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Pearson Edexcel International GCSE
In English Language B (4EB1)
Paper 1

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Introduction

The texts about art were accessible across the full range of abilities and candidates were able to engage with the tasks and respond appropriately.

Examiners commented there was evidence of some good teaching and learning in preparation for this examination in the responses seen and many candidates seemed well prepared on the whole. It was felt that now that centres and candidates have access to past papers as well as the Sample Assessment Materials, they are becoming more familiar with the requirements of this specification and there has been an improvement in the quality of the responses, especially to Section A. However, examiners did comment that a significant number of responses to Q3 and Q6 did not focus on the writers' techniques and their intended effects. Examiners saw some good responses across all the questions.

Better candidates were able to engage fully with both texts and their responses demonstrated exploration and analysis. Their writing responses were often interesting and effective and were well controlled and accurate. Less able candidates sometimes struggled to understand the passages and the questions. Their writing was often brief or lacked coherence and had weak language controls.

There were some candidates who made references to the pictures in their responses to Questions 3, 6 and 7. This is not a valid way to respond to texts as the pictures are not language or structural devices chosen for effect by the writers.

There were candidates who copied out all, or considerable chunks, of the extracts in response to Question 8. This is not a successful way to respond as candidates are required to produce their own work and show the ability to adapt the original texts for a different audience and purpose.

There was evidence of planning and proofreading which is to be encouraged. However, the use of very long plans or draft essays is to be discouraged as they are not a good use of time. Candidates should be encouraged to plan their response in the answer booklet rather than on separate additional sheets.

Section A (Questions 1-7)

This consists of two short retrieval questions and a question on the writer's use of language and structure to create effects on each text and a question requiring candidates to compare the two texts.

Question 1

This is a straightforward question on Text One which does not require candidates to use their own words.

The majority of candidates responded correctly. The most common points identified were 'the local art exhibition' or 'the student teacher'. Examiners did comment that some candidates were writing too much and giving too many points for this one mark question. A number of candidates used their own words for this question which is not required and sometimes the meaning was not clear so they were unable to access the mark e.g. those who used 'museum' instead of 'the art exhibition'. Occasionally candidates used points from outside the line references e.g. 'a range of art-making materials'.

Candidates must ensure they read the text and the question carefully.

Question 2

This is a straightforward question on Text One which does not require candidates to use their own words.

The majority of candidates provided correct examples of the writer's experiences of teaching art such as 'his interests', his enthusiasm', his guidance', 'observed the transformation of reluctant students' or 'the students became willing risk-takers'. Some candidates used examples from other parts of the extract and ignored the line references mentioned in the question.

Candidates must ensure they read the question and the text carefully.

Question 3

The question asks the candidate how the writer presents his attitude to studying art. Responses to this question were on the whole encouraging.

Examiners commented that most candidates were able to demonstrate some understanding of language techniques and how these were used to present the writer's attitude to art. Most

candidates were able to identify the writer's positive attitude towards art. Candidates were able to recognise linguistic techniques (first person and rhetorical questions being the most widely spotted features) but many were not able to comment upon the effects achieved saying little more than 'this emphasises' or 'this makes the reader want to read on'.

Successful candidates were able to explore language and answer the question in detail, with appropriate integrated references used to support points made. They did not simply re-tell the content of the text but explored and analysed the writer's techniques and went beyond generic and straightforward comment. These candidates had clearly been prepared well in how to systematically appraise and analyse texts. They were able to correctly use terminology to identify language used e.g. 'like walking into another dimension' (simile), 'embraced new possibilities' (metaphor), and the use of tricolons throughout the text.

Less successful candidates produced responses that were content based without much focus on the writer's techniques. These tended to focus on 'what' the writer said rather than 'how' the writer presented his attitude to studying art. There was also evidence of 'feature spotting' where candidates identify (correctly) particular language features but do not explain them. Less able candidates often narrated information from the text, with only brief or generic comments offered. Some did use quotations but these were to support their narrative response. Expressions were used such as 'The writer describes', 'The writer explains', but these were followed up by references to content, not to 'how' the writer achieved effects. These candidates also often used long quotations. Some of the weakest responses were simply summaries, narratives or direct copies of the text.

Centres need to remind candidates that this question asks **how** the writer achieves his/her effects not **what** he/she says.

Question 4

This is a straightforward question on Text Two which does not require candidates to use their own words.

Most candidates responded successfully. The most common point identified were: 'a medium for expression, passion or emotion', 'to present opinions', 'to challenge authority' and 'to record iconic moments in history'. The main reason for incorrect responses was using the wrong part of the text. A small number of candidates tried to re-word their chosen point which is not required.

Centres need to make sure that candidates read the question carefully.

Question 5

This is a straightforward question on Text Two which does not require candidates to use their own words.

Most candidates answered correctly with 'he is a famous artist', 'his work was a load of odd shapes and lines', 'his invention of his strange and occasionally mad art style' and 'the painting sold for \$95 million'. A number of candidates split the points about 'he is famous and important' and 'she has come to admire him and his courage' into two separate points which could only be given one mark. The most common error was to use the quotation from Picasso 'The world does not make sense ...' as a point which could not be rewarded. Other unsuccessful responses chose material from outside the line references. Some candidates attempted to re-word their points which often produced responses that were unclear.

Centres need to make sure that candidates read the question carefully and understand that they do not need to use their own words to respond.

Question 6

The question asks the candidate how the writer presents her enthusiasm for art. Some examiners commented that candidates did not perform as well on this question compared to Question 3.

Most candidates were able to demonstrate some understanding of language techniques and how these were used to present the focus of the question. They were able to identify relevant quotations and comment on them. They commented on the colloquial style and the use of informal language, the use of tricolons, the use of questions and the use of the pronouns 'I' and 'you'. Most were able to identify Safah's enthusiasm for art.

Better candidates provided a wide range of points and explained the enthusiasm in their own words showing a deeper understanding of the writer's views. These views were closely referenced using textual and technical support. They were able to identify and illustrate the writer's purpose in writing a polemic for art, both in schools and in life, and also ably to describe her passion for and commitment to the subject.

Some less able responses identified techniques but gave a generic answer like 'this adds credibility' or 'it makes the reader want to read on' or used the Point, Evidence, Explanation approach in their responses but the explanation merely reiterated the quote. Some examiners commented that a significant number of candidates did not focus on the writer's techniques and their intended effects and instead described how much the writer liked art. There was evidence of 'feature spotting' where candidates identify (correctly) particular language features but do not explain them. Some candidates adopted a list like approach to this question identifying

techniques and choosing appropriate references but doing no more. Some less able candidates copied out sections of the text and offered simple comment. Less able candidates tended to paraphrase the content. The weakest candidates simply copied out all or sections of the text.

As with question 3, centres need to remind candidates that this question asks **how** the writer achieves his/her effects not **what** he/she says.

Question 7

This question requires candidates to compare how the writers convey their ideas and perspectives about the importance of art. Examiners commented that the majority of candidates were able to identify and discuss basic similarities and differences at a minimum, and some produced well-thought out comparisons of the extracts. Some examiners commented that candidates engaged well with the task but others thought candidates found this task more demanding.

Most candidates were able to identify some comparisons and use valid references from the texts as support. Comparative points that were made covered the contrast between the adult and adolescent perspectives, the contrast between autobiographical and purely persuasive intentions, the similarity to be observed in the account of personal journeys, direct address to the reader and the use of formal and informal language.

More able candidates explored the similarities and differences of the two passages, comparing a range of ideas and perspectives and supporting these throughout with evidence. They were able to make perceptive comment and analysed the writer's impacts on the readers whilst comparing. These candidates carefully selected appropriate material that they could compare. Popular choices were first person narration, the use of rhetorical questions, the perspective of a teacher looking back over his life and career versus a student exploring her passion and specific vocabulary choices that each writer had chosen to communicate their ideas. These candidates chose short and relevant quotations to support their ideas and were able to discuss them in some detail and depth. They tended to identify the key point that both texts were aiming to convince readers of the vital importance of art both in education and as part of a fulfilling life. They were able to structure their responses comparatively by taking the various features of the text and comparing/contrasting them throughout. Their responses were balanced.

Many candidates wrote about each text individually and then wrote a comparative comment at the end. Examiners commented that these responses were not as successful as those candidates whose responses were comparative throughout. It was noted that a number of candidates did not support their comparative points with references to the texts.

Less able candidates either did not compare or made few comparative comments. They wrote about one text and then the other without making comparisons or had a brief comparison at the beginning or end of their answer. These candidates sometimes gave summaries of the texts with little attempt to compare them. Sometimes the texts were only linked by a single sentence, e.g. 'Whereas in Text 2...' Others just gave vague points of comparison, e.g. 'they're both about art'. Some less able candidates paraphrased the texts, retelling the passages or directly lifted from the texts.

Examiners noted that some candidates answered this question as if it was Question 10 on the legacy specification (4EB0) explaining which text they preferred and why, even using 'my first reason is...my second reason...'. This is not a successful way to approach this question.

Centres will need to continue to work with candidates to make sure they have a clear understanding of valid ways of responding to texts. This should include how to analyse how writers use language and structure to achieve their effects and how to write comparative responses.

Section B (Question 8)

There was some evidence of good teaching and learning in the responses to this section. There was some evidence of planning which was pleasing. The most useful plans were relatively short but allowed candidates to focus and organise their ideas effectively. Plans should be in the answer booklet rather than on an additional sheet. Some examiners commented that candidates who planned their responses seemed to respond in a more focused manner.

There were a number of lively, well written responses to this task. Most candidates understood the requirement of the task and were able to use the appropriate register for a letter to a friend. It was generally felt that most candidates engaged with this task and some produced lively and convincing responses. The most successful responses had a strong sense of audience and purpose and included personal touches and rhetorical language to engage the audience. Many candidates were able to adopt an appropriate register and there was clear evidence of an understanding of the purpose, audience and format required although some examiners commented that some candidates struggled adopt an appropriate register.

AO1

The majority of candidates used the bullet points provided in the question to prompt the content of their letters, with some opting to use only the information provided in the two texts while others also used their knowledge of art to provide further ideas for their letters.

Most candidates referred to the three bullet points appropriately and managed to cover a reasonable number of relevant points. These tended to concentrate on aspects such as learning art in school, the value of good teaching and visiting art exhibitions. The second bullet point 'different types of art' was sometimes less developed than the others with candidates tending to list the different types with no additional development.

More able candidates referred to a good range of ideas and made developed comment on all three bullet points. They adapted the stimulus material well and were able to incorporate their points to produce more sophisticated responses. They were able to refer perceptively to information and ideas whilst maintaining the required tone and register. They covered all three bullet points equally and produced clearly focused arguments.

Less able candidates were sometimes able to select and interpret a small range of relevant points but there was evidence of lifting of large sections from the original texts without any attempt to re-work the material.

Examiners commented that a significant number of candidates lifted information from the texts especially whole sentences. This affects the quality of the responses as candidates are expected to adapt the material and use their own words.

AO4

Examiners commented that many candidates were able to produce a successful letter with a real sense of engagement with the person receiving the letter. These candidates were able to communicate their ideas clearly and sometimes persuasively, with a clear sense of audience.

Most candidates understood the format of a letter, offering a salutation and a sign off, but it should be noted that addresses are not necessary as it is the tone, style and register that should be appropriate for the task. Most were able to communicate clearly with their audience but sometimes examiners commented that the letters were rather too formal for a letter to a friend. Other examiners commented positively on candidates' ability to demonstrate a sense of audience and purpose.

Better candidates were able to create a lively and engaging style that suggested they had a well-developed understanding of the required approach. They wrote detailed, persuasive letters with some effective use of tone and register to indicate their friendship with and concern for the recipient. The more successful responses constantly reminded the reader that it was a letter to a friend by addressing their friend throughout.

Less able candidates did not have the sense that this was a letter to a friend and their responses were too formal, too stilted and often too brief. Less able candidates had problems sustaining the required register throughout their response often only acknowledging the register at the

beginning and ending of their response. Some less able candidates did not write in a style that resembled a letter and chose to write an article or essay.

AO5

There were some examples of successful responses with high levels of accuracy.

Most candidates were able to communicate clearly with reasonably accurate structures, vocabulary and punctuation. Spelling and punctuation were often correct and many candidates tried hard to use a range of sentence structures and punctuation for effect.

Better candidates used a good range of vocabulary with ambition and had a good range of punctuation including the correct use of apostrophes, commas in lists and other devices. Paragraphing was used throughout and could be for effect as could the deliberate use of short sentences and rhetorical questions. Examiners commented that in these responses there was real attention to detail in the crafting of sentences and there was often evidence of proofreading.

Less able candidates sometimes struggled to communicate their ideas and their language controls were not always secure, especially grammar. Examiners commented that some candidates had problems with grammar, despite good spelling and punctuation.

Common errors commented on by examiners were: comma splicing, missing or misused apostrophes, problems with homophones, misspelling of basic vocabulary, not capitalising 'I' for the personal pronoun, missing capital letters at the beginning of sentences and grammatical errors.

Centres should continue to work to ensure candidates have a clear idea of how to adapt ideas from texts and how to write appropriately and accurately for different audiences and purposes.

Section C (Question 9, 10 and 11)

Question 10 was the most popular question.

There was evidence of some good preparation and teaching in this section.

There was evidence of planning which is to be encouraged. However, the use of very long plans or draft essays is to be discouraged as they are not a good use of time. Candidates should be encouraged to plan their response in the answer booklet rather than on separate additional sheets.

Some examiners commented positively on evidence that candidates had proofread their work but other examiners observed that candidates would have benefitted from proofreading their work more carefully.

Examiners commented on how much they enjoyed reading the responses in this section.

Question 9

Examiners did not see many responses to this question.

AO4

Some examiners commented positively on candidates' responses to this question. However, other examiners thought that some candidates struggled to develop and sustain a response. The majority of candidates argued in favour of studying art in schools and very few candidates seemed to think that art education was a waste of time. Examiners did comment that a number of candidates who chose this question used ideas and material from the extracts which limited their responses.

Most candidates were able to refer to the importance of art in terms of a career opportunity, personal fulfilment or the simple enjoyment of a hobby. Of these, the emphasis was firmly on the latter two of these outcomes, often with some personal illustrations of how the candidate had benefitted from a study of art. They were generally able to construct an argument or discussion – some presented one side of the argument only, whereas others considered both sides in some detail.

More able candidates adopted a persuasive and argumentative tone and had clearly been prepared to write this kind of response. They wrote in an engaging and lively manner, seeing both sides of the argument but being clear about their own views. More able candidates used a wide range of ideas and information to present a successful argument to promote the studying of art. These responses utilised a range of rhetorical techniques deliberately to persuade the reader.

Less able candidates had problems with both maintaining a clear argument and structuring their responses. Weaker candidates tended to be repetitive in their points, not developing them adequately, or developing a single point at length at the expense of alternative views. Less able candidates sometimes recounted a personal experience of studying art and there was little or no attempt to write in an argumentative way. Some less able candidates used too many ideas from the extracts.

Centres need to ensure that candidates who choose this option are well prepared in argumentative, discursive and rhetorical techniques and are able to develop and sustain their ideas effectively.

Question 10

AO4

Examiners commented positively on the quality of some of the responses to the title 'The Opportunity'.

Some examiners commented on weak openings and endings for the narratives. Often candidates chose to reveal the opportunity at the end of their writing and, whilst in the majority of cases this appeared to be a deliberate strategy, occasionally it appeared that they had put this in at the end, perhaps having lost focus and realising that they needed to make a connection to the title. Candidates should be reminded of the importance of an effective ending as narratives often started well but then lost momentum.

Candidates interpreted this question in a wide range of ways. Many candidates chose to write about sporting trials (especially football), adoption, career changes, studying abroad and success in fashion modelling, singing or acting. A number wrote about missed opportunities. There were some who wrote about the opportunity being an escape from some gruesome kidnap. These unpleasant plots sometimes struggled to maintain focus on the title.

Most candidates were able to grasp the purpose of the task and tried to include a range of language techniques and vocabulary to communicate their ideas. They were able to adopt an appropriate register and tone for a narrative piece and to develop and manage information and ideas with a conscious use of appropriate structural and grammatical features.

More able candidates offered responses that were increasingly successful, secure and effective. The very best also offered perception and sophistication in their responses. At this level, writing was highly engaging and entertaining. More able candidates produced a more original narrative (sometimes dealing with opportunities missed) with a range of ideas developing character and plot. Better candidates demonstrated an ability to use imagination very successfully. These candidates showed perceptiveness and engaged the reader well with interesting, original and plausible narratives.

Less able candidates struggled to produce a coherent narrative and plot ideas were often unfocused, with the opportunity clumsily added in as an afterthought. They lacked development of ideas or the ability to maintain a narrative. They struggled at times with clarity, with muddled storylines and weak endings that were not closely related to the events that had unfolded. Less able candidates often wrote responses that showed evidence of prepared essays with little adaptation and also used films, television programmes, computer games and books for plot lines.

Centres need to ensure candidates have a secure understanding of narrative techniques and the ability to develop a coherent personal response.

Question 11

Examiners saw a small number of responses to this question.

AO4

Candidates produced some well written responses that were fully focused on the task of describing a picture, painting or photograph. An examiner commented that small number of the descriptions were truly impressive. There was a good range of pictures or paintings covered with some detailed, engaging description and a range of interesting, descriptive pieces. One examiner commented that no candidates chose to write about an art work although another examiner commented enthusiastically about a response to a Goya painting.

Most candidates were able to express and order information and describe the chosen painting, photograph or picture in a manner where the reader had some sense of what it looked like. Most candidates were able to describe a painting, photograph or picture in terms which evoked both its appearance and its emotional impact on the onlooker. In most cases these were family photographs or pictures, usually recording a significant moment in the past, and in many cases commemorating a lost relative. Of these, the most effective were those who wrote simply and directly to achieve a genuinely touching effect.

Stronger responses were detailed and lively with fully developed ideas. These responses had a sustained focus on description and were able to communicate a real sense of the picture, painting or photograph. They described their chosen picture, painting or photograph in detail, using an imaginative vocabulary and crafted the description using a wide range of sentences, paragraphs and descriptive devices. More able candidates engaged directly with the task and attempted to develop their subject in a way that entertained and engaged the reader. They were clearly trying to convey a 'verbal' picture.

Less able responses were often pedestrian, undeveloped or unclear. Examiners commented that less able candidates did not focus on the descriptive nature of the task and wrote narrative responses focusing on re-telling the events that were shown in the picture, painting or photograph rather than describing it.

Centres need to ensure candidates are aware of the techniques they can use in descriptive writing and also ensure candidates develop a varied vocabulary which they can use appropriately.

AO5 Comments across Section C (Questions 9, 10 and 11)

Most candidates were able to express and order information with some correctly spelt vocabulary, some control of punctuation and some paragraphing. Most candidates were able to communicate successfully even if there were errors.

Stronger responses were accurate using a wide range of grammatical constructions, punctuation and vocabulary. They were able to shape their writing, using an increasingly wide vocabulary, with spelling invariably correct and punctuation used for effect. The very best offered cohesion, an increasingly complex vocabulary and the use of punctuation to craft their response.

Less able candidates communicated poorly. There were many errors especially grammar and punctuation. Some examiners commented on weak spelling in these responses.

There was evidence of good spelling and reasonably accurate punctuation, but most examiners commented on candidates who had problems with grammar and expression. Some of this was unidiomatic English but there were also problems with tenses and sentence structure including missing words. These problems limited the effectiveness of the communication.

Common errors commented on by examiners were: comma splicing, missing or misused apostrophes, problems with homophones, misspelling of basic vocabulary, not capitalising 'I' for the personal pronoun, missing capital letters at the beginning of sentences and grammatical errors such as subject-verb agreement.

Centres need to focus on developing accurate and effective grammatical structuring and idiomatic English to enable candidates to express themselves clearly and access the higher mark bands.

Summary

Most successful candidates:

- read the texts with insight and engagement
- were able to explore language and structure and show how these are used by writers to achieve effects
- were able to select a wide range of comparisons and explore the writers' ideas and perspectives
- were able to select and adapt relevant information from the texts for Question 8
- wrote clearly with a good sense of audience and purpose in an appropriate register in response to Question 8

- engaged the reader with creative writing that was clearly expressed, well developed and controlled (Questions 9, 10 and 11)
- used ambitious vocabulary
- wrote with accuracy in spelling, punctuation and grammar.

Least successful candidates:

- did not engage fully with the texts
- were not able to identify language and structure or made little comment on how these are used by writers to achieve effects
- were not able to compare the texts or offered very limited comparisons
- sometimes narrated the texts in response to Questions 3, 6 and 7
- did not write in an appropriate register in response to Question 8
- were not able to select and adapt relevant information for Question 8
- sometimes copied from the original texts in response to Question 8
- were not able to sustain and develop ideas clearly in response to Section C (Questions 9, 10 and 11)
- sometimes used prepared essays or plots from films, novels or games in response to Section C (Questions 9, 10 and 11)
- did not demonstrate accuracy in spelling, punctuation and grammar.

