceptive”.
- e) teachers need to be aware of revised documentation (e.g. cover sheets) and mark schemes reflecting specification development since the launch in 2010.

It is hoped that the success of this specification continues in the June entry. That success is particularly encouraging in the evidence that candidates in large centres and small PRUs are well suited to the Project requirements. It is also encouraging in the evidence that candidates at the top of the ability range and lower down are able to show themselves committed, stimulated and successful in work which gives scope for individuality, and which rewards their efforts with a very substantial share of the total marks for the paper.