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Examiners' Report
Principal Examiner Feedback
Summer 2017

Pearson Edexcel IGCSE
In English Language (4EA0) Paper 02R

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IGCSE English Language 4EA0R

Paper 2

June 2017

Paper 2 of IGCSE English Language 4EA0R lasts ninety minutes and is equally divided between reading and writing. Question 1 is a reading question, based on a text drawn from the Edexcel Anthology.

Candidates would have seen the text previously. This year the text was a poem, "Electricity Comes To Cocoa Bottom". For Question 2, candidates have a choice of three writing questions, of which they choose one. Question 2a was the text of a talk to students on making the world a better place, Question 2b was a contribution to a website about making difficult choices and Question 2c was a story beginning "I was only trying to help".

Principal Examiner's Report

Reading

Question 1

This question was generally answered well. Very few marks less than 5 were awarded. Most answers were in the 8-13 range. These tended to tell the story of the poem and make points about it, but failed to expand on these points or offer much analysis. The highest marks were awarded where technique was spotted and then an offer of analysis was made relating to the context and or/narrative. There seemed to be a lot of key terms in the answers which appeared to have been 'learnt by rote' but not much explanation behind, for example, "in media res". Marks awarded in particular for alternative interpretations and use of modal auxiliary verbs, for example, "this could suggest....on the other hand it could show...."

Examiners reported that the selection of "Electricity Comes to Cocoa Bottom" was very effective in eliciting a range of successful responses. While reading the scripts, some examiners reported that they could sense the enthusiasm of the candidates, responding to the set task. Many students seemed to have an excellent knowledge of the poem. Most were able to recognise the importance of the event. Most were able to recognise, to varying degrees, the use of language devices. Some students made detailed comparisons and also referred to the effects of the arrival of electricity, on the locals, developed their response to show a more perceptive understanding of the language used. A range of responses made effective links to poverty and the power of the wealthy.

There were very few weak or short responses. Some students produced pages flowing with their knowledge. Some seemed to make the events come alive. Examiners reported that they enjoyed marking this question.

Writing

Question 2a

Students were good at opening with rhetorical questions though it would have been nice to see some variety in openings or different ways of starting that might make responses stand out. Students generally made points around the idea of global warming and so on, but there could have been more use of persuasive devices for effect in the mid-range answers. Lower band answers were straightforward and used simple vocabulary with minimal signposting. There appeared to be a lack of sophisticated punctuation across the board. In the higher mark questions, there was a more subtle use of persuasion and explanation that coaxed the reader in through use of emotive language and personal pronouns. Overall, the question was answered suitably. Nearly all responses used the correct tone. Most used realistic ways for teenagers to change the world, for example, helping in the local community, recycling and encouraging others to show respect. Some did write about trying to influence world leaders to contribute to making the world a better place.

Question 2b

There seemed to be more creative answers for this question than 2a. Students were good at using tension-building techniques when writing in the style of a story and a far wider range of punctuation used. There was more effective writing here. Some markers felt the question lent itself better to meeting the level 4/5 criteria. Higher level answers made full use of a variety of descriptive writing techniques, lower level (there were few) were very short, perhaps due to time constraints as what was there was still effective. Most students talked about subject and career choices. Some wrote about incidents where a choice was made. These tended to be more narrative in approach.

Question 2c

Similar to 2b, this elicited a far more creative sample of answers marked. There was a wide use of descriptive writing techniques and some narratives were very well executed. The highest marks were awarded for a subtle use of tension, description and intriguing narrative. Answers at the lower end of the spectrum were simplistic in approach and lacked detail. Some answers contained too much dialogue which did not really add to the overall effect. Many students

wrote about incidents where they were helping at home, that went wrong. Some did produce incidents where they were rescuing people from danger. Some students used the quotation at the end, instead of being the opening line, although this did not greatly detract from the result.

Throughout the writing questions, examiners reported that nearly all students used the correct tone. A general weakness was with punctuation, including with the more able writers. They tended not to use a correct range consistently, even if the use of vocabulary was excellent.

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