



AQA Certificates
January 2013

English Language

8705/CS

(Specification 8705)

Speaking and Listening

Report on the Examination

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Report on AQA Certificate in English Language: Speaking and Listening

Various types of institution were represented in this second cohort of entries: schools; 6th form colleges; small units; private external entries. For all of them this coursework formed a useful part of the certificate. Meanwhile, though, further lessons can be learned from this experience, to add to those reported in June 2012.

1. Centres are reminded of the requirement to (a) send in completed records for all candidates and (b) send in on DVD or flash drive a sample of 5 candidates across their range of entry and performance. Records and samples of performance help in delivering parity across centres.
2. To help us watch the performances and to match them to record forms, we need candidates to state their name and number at the start of their performance.
3. Candidates should not read from scripts, although supporting notes are allowed.
4. Where there are several candidates they should be working independently on their topic. It was disappointing to see, in one centre, that all candidates had prepared and delivered on the same topic.
5. Good records for each candidate help to show how well the centre has set tasks and assessed these tasks. This time there was a range of quality in record keeping, but there were many records which were excellent.
6. The criteria are designed to help assess:
 - The quality of ideas and the use of data which has contributed to the substance and development of these ideas
 - The use of language and structures to express ideas
 - Interactive strategies which help the ideas to be communicated

Note too that there has to be a substantial element of presentation. Questions can be part of this, but for this specification an interview is not allowed.

7. The importance of having a good task cannot be emphasised strongly enough. Good tasks had a level of challenge, were designed within the idea of a debate, required some research, encouraged rhetoric and explanation.

8. Centres are reminded that there is now a standardising DVD for this specification. This DVD, and its commentary, help to show the standard to be applied. **All teachers teaching the specification should be familiar with this DVD before marks are next submitted, and records should, where applicable, make reference to it.** A further DVD, made specifically in a school doing this specification, will be filmed in May, ready for issue in late 2013.

Conclusion

There was much to enjoy in the work seen from this second entry. It suggested that Speaking and Listening is being integrated into the wider elements of the course and that many teachers have already acquired a good sense of how to apply the criteria fairly and rigorously.

Next year there will be a supporting DVD to exemplify some of the issues and standards. This DVD will be first seen at the teacher standardising meetings.