



GCE EXAMINERS' REPORTS

**WJEC ENGLISH LANGUAGE
GCE
AS/Advanced**

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	Link
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

The papers worked well this year. There was Advanced Information released to centres as part of Covid mitigations. The Principals noted that the papers were generally accessible. There is a low take up for these papers which make any overall trends difficult to pinpoint. Centres will find areas that worked well and areas for improvement at the end of each Unit's report.

Areas for improvement	Classroom resources	Brief description of resource
Unit 1 – Understanding how texts create meaning	Language and Meaning	A blended learning resource
Unit 2 – crafting essays	Crafting essays	A blended learning resource
Unit 3 – how context shapes meaning	How context shapes meaning	A blended learning resource

AS UNIT 1: ENGLISH LANGUAGE

General Certificate of Education

Summer 2023

Advanced Subsidiary/Advanced

EXPLORING LANGUAGE

Overview of the Unit

This unit contains two sections: Section A, Analysing Language; and Section B, Contemporary English. Section A assesses AO1 (methods of analysis, use of terminology, and coherent expression and discussion); AO3 (analysis of the contexts of production and reception); and AO4 (connections). Section B assesses AO2 (critical understanding of concepts and issues relating to 21st century English use); and AO3 (analysis of the contexts of production and reception of 21st century English).

In Section A, students were asked to read three texts from a variety of contexts, all presenting attitudes to internet trolling. Text A was an entry from the dictionary section of a technology education website. Text B was an extract from an online article, published in the Technology news section of the *Telegraph*. Text C was an online article, published in the Culture section of an international women's fashion magazine. Candidates were asked to analyse and evaluate how the language used in each of these texts represented attitudes to internet trolling. The question tested the candidates' ability to analyse language using appropriate terminology to evaluate how the contextual factors (e.g. the purpose or perspective of the writing) have shaped meaning, and to explore meaningful connections across the texts (e.g. the dangers of trolling, and the impacts on individuals and groups).

In Section B, candidates were asked to read data taken from an online discussion forum where the contributors were discussing the process of applying to study mental health nursing at university. Candidates had to use their knowledge of contemporary English to analyse and evaluate the ways in which contributors used language in the discussion. This question tested the candidates' ability to analyse and evaluate the ways in which contextual factors (e.g. the identity or experiences of each contributor) affected their linguistic choices. Candidates had to demonstrate they understood how language was used through critical selection of relevant 21st century language and issues (e.g. the abandonment of, or adherence to, Standard English forms as a reflection of the respective contributors' voice).

Generally, candidates engaged well with both sections of the examination paper, with Section A being slightly stronger in terms of the quality of analysis.

Whilst the paper was challenging on the whole, it was pleasing to see that candidates were able to access the full range of marks available, including a few candidates who were able to achieve close to full marks. Centres had addressed some of the key messages arising from previous summers' examinations. In particular, the culture of embedding connections for AO4 in Section A seems well established in many centres. Furthermore, for Section B there was less evidence that students had been drilled in advance with ready-made responses which simply did not meet the full requirements of the specific task they had been given, and which were used by the student to set down everything they had been taught about a particular topic. It is still worth reminding candidates that they are allowed to include in their discussion prior knowledge of 21st century English genres, as they are invited for AO2 and AO3 to 'use [their] knowledge of contemporary English'. However, in order to avoid bunching

of marks around the top of Band 2 and bottom of Band 3, centres would be advised to encourage candidates to respond to the data they have been given in *this* examination paper, rather than making more general points. Finally, it was encouraging to see that on the whole in Section B, the selection of evidence was done to purposefully aid the discussion of 21st century English concepts that were germane to the texts in question.

Comments on individual questions/sections

Section A

In Section A, candidates on the whole demonstrated a solid grasp of the key language constituents, with many considering how contexts shaped meaning. Connections were strongly considered in most instances, with candidates teasing out aspects of representation of internet trolling from the three texts throughout their discussion. In more successful responses, discussion was anchored securely in the specific context of each text's production and reception. Selection of textual evidence was precise and purposeful. A balanced selection of linguistic features typical of 21st century English and more general linguistic features was demonstrated. Clear links were established between language features and the representation of trolling as a social problem motivated by the malicious desire to inflict harm, particularly in Text C, whilst in Texts A and B, there was a sense of debate on the extent to which trolling and free speech are at odds with each other as modern social concepts.

In less successful responses, candidates simply made general points about the dangers of trolling, ignoring the sense of debate outlined in Text A and B. There was also some misreading of Text B, where some candidates mistakenly concluded that because the writer was quoting directly from a troll, who justified their action as being dark humour, that the writer therefore was asserting their own support for trolling by mere virtue of providing them with a voice in their piece. As usual, centres should discourage candidates from focusing on only a narrow range of textual evidence and avoiding feature spotting.

Section B

Candidates appeared to apportion their time well, spending enough time to tackle Section B. Generally, there was a solid understanding of the concept of 21st century English as the prism through which the analysis in their responses ought to be delivered.

Encouragingly, in Section B, more candidates anchored their discussion within a successful grouping of the data according to the identity of the contributor. For example, they looked at language use from unsuccessful applicants versus the language used by successful applicants or experts. Some candidates grouped the texts by the similar identities of the contributors; others grouped by 21st century English concepts, e.g. use of Standard English versus the use of Non-Standard English. Still, some candidates examined the data one text at a time, which sometimes led to feature spotting.

On the whole, analysis that teased out specific aspects of factors affecting the construction of meaning, e.g., success or failure in the university admissions process or the status of the contributors, e.g., advice seeker or advice giver, was more successful. Furthermore, a feature of successful candidate responses was the connection made between the aforementioned contextual factors and the overall colloquial nature of online forum posts, which often, but not always, includes Non-Standard English, due to the digital nature of the platform.

In less successful responses, candidates 'surfed' through the data one text at a time, failing to engage in depth with any one text or concept. Such candidates often made sweeping generalisations and used what appeared to be pre-learned responses, rather than engaging with the specifics of the actual texts in front of them. Centres are reminded to discourage this practice.

Characteristics of successful responses:

- sustained engagement with all three texts in their distinctive contexts
- frequent and relevant use of correct terminology which is integrated throughout
- insightful engagement with contexts and subtexts.

Areas for improvement:

- avoid feature spotting
- ensure all analysis is supported by purposeful selection and generalisations are avoided
- ensure the purpose and meaning of each text is understood
- develop connections.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE

General Certificate of Education

Summer 2023

Advanced Subsidiary/Advanced

UNIT 2 LANGUAGE ISSUES AND ORIGINAL AND CRITICAL WRITING

Overview of the Unit

Unit 2:

- This unit is assessed on **AO1**, **AO2**, **AO3**, and **AO5**, with each AO worth 20 marks across the entire question paper.
- **AO1** [20 marks] is only assessed in the a) task, while **AO5** [20 marks] is only assessed in the b) task. **AO2** and **AO3** are both assessed in the a) and c) tasks out of a maximum of 10 marks in each task for each AO.
- This unit provides candidates with a choice of two questions, 1 or 2. Candidates have to answer the a, b and c parts of their chosen question. Each question features a short stimulus text, which can be spoken or written, and the a) and b) tasks for that question are linked to the stimulus.
- The a) task requires a discursive essay (assessed on **AO1** [20 marks], **AO2** [10 marks] and **AO3** [10 marks]), where candidates discuss relevant issues linked to the broader topic of 'Language and Situation' or 'Language and Power', depending on which question they have chosen. Candidates are encouraged to use the stimulus as a starting point for their discussion and are required to discuss their own wider examples in reference to the question topic. Since there is considerable overlap in linguistic concepts and theories that can be applied to 'Language and Situation' and 'Language and Power' topics, the questions do not specify which is which, but encourage candidates to apply any knowledge that is relevant. Wider examples must be of the kind specified by the question, which usually means the same mode of production as the stimulus; spoken or written, or in the case of 'Language and Situation', similar situations. If a candidate does not provide their own wider examples, the maximum mark that can be awarded for **AO3** is 4 (top of Band 2).
- The b) task is a creative writing task, which can be fiction or non-fiction and which has a connection to the stimulus, so that candidates if they wish can use the stimulus text as inspiration. They are free to ignore the stimulus, unless explicitly instructed to use the stimulus text for their creative writing. This task specifies a word count of approximately 350 words. Candidates are expected to write a minimum of approximately 250-300 words and expected to stay under 450 words. For this task, **AO5** is the only Assessment Objective assessed. Whilst technical accuracy and fluency are part of this, the main focus is on the candidate's ability to write a text that engages the target audience, meets the purpose (and/or genre conventions) of the task's specifications.
- Candidates must complete the b) task for the question that they have chosen for their a) task. If a candidate answers 1a and then proceeds to write a creative text for 2b (and vice versa), they are committing a rubric infringement. In cases of a rubric infringement, the b) task will be marked but awarded 0 marks.

- The c) task is a linguistic commentary on the candidate's own creative writing produced for the b) task and is assessed on **AO2** [10 marks] and **AO3** [10 marks]. Although **AO1** is not assessed here, there is an expectation that candidates use appropriate and accurate linguistic terminology in their commentary. Candidates are expected to write in 1st person, as they explore how they have used language in their creative piece to target a specific audience, fulfil a specific purpose, and create a text that adheres to (or not) genre conventions. Candidates need to evaluate how they have chosen words, grammatical and other structural devices, and imagery in their writing to create particular effects or engage readers.

Comments on individual questions/sections

Questions 1a and 2a: Language Issues

Question 1a was the 'Language and Situation' question this year and featured an extract from a speech made by the father of the bride at a wedding celebration. The question asked candidates to discuss how people celebrating an occasion use language. As the stimulus material was scripted speech and referenced a spoken situation, almost all candidates discussed spoken examples when discussing their own wider examples of language used in celebrations, such as birthdays, graduation ceremonies, and award acceptance ceremonies.

Many candidates responded positively to this extract with a significant number making sensible and insightful comments on the relationship between the speaker and the audience (bride and groom on the one hand, wedding guests on the other), the ceremonial role of the speaker, and traditions associated with weddings. A number of candidates successfully applied concepts such as Face theory and politeness, standard English, status, and influential power linked to the formal, traditional context of the wedding. However, very few candidates discussed the stereotypical nature of the speech, which would have lent itself well to the application of various language & gender theories and concepts, linked to such a traditional celebration. A very small number of candidates misunderstood the nature of a father-of-the-bride speech, as some connected the use of "princess" and "prince charming" to popular films; a handful of candidates wrote about the "mother of the bride".

Question 2a was the 'Language and Power' question this year and featured an extract from a campaign leaflet supporting the protection of the NHS. The question asked candidates to analyse how language is used to influence readers and to discuss how language is used to influence or control readers in written texts with reference to wider examples. Candidates tended to discuss charity leaflets, as well as posters and signs such as those in the examination room, or instructions. Again, most candidates engaged constructively with the extract with a significant number making sensible and insightful comments on how the extract aimed to empower the reader to take action on behalf of the NHS. The change in possessive determiner "your" to "our" was discussed intelligently, as was the use of bullet points, and the reference to the American health care system. Many candidates successfully employed synthetic personalisation and Face and politeness theories in their discussion of the stimulus.

For both a) tasks, the best responses demonstrated a sustained focus on the question topic, both when discussing the stimulus and the candidates' own wider examples. Such responses also tended to be succinct in that similar language features or issues would be grouped together for discussion. These responses were evidently the product of close reading of the stimulus text and planning.

Weaker responses tended to be written in the order of the stimulus, starting with its beginning and discussing features as they occurred in the text. This sometimes resulted in repetition and a loss of focus. Some weaker responses clearly demonstrated rehearsed language concepts and linguistic theories that were applied whether these were relevant to the stimulus and question or not.

Most candidates tended to start with an exploration of the stimulus, and then discussed their own wider examples. There were a few candidates who started with their own examples, before moving to the stimulus, which is also a valid approach.

There were two distinct approaches to discussing wider examples: just under half of the candidates would discuss the stimulus in some depth, before moving over to discuss two or three of their own wider examples in the final section of their response. While just over half of the candidates would discuss a particular feature of the language in their chosen stimulus and would then in the same paragraph discuss a wider example that would also employ that particular linguistic device. Either approach is a valid one, but candidates who took the stimulus-first approach tended to be more successful. This is likely because successful responses include some discussion of linguistic features in the wider examples cited, rather than merely identifying a language feature in the stimulus, such as modal verbs and then mentioning briefly that modal verbs would also be used in a wider example, without some evaluation or linking to contextual factors for that wider example.

A significant number of candidates still did not include their own wider examples. Also, a number of candidates in question 1a included examples of spoken language that were not linked to celebrations. This was perhaps more common among the candidates who tended to discuss specific language features such as 'positive lexis' in the stimulus and then immediately mention a brief wider example of a situation in which positive lexis would also be used. A smaller number of candidates discussed the language of speeches, rather than the language of celebrations in question 1a. A significant minority of candidates in question 2a included examples of spoken language aimed at influencing audiences, whereas the question specified written language.

Furthermore, a significant number of candidates did not write enough, with some responses running to just one side of the answer booklet. Such a short response did not allow candidates to discuss a range of language features, concepts and issues, nor allowed them to go into sufficient detail.

Characteristics of successful responses for questions 1a/2a:

- Focus on the question's specific issue or context that allows for discussion of the most interesting language features in both the stimulus materials and own examples.
- Close analysis of the stimulus materials and own examples with accurate linguistic terminology.
- Inclusion of wider context examples with (short) quotations, which are also closely analysed.
- Application of relevant knowledge, concepts, issues, and theories that is shaped by the question's precise focus and the nature of the stimulus.
- Sustained focus on the detail of the question.

Areas for improvement for questions 1a/2a:

- Better focus on the essay question; question 2a especially featured many responses where candidates were not discussing how **written** language is used to influence and control readers.

- More detailed discussion of the examples of wider context, beyond merely stating ‘this particular feature also appears in X’, or ‘another example of positive lexis used to celebrate is at birthday parties’.
- Covering a wider range of language levels in the analysis of both the stimulus and own examples, moving beyond word class terminology only.
- More precise application of linguistic terminology, especially: phrases (verb phrases in particular), sentence types, pronoun types, possessive determiners, and exclamatory mood.
- More precise selection of linguistic concepts and theories to support analysis rather than applying every theory that a candidate knows of.

Summary of key points for questions 1a/2a:

- The “information for candidates” on the front cover of the exam paper suggests that candidates should spend approximately 50 minutes on question 1a/2a, with 35 minutes each for questions 1b/2b and 1c/2c. As so many candidates wrote similar amounts for question 1a/2a as they did for 1c/2c, it is important to remind candidates of the heavier weighting of question 1a/2a.
- Linguistic terminology – it is important to not only focus on accuracy (especially a concern with regard to phrase level terminology), but also to encourage a wider language level approach that goes beyond mere word class labelling.
- Selective application of linguistic concepts and theories, rather than discussing every concept and theory a candidate may have come across in their studies. Selective application of theories especially will also encourage embedding of theories in the linguistic analysis of the stimulus and examples, allowing for more focus on **AO1** (which is doubly weighted compared to **AO2**).
- Knowledge of possible wider context examples for **AO3** marks is very important – candidates might consider a variety of potential sources for these, including SAMS, past papers on this unit, as well as resources referred to in the Teachers’ Guide and materials on the WJEC website made available for teaching this unit.

Questions 1b and 2b: Creative Writing

The vast majority of candidates’ accuracy and fluency was secure. Most candidates demonstrated a sound understanding of the relevant genre conventions and particular audience needs, as well as an increasingly confident use of language to create specific effects. The best responses also demonstrated the creation of an individual voice.

Task 1b asked for an extract of a story about a celebratory event when people come together. Successful candidates presented a piece of fiction that felt a realistic part of a longer short story, while weaker candidates tended to write a piece that was very much a complete narrative. Since the task was very broad, there was a range of different responses, with some successful candidates choosing to write genre fiction in which a celebration features, while others, less successful candidates mostly, tended to write broadly literary fiction specifically about a surprise birthday, wedding proposal or gender reveal party. The strongest responses tended to be well crafted and were a pleasure to read with effective character and/or plot development, description and creation of setting. Such strong responses tended to make sparing use of dialogue, but when they did, the dialogue either drove the plot or was an integral part of character development. Weaker responses tended to be complete narratives about a celebration, often featuring descriptions of food and festive settings, with some featuring dialogue that did not move the story on nor develop character.

Task 2b asked candidates to write a letter to their local MP to ask them to support a cause that the candidate was passionate about. Virtually all candidates adhered to the conventions of the genre of the formal letter with suitable stylistic choices of standard English, formal register and appropriate language choices. Some weaker responses tended to be too brief or lose focus or change from suitable formality to some informality that would have been inappropriate in such a letter. The strongest responses tended to employ a range of persuasive language techniques to appeal to the MP and many candidates clearly chose a topic close to their own hearts: environmental concerns, young people's mental health problems, and specific issues in their local community such as the lack of or closure of leisure facilities. Weaker candidates often focused on a very generic issue which was not suitably developed, often resulting in brief responses. Some candidates used the stimulus to write about supporting the NHS, and while stronger candidates managed to make this relevant to a local MP, weaker candidates tended to discuss the NHS in broad, national terms.

While most candidates' use of language was accurate and appropriate, there were a number of candidates who did not paragraph their creative responses. Furthermore, the fiction responses in 1b sometimes demonstrated a poor management of tenses, with some instances of verb tenses changing in the same sentence. Subject-verb agreement errors also occurred at some rate, although less frequently than tense management errors, these were still noticeable; this was especially the case in the 2b task.

Some creative responses were significantly under the recommended word count (between 150 – 200 words) and thus were self-penalising.

Characteristics of successful responses for questions 1b/2b:

- Planned in advance (not necessarily by producing a written plan in the answer booklet), but evident from structure of writing and ability to work to recommended word count.
- Close adherence to the parameters of the task.
- Precise, economical written expression.
- Clear knowledge and understanding of the particular genre and its stylistic conventions.
- A clear sense of the candidate's own voice as a writer becoming evident.

Areas for improvement for questions 1b/2b:

- Candidates must read the task carefully in order to ensure that all content is relevant.
- Many responses demonstrated little evidence of advance planning, both in terms of content, but also in terms of structure for the piece.
- Technical accuracy is assessed; many responses were not proof-read thoroughly, resulting in issues of poor tense management and confusing pronoun usage/anaphoric referencing.
- A number of candidates did not reach the recommended 350 words; by writing significantly under this limit (often around half the number of words), they limited their achievement.
- Paragraphing still remains an issue, with some candidates not paragraphing at all.

Summary of key points for questions 1b/2b:

- Practice in both interpreting the writing tasks and planning for these accordingly is recommended.
- Candidates should be discouraged from deliberately "planting" pre-learnt linguistic devices in their responses to b tasks (often done so that candidates can comment on these in their subsequent responses for c tasks).

- The importance of proof-reading skills to ensure technical accuracy and fluency should be reinforced. Focus on particular areas such as tense management, (anaphoric) referencing, and writing dialogue/indirect speech would be beneficial.
- Candidates should be encouraged to develop confidence in finding their own creative writing voice – even those obviously less naturally gifted are able to achieve a good mark on these tasks by demonstrating this.
- Candidates should be encouraged to practise interpreting creative writing tasks in ways that suit their personalities and interests, e.g., a football fan could write a fiction extract about their team celebrating winning an important match / league etc.
- Candidates should be encouraged to practise handwriting for a sustained period to build up stamina and maintain legibility.
- There is advice on practising writing effectively for an audience on the WJEC [resources website](#).

Questions 1c and 2c: Critical Writing

For this task, **AO2** and **AO3** are the Assessment Objectives. **AO2** assesses the candidate's understanding of the task (e.g. genre, purpose) as well as their application of relevant concepts and issues in the analysis of their own writing. For **AO3**, candidates are assessed on the analysis of contextual factors, discussion of the construction of meaning and evaluation of their own writing. Since this task is a linguistic analysis of their own creative writing, it is pleasing to see that the vast majority of candidates adopt first person rather than third person references to "the writer". While the majority of candidates understood that in order to evaluate their creative writing, they are expected to discuss the effect of their creative language choices, rather than discussing perceived weakness in their writing, there were still a number of candidates highlighting areas of weakness in their writing with suggestions for improvement. This limited candidates' access to the higher bands for this task.

The strongest responses focused on detailed discussion of genre conventions and textual purpose, as well as close contextual analysis of the most interesting and/or specific features of their own writing, with effective, short quotes for detailed discussion. These responses also featured a wide, language levels focused analysis with a range of accurate linguistic terminology that demonstrated a clear awareness of the links between language features and effects created.

Most of the weaker responses focused attention on less interesting language features in task b, such as alliteration, or graphology (especially in discussing the formal letter in 2b) which were also commonly deliberately inserted features. Similarly, many weaker responses took an approach that was descriptive rather than analytical, merely consisting of observations of the creative text with no discussion of the meaning or effect.

Characteristics of successful responses for questions 1c/2c:

- Wide range of points from across the language levels.
- A clear focus on the strengths of the writing piece, supported by well-selected evidence, presented in brief, embedded quotes.
- Insightful analysis of meanings created, and effects achieved.
- Well-contextualised discussion that demonstrates how specific audiences are addressed, purposes achieved and/or (sub-)genre conventions are applied.
- Where theory and concepts are applied, such as synthetic personalisation (Fairclough) in the letter for 2b, this is done as part of the contextualised, analytical discussion.

Areas for improvement for questions 1c/2c:

- Avoid a pre-prepared approach with formulaic approaches and a pre-learnt set of basic features.
- Avoid listing and feature-spotting – all points should be developed to demonstrate effect achieved.
- Avoid recounting theory where it is not relevant or connected to the creative writing in task b.
- All points should be supported with selective evidence from the candidate's own writing, rather than long quotations that may contain a feature under discussion.
- Candidates should use accurate and precise linguistic terminology from a range, covering the language levels to support all points.

Summary of key points for questions 1c/2c:

- Candidates should be encouraged to include points from all language levels wherever possible.
- Careful planning of the creative piece in task b will allow candidates to develop a sense of the most effective points to include in the commentary.
- Careful selection of brief quotes from task b that clearly identify the feature under discussion is essential.
- A clear focus on the specific features of the creative piece as belonging to a particular genre, being shaped for a specific purpose, and /or being aimed at a specific audience should be encouraged.

Conclusion Unit 2

Candidates had clearly been prepared for this unit and demonstrated some sound knowledge, both of linguistic features and appropriate theories and issues. There were some genuinely insightful analyses, as well as extremely engaging and entertaining creative pieces, and perceptive commentaries, which were all a pleasure to read. For future reference, it is essential that all candidates are encouraged to read all questions / tasks very carefully in order to ensure that responses are clearly focused and relevant to what has been asked, with candidates selecting the most effective and appropriate concepts, theories, linguistic features, as well as examples.

Summary of common errors in linguistic terminology across Unit 2:

In both the a) and c) tasks, there were a number of common errors; with some of these errors being more frequent than accurate terminology applied to these particular features:

- the possessive determiner “your” (and “our” to lesser extent) being identified as a possessive pronoun
- the use of exclamation for any sentence ending in an exclamation mark, when the examples referred to were exclamatory
- the labelling of verb phrases or clauses with deontic modal verbs as imperative: these are declarative or indicative mood, but their effect is of a mitigated imperative
- the use of the term ‘verb phrase’ to describe a complete clause or, more commonly, to describe the predicate of an example sentence or clause.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE

General Certificate of Education

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UNIT 3 – LANGUAGE OVER TIME

Overview of the Unit

The first part of this unit assesses candidates' linguistic knowledge of orthographical, lexical and grammatical variation in Early Modern English plus their understanding of the processes and concepts driving language change. In Question 1 (parts a-d) candidates can demonstrate their knowledge in response to a series of short answer questions by using concise and accurate description along with precise labelling of linguistic features (AO1). Question 2, the extended essay question, then assesses candidates' ability to analyse and compare the features of three unseen texts chosen from different historical periods of English. Candidates need to demonstrate their understanding of genre, the writer's purpose and each text's relationship with the target audience (AO2). They need to engage with the details and meaning of each text, how these are shaped by context and to evaluate the effects of each writer's language choices (AO3). They also need to make meaningful connections across the three texts and, while doing so, select and accurately apply a range of appropriate linguistic terminology and concepts in their analysis (AO4). The short answer questions (AO1) combine to a maximum total of 20 marks. The extended essay question is worth a maximum of 60 marks with the assessment objectives (AO2, AO3 and AO4) equally weighted at 20 marks each.

General Comments

The responses to the short answer questions this year showed that many candidates had been well taught about the different requirements of each of the four parts which form Question 1. There was, in most cases, secure understanding of the processes and concepts of language change and variation. A significant number of candidates were also able to demonstrate sophisticated understanding of the distinctive grammatical and punctuation features of EModE texts and to describe them accurately with appropriate terminology. As in previous years, some candidates continue to face problems with identification of basic word classes which limited their overall performance on Question 1. The attempt rate for the different sections of Question 1 was broadly in line with previous years, with slightly higher numbers completing parts a) and b) compared to c) and d) as the latter sections increase in challenge. It was also pleasing to see an improvement in the mean mark for question 1d) with many candidates demonstrating a more secure approach to this grammar-focused question.

This year candidates were supplied with advance information about the genre of the unseen texts (cookery) which would form the focus of the essay for Question 2. The recipe genre of the three texts was therefore one which was familiar to the candidates and most had a sound understanding of the features which characterised this instructional genre (e.g. use of imperatives, concrete nouns, enumerators, use of pronouns etc.) and were able to make meaningful connections between the texts and relate these to the different contexts in which the texts were produced and their varied intended audiences (e.g. Text A an Early Modern English text describing the cooking of an eel pie for an aristocratic household; Text B a Modern English domestic recipe for a luxury cake; and Text C a Present Day English online recipe from a food blogger well-known for offering low-cost, budget friendly cooking tips).

Most candidates managed their time effectively on this paper and ensured that their responses to the essay question were developed enough (3 or more sides of writing) to analyse all three texts in sufficient depth. There were some candidates, however, who were approaching the essay question as merely an exercise in listing language change features (often repeated from those in Question 1) with little or no reference to each text's content or meaning. This approach is self-penalising given the AOs for this question which reward discussion of issues and meaning in context along with associated comparisons which move beyond 'feature-spotting' or labelling of word classes. The attempt rate for Question 2 was 100% (in line with previous years) and it was pleasing to note that this year there was also an improvement in the mean mark for this question from 2019 and 2022 levels which again shows increasing confidence in tackling the specific demands of this essay question with its focus on meaning in context, comparison and supported language analysis.

Comments on individual questions/sections

Q.1 (short answer questions)

Most candidates were able to successfully demonstrate their linguistic knowledge in the short answer questions and were well aware of the different requirements of each question.

- (a) It is acceptable for candidates to answer question 1a. in the form of bullet points, but the remainder (1b-d) should be answered in full sentences to ensure that explanations of language change concepts and/or grammatical features are fully developed. The identification of word classes in this question was mostly very effective, but fewer candidates were able to successfully identify the word class of 'every' as a determiner. Candidates are reminded to use the line references cited to identify the function (and therefore the class) of each word in its context.
- (b) Most candidates were able to identify the word classes of the examples and make valid comments about language change. A few candidates were, however, unaware of the usage and unchanged spelling of the noun 'coffin' in PDE which therefore limited their response.
- (c) Although most candidates were able to broadly identify the forms of and archaic grammatical features in the examples, many responses lacked the precision required to gain full credit. Candidates are reminded with inflected endings that they should provide the 'person' of the inflection and the tense of the verb to gain full credit (i.e. 'beginneþ' – is a present tense verb which features a third person verb inflection).
- (d) Most candidates were aware that this question tested the candidate's ability to identify and describe distinctive EModE *grammatical structures* and *punctuation* patterns. There were, however, still some candidates who made comments on EModE spelling variations which can not be credited in this question. As mentioned above, it was pleasing to see that a significant number of candidates this year were able to provide concise examples of EModE grammatical structures and to describe these with precision (e.g. absence of periphrastic 'do', the non-standard position of a negator and use of the subjunctive). Many candidates referenced the use of multiple clauses in EModE, but to gain credit this needed to be supported with concise examples and described using precise terms. Centres and candidates are advised to look in detail at mark schemes for this and previous papers to familiarise themselves with the level of detail and precision required here.

Characteristics of a successful response:

- clear understanding of the different requirements of each of the questions 1a - d
- concise responses preferably written in sentences (for 1b - d) with clear descriptions of EModE features and/or language change concepts
- precise and accurate labelling of word classes, forms and/or grammatical features
- accurate description of orthographical, grammatical and/or punctuation features which are *distinctive* in EModE.

Areas for improvement:

- understanding the specific focus of each question
- noting that comments on archaic spelling cannot be credited in 1d
- accurate identification and description of word classes in context
- the need for greater precision in describing EModE verb forms (Q1c).

Q.2 (essay)

This question tests the candidate's ability to analyse and evaluate the content and the meaning of three texts taken from different historical periods. They should relate their points about language features to relevant language concepts or issues and to the contexts in which the texts were written. Throughout their responses, candidates should select and explore meaningful connections and comparisons across the three texts.

As stated above, candidates were given advance information about the genre of this year's texts (cookery) and this allowed for an effective and informed engagement with the recipe genre with most candidates able to identify and evidence key genre features in each text. The texts appeared to be accessible to the majority of candidates and the most successful responses were those which were driven by content and meaning with a clear language focus. Most candidates were able to use the contextual information provided to effectively frame their analysis. For example, exploring how the aristocratic context of Text A allowed for the use of more unusual and luxurious ingredients such as '*cannelle*' (cinnamon) and '*good red wyne*'. Or, for instance, noting how the reference to '*her employers*' in Text B along with the descriptions of extensive labour and cooking times were linked to 19th C middle-class assumptions about domestic service. There were perceptive discussions about the different ways each text engaged (or didn't engage) with its audience and the varied ways in which instructions were delivered (repeated imperative dynamic verbs with minimal expansion in Text A, the introduction of options with conditional clauses in Text B and the more personal, less directive style of Text C). There were many thoughtful analyses of Text C with its personal voice, lack of gender stereotyping and its precise and detailed costings and measurements. Some candidates were also able to make perceptive comparisons between the rather brutal description of the killing and cooking of a live '*quyk*' eel in Text A with the foregrounded references to '*vegan*' and '*vegetarian*' diets cited in Text C. It was also pleasing to see the different ways in which candidates structured their essays, not necessarily working from the oldest text to most recent, and that there was clear understanding of the centrality of comparison (AO4) in the vast majority of responses.

The weaker responses, however, were characterised by a lack of focus on meaning in context. Some of these consisted of unsupported general observations about the recipe genre which could be applied to any text or which merely identified language change features across the three texts (often repeating the features identified in Q1a-d) without any reference to their distinctive content.

There was evidence that some candidates had not engaged carefully with the contextual information provided and that this led to a mis-gendering of the writer of Text C as male (in the contextual information clearly indicated as 'she'). This in most cases was not significant, but some weaker candidates chose to make general, largely unsupported, observations about gender and gender roles a prominent or even exclusive focus of their response. This, inevitably, created issues in terms of understanding. The first word of Text A ('her') was also misinterpreted as a female pronoun which, when read carefully in context, was clearly 'here.' Again, for most responses this was not an issue, but for those in which gender was an exclusive focus it did create difficulties. In the weaker responses the connections between the texts were not carefully selected and were often made simply at word class level (e.g. basic pronoun use, without reference to meaning or any evaluation). Finally, although candidates were given advance information about the genre to aid their performance this did lead to some including significant sections of pre-learned material which did not relate to the extracts in the paper. This then used up time which could have been much more valuably spent on specific, language-focused analysis of the exam texts.

Characteristics of a successful response:

- well-structured essays which explore meaning and content in context
- careful selection of significant points of comparison and connection
- concise support and consistent language focus with a range of relevant and accurate terms
- contextual points which emerge from detailed analysis of the specific texts.

Areas for improvement:

- close reading of contextual information to inform analysis
- selection of noteworthy points of comparison
- careful attention to the content and detail of the texts themselves
- a consistent language focus with concise support
- use of a range of terminology – at word, phrase and sentence level.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE

General Certificate of Education

Summer 2023

Advanced Subsidiary/Advanced

UNIT 4 - SPOKEN TEXTS AND CREATIVE RE-CASTING

Overview of the unit

- Unit 4 assesses AO1, AO2, AO3 and AO5. AO2 features in both Section A and Section B. AO1 and AO3 are solely in Section A, and AO5 is only in Section B.
- Section A focuses on analysis of spoken language, and Section B focuses on writing which creatively re-casts material for a specific purpose and audience.
- In general terms, candidates seemed to have been well prepared for this unit. Most candidates addressed the requirements of the assessment objectives in Section A by developing suitably constructed responses which directly attended to the question that had been set. The majority of candidates appeared to find all three texts equally accessible and produced analyses of them that explored the linguistic structures in appropriate depth and detail. In Section B, most candidates deployed their understanding of the requirements of the writing task in a manner that was at least sensible, and frequently effective. There were many evocative and imaginative recreations of the 'excitement and beauty of the natural environment'. Only a very few responses fell short of the indicative 400-word guidance in the prompt. A substantial minority of candidates misread the task and produced writing that fell frustratingly outside of the required genre.
- In general terms, the vast majority of candidates constructed analyses that attended to all three texts in Section A in an even manner. In 2022, a minority had focused on one of the texts to the relative exclusion of the other. In Section B, as noted above, there was a larger proportion of candidates who misread the genre, when compared with 2022.

Comments on individual questions/sections

Section A: Analysing Spoken Language

The three texts focused on spoken interactions in which participants explored aspects of the natural world. The different broadcast contexts, radio for Text A, and television for Texts B and C, implied two quite distinctive contextual frameworks for the interactions, and most candidates used these successfully as reference points for their analysis. In addition, the differing levels of formality across the three texts, from more specialist exploration of an ecosystem in Text A, through the humorous presentation of important research in Text C, to the engaging conversation with young children in Text B, served as a sensible analytical framework for many candidates. In Text A, most candidates made some analytical use of the presenter/expert dynamic, whilst in Text B most candidates sensibly explored the ways in which the adult presenter, Matt Baker, engaged the children who featured in the extract. The entertaining, co-presenter dynamic, incorporating humour and banter in Text C, was also generally sensibly explored, sometimes in increasingly effective detail.

Previous reports have noted that some candidates focused on one text to the detriment of the other, and although a reduced feature, this was still evident in 2022. This year there were very few examples of candidates not attending in any detail to the final text (Text C).

This suggests that the vast majority of candidates had conducted a careful survey of the texts before starting their responses, noting potential areas of analytical opportunity, and were then able to structure their time effectively.

AO1

There were many thorough, effective analyses of the transcripts, and the most successful responses used wide and varied terminology to add precision and rigour. There were hardly any instances of feature-spotting. Even candidates whose use of terminology was more basic clearly understood that they had to mobilise their linguistic knowledge to respond to the question and therefore to explain *how* language was being used. Very few candidates wasted time summarising the content of the participants' discussions. Fewer candidates restricted their analysis to an exploration of spoken language features only, compared to 2022, although for those that did, it was then difficult for them to conduct a really thorough discussion of the texts. Some responses which spent a long time focussing on emphatic stress and paralinguistic features (in Texts B and C), found it more challenging to substantially move from a 'competent' to a 'thorough' discussion. Most responses used generally accurate expression, and there were many, very impressive responses that sustained effective academic writing throughout that was characterised by a concise and precise prose style.

AO2

There were very few responses that made limited or even infrequent use of textual support. Clearly, not only did candidates appreciate the need to cite support, they were able to find plenty of examples in the texts. In general, compared to previous years, there seemed to be a more widespread understanding that the best references are those that are used in a precise way, rather than relying on extensive, long quotations, or repeated examples to substantiate one analytical point. As with last year, there were many good and successful examples of candidates adopting a light-touch approach to theoretical discussion, using reference points as part of a broader discussion. Indeed, most candidates made sensible, often effective, choices when deciding to apply their theoretical understanding of an issue to a text. For example, many candidates made good use of their understanding of the ways in which power operated in subtly different ways across the three texts. Effective responses quickly noted that theories about gendered use of spoken language would be less helpful in a text (Text C) where the male and female participants were also co-presenters working in a semi-scripted context. This judicious application of theory seemed to be more widespread than in 2022. There were few examples of candidates forcing the texts to demonstrate or relate to the theoretical issues that they had prepared in advance of the exam.

AO3

Most candidates conducted an analysis of contextual factors that was sensibly informed by an understanding of the two different broadcast media of radio and television, although a minority clearly read the contextual information too quickly and assumed they were all from television programmes. This was then a missed opportunity to explore the ways in which language was being used in Text A to evoke a landscape that the audience could not see. Most candidates made sensible assumptions about the likely audience for the three texts, and the differing formality levels that were implied. In turn, most candidates made relevant evaluations of the effectiveness of different communication strategies across the three texts. In Text A, they discussed the effective way, for example that Phil Gates presented his specialist knowledge, whilst in Text B they explored the effective approach Matt Baker took to engage the children. In Text C, most candidates were able to explore the strategies Michaela Strachan and Chris Packham used, firstly to present the scientific data, and then, to attempt to mobilise a response from the television audience.

Characteristics of successful responses:

- consistent focus on the analytical direction set out by the question
- comprehensive analysis of language features, propelled by a detailed and confident grasp of terminology
- thoughtful application of theory associated with concepts and issues.

Areas for improvement:

- check and re-check the contextual information surrounding the texts
- do not restrict analysis to the spoken language and paralinguistic features
- avoid over-long quotations of supporting evidence.

Section B: Creative Recasting

Most candidates understood the text type that was required in the task although a significant minority (around a fifth of the cohort) seemed to only focus on the first sentence of the prompt and wrote a persuasive brochure to encourage people to visit a named nature reserve. Occasionally these responses also contained some descriptive content, so had some basic relevance to the task, but mostly they departed substantially from the brief, and included content that was largely irrelevant (for example, cost of entry, FAQs, menu choices at the reserve's café), and modes of writing that were fundamentally, often exclusively, persuasive, not descriptive. The brochures that were produced could not realistically have been entered for a descriptive writing competition. It seems likely that these candidates did not stop to sense-check their understanding of the task before commencing writing.

The majority of candidates, however, did note that the task required them to construct a piece of descriptive writing that evoked the wonder of the natural world. A small number of candidates took a more discursive approach, within which they contemplated the need to look after the natural world. This was deemed to be a broadly sensible approach as this could be a plausible competition entry.

AO2

Most candidates demonstrated that they had at least a sensible awareness of the descriptive writing genre and set up a framing device for their response. The most popular choice was to explore the (imagined) recollection of a day out in the natural world, and many candidates used prompts from the texts in Section A to develop this day out over a variety of habitats, in order to give their response the effective notion of a journey through nature.

AO5

There were many fluent and controlled responses that made purposeful linguistic choices to evoke the delights of the natural world. Once they had identified the descriptive genre they were working within, very few candidates found that they could not generate sufficient material to avoid writing responses that fell short of the 400-word guidance, or that became repetitive. Many candidates were able to draw on natural habitats that were close to home (for example parks, gardens, urban habitats) and made a virtue of the concept that the wonder of the natural world can be closer than we think. Most candidates stuck to more traditional 'wild' habitats of forests and coastlines and generated sensible or effective content this way. A very small proportion of responses were built on sentence after sentence of descriptive detail that would be rather overwhelming for the reader, and in this case the imagined competition judges. More successful candidates added a greater variety of texture and form into their writing, in some cases, remarkably skilfully, given the timed conditions. Most responses were at least accurate and sound, although a minority contained spelling inaccuracies on relatively simple linguistic choices, and a lack of consistency on punctuation and/or use of tense in, for example, an imagined recollections of a day in the countryside. A few outstanding responses managed to subtly convey an encouraging dimension to their writing without disrupting the integrity of their descriptive writing.

These nuanced texts very successfully attended to all aspects of the information given with real sensitivity of judgement and would likely have been very successful in the imagined competition.

Characteristics of successful responses:

- stylistic choices that explored the topic of the natural world in an engaging and evocative manner
- sensitivity to the need to add variety of form and tone to a descriptive response
- confidence to create an over-arching structure to carry the response.

Areas for improvement:

- read and re-read the question to ensure clarity over genre, purpose and intended audience, and then conduct a final sense-check
- use planning time to mark out indicative content
- leave time to check for careless errors in accuracy and writing consistency.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE
General Certificate of Education
Summer 2023
Advanced Subsidiary/Advanced
UNIT 5 LANGUAGE AND IDENTITY
NON-EXAMINATION ASSESSMENT

Overview of the Unit

This A2 GCE A level English Language Non-Examination Assessment (NEA) unit once again yielded many interesting language investigations which reflected the language interests of students. The data collected, whether that be written, spoken language transcripts or multi-modal forms were interesting to read followed by the analysis and evaluation of the data in relation to the language focus on identity. WJEC centres had clearly prepared candidates well in developing their research, investigative, analytical, evaluation and written communication skills. Candidates' work clearly reflected real interest and enthusiasm for linguistic study. Centres had effectively prepared candidates for this NEA.

The Unit 5 Language and Identity NEA consists of a 2500-3500 word language investigation. The total number of marks available are 80. The assessment objectives are as follows:

- AO1: Apply appropriate methods of language analysis (20 marks), using associated terminology (10 marks) and coherent written expression (10 marks). A total of 40 marks is available.
- AO2: Demonstrate critical understanding of language concepts and issues relevant to language in use. A total of 20 marks are available.
- AO3: Analyse and evaluate how contextual factors and language features are associated with the construction of meaning. A total of 20 marks are available.

“This unit gives opportunities for language research which has a personal relevance. It is designed to engage learners with the theme of language and identity. Learners are required to conduct a language investigation independently and to develop their methods of language analysis through research, data collection and interpretation. The material they select should be culturally, personally and academically of interest to them.” (Source: WJEC specification)

Candidates have the opportunity to focus their investigation on one of the following four aspects of study:

- a. Language and self-representation;
- b. Language and gender;
- c. Language and culture;
- d. Language diversity.

The moderation team observed that almost all WJEC centres were able to assess candidates' work applying the assessment objectives and banded criteria effectively, which resulted in the full range of marks being awarded.

There was a good proportion of Band 5 language investigations demonstrating sophisticated applications of language methods, confident, precise linguistic terminology, and academic, coherent written expression. These folders demonstrated detailed and critical understanding of language concepts and issues with meaningful application of relevant theories in relation to the NEA focus of language and identity. In addition, there was a confident understanding of contextual factors affecting the construction of meaning with perceptive overviews and assured evaluation.

There was an approximately equal number of Band 4 investigations where there was effective linguistic knowledge and secure interpretation of the identity topic, concepts, and issues with sustained linguistic terminology and accurate expression. There was an effective understanding of contextual factors and insightful discussion of the construction of meaning.

There was a reasonable proportion of Band 3 folders showing competent linguistic knowledge and a sound understanding of the chosen identity focus and sensible contextual evaluation.

There were relatively few Band 2 folders demonstrating basic levels of linguistic knowledge and engagement with concepts, issues, and contextual evaluation as well as errors in written expression.

No folders were assessed as being of Band 1 quality demonstrating limited linguistic knowledge and engagement with the chosen topic.

All of the above patterns are very similar to those seen in previous submissions and series.

Tasks:

In respect of the four aspects of identity study, we saw the majority of candidates focused on Culture investigations, a significant number studied Gender and a small number investigated Self-Representation and Diversity. These patterns were in keeping with previous years. It was very pleasing to see that the majority of centres had encouraged candidates to choose aspects of study which interested them and, as a result, centres provided submissions with a range of investigations covering many of the four aspects.

The more successful NEA folders had clear focuses on language and identity within their titles. Unfortunately, the issue of the lack of an explicit focus on language and identity within the title has been mentioned in previous Principal Moderator's reports and centre moderation recommendations. There were some centres with no identity focus in any title and a significant number of centres where some candidates did not have the specific reference. It is clear that this omission often leads to issues with data collection and weaker lines of argument in exploring language concepts, issues and evaluating contextual factors. Centres are reminded to consult the specification and NEA CPD materials available on the WJEC website.

The moderation team saw more issues in respect of the nature of the data which had been collected. There were a significant number of NEA folders which focussed on just one set of data, for example, extracts from the film script of *Legally Blonde* or one court case transcript. Other investigations focused on direct comparisons using just two different sources. These investigations often lacked breadth which then limited the candidates in exploring language and identity more thoroughly and perceptively given the restricted range of data. However, candidates also have to ensure that they do not have too much data which is not able to be analysed and evaluated effectively within the 2500-3500 advisory word count.

In addition, there were a very small number of investigations in which the data was translations into English from other languages. One candidate acknowledged this within their investigation, but another candidate did not. Centres and candidates are advised to avoid translations into English given validity and reliability issues in respect of analysing and evaluating the data.

Language and Self-Representation

A minority of candidates did this option in this series. Of note was one highly focused self-representation investigation about code-switching and code-mixing. This led to the collection of four spoken language transcripts in which the candidate focused on their bilingualism and use of Wenglish (Welsh and English) with different participants in different contexts. The question and data collection then led to sophisticated and perceptive exploration of the differences between code switching and mixing, the construction of personal and cultural identity through a range of language frameworks, for example, sentence types, functions, idioms, modality, conditional tense, and prosody.

A range of data was seen in these folders including, spontaneous spoken language transcripts, social media, and written data.

Example of a focused title:

- Using relevant data, investigate and analyse the ways by which code switching and code mixing is used in language for my own self-representation when creating a sense of identity.
- *Commentary:* this title had a clear linguistic and identity focus which drives forward the data collection process and results in more illuminating and insightful analytical and evaluative outcomes.

Example of a less focused title:

- An investigation into my personal linguistic repertoire: how do I adapt the linguistic features of my idiolect according to context?
- *Commentary:* a clear linguistic focus, but lacked the identity issue which was central to this NEA component.

Language and Gender

This aspect of study is still very popular with many candidates. There were perceptive language investigations which had focused on male and female language users, such as Theresa May and Boris Johnson as examples of Conservative Prime Ministers/politicians.

There was still a heavy reliance upon Lakoff's deficit approach as being the "one stop shop" gender approach to apply. More successful investigations entertained Zimmerman and West's dominance theory as well as Tannen and Coates' difference theory. Only a few gender investigations started to challenge the perceived 'outdated' theories and bring in more recent research of Butler's performativity model and Eckert and McConnell's communities of practice. It was pleasing to see a wide range of subjects for gender identity including politicians, transgender celebrities, Love Island and Big Brother contestants to name a few.

Example of a focused title:

- Using relevant data, how does the language used to create the identities of politicians differ according to gender.
- Commentary: very clear focus on language and multiple identities with a focus on a particular occupational group and focusing on gender. This question would be even more effective if it was turned into a “to what extent.....” format which would ensure the candidate does not simply describe language features but form an academic linguistic argument further to analysis and evaluation.

Example of a less focused title:

- An investigation into the presentation and how language is used to show stereotypes and power on the film *Legally Blonde*.
- Commentary: clearly no specific reference on identity/ies or specific reference to gender or male/female/other gender identity language users. Rather than focus on the film, there should be specific reference to participants within the source. The specific reference to *Legally Blonde* did lead the candidate to transcribe extracts from the one source which limited their breadth of analysis and evaluation of this sub-aspect of study. Other comparable film/media texts could have been chosen to further illuminate the question.

Language and Culture

This was by far the most popular sub-aspect of study. One language investigation focused on the personal identity of Freddie Mercury (see title below). This language investigation was illuminating, perceptive and insightful in respect of the personal, social and cultural identities of Freddie Mercury. The language investigation focusing on how music portrays love (see title below) led to the basic analysis and evaluation of song lyrics without any real acknowledgement that song writers could be different to musicians and performers. There were also very general and broad references to audiences. Song lyrics are often straightforward for candidates to find, however, centres should encourage candidates to enhance the data in some way, for example, looking at adding prosodic features to the data to focus on oral delivery or add to the data set by looking at interviews with the artist in correlation with the values and beliefs conveyed in the song lyrics. Candidates did pursue a wide range of different cultural subjects ranging from the swimmer Tom Daley, the Red Bull Formula 1 team, to the musician Dave, drag queens, representations of NHS staff in the media and Royalty interviews, again to name a view.

Example of a focused title:

- Using relevant data, how did Freddie Mercury present himself and his personal identity to his fans through the music of the band Queen?
- Commentary: a clear focus on identity and the subject of cultural identity study. The question did lead to the collection of both song lyrics and interviews with Freddie Mercury which led to a fruitful investigation. The title would have been more effective had it been re-phrased to a “to what extent....” question which would produce more of an academic linguistic argument.

Example of a less focused title:

- Do different genres of music portray love in a negative way with language?
- Commentary: this title is too broad and vague. There is a lack of focus on identity and language users. Thematic type questions are not appropriate for the unit’s focus on language and identity.

Language Diversity

There were a limited number of investigations seen in this category, but this is in keeping with previous submissions. One folder stated the aspect of study as “Language and Power” with the focus being on the personal and social identity of the celebrity Judge Rinder. Language and Power is not one of the four aspects of study defined in the Unit 5 specification outline, however, occupational varieties can be studied on the Language Diversity topic. Some interesting language investigations focused on the personal and social identities of football managers in post-match interviews. The investigation data was varied from occupations such as lawyers and police interrogation to Polish/English bilingualism.

Example of a focused title:

- Using relevant data, how do criminal suspects and their interrogators construct their identities when they are being interviewed?
- Commentary: a very clear focus on identities being constructed by specific language users. Candidates have to be careful with “how” questions that, the analysis and evaluation is not merely describing a list of specific language features.

Example of a less focused title:

- A language investigation exploring the South African variety of English.
- Commentary: there is no explicit reference to identity. A more focused investigation would focus on the personal, social, and cultural identities of specific bilingual South African English users.

In relation to achieving AO1, a range of language frameworks were applied to data. There were varying degrees of accuracy as is to be expected across the banded criteria. However, candidates need to be reminded about the need for precise labelling of examples. Candidates chose the most appropriate structures for their 2500-3500 words language investigations, which included extended essays with and without subheadings, both of which were acceptable. Some candidates chose to structure their academic arguments using either a text-by-text approach, a language framework approach or using specific language concepts and issues in application to the data.

The demonstration of critical understanding in relation to language issues and concepts (AO2), using theories as appropriate, were applied specifically to the language features in the data in the higher achieving folders. Theories such as Giles’ accommodation theory and Grice’s maxims were applied in a ‘bolted-on’ fashion or generalised without close application to the data in the lower achieving folders.

Candidates who considered a wide range of contextual factors as well as analysed how these variables affected the construction of meaning (AO3), achieved the higher bands. There were many low achieving folders where candidates spent too much time producing general contextual information without closely linking to the data. Centres and candidates are reminded that both AO1 and AO3 are inter-related.

The sheer breadth of topics covered by centres and candidates were a pleasure for the moderation team to read.

Characteristics of successful pieces of work

- Well focused titles referring specifically to both language and to the theme of identity.
- Well selected, high quality, rich data collected and analysed.
- A balance of quantified key patterns of language together with qualification of precisely labelled examples from the data results in effective and sophisticated analytical methods and evaluation of concepts, issues and contextual factors.

- Clear interest and academic curiosity in the language of a wide variety of different subjects, fields and domains.
- A sophisticated range of accurate language terminology covering word, phrase, clause and sentence level analysis.
- Sophisticated engagement with concepts and issues and exploration of contemporary research
- Intelligent and coherent lines of argument in relation to the title/question.
- Proof-read, edited and accurate written expression.
- A well organised, academic style of writing adapted.
- Language concepts, issues and theories carefully selected and discussed.
- Confident, subtle interpretations of how identity is constructed.
- Perceptive understanding of how data can be affected by different contextual factors.

Advice to centres

- Some titles did not have 'language' and/or 'identity' in their titles. Both should be explicitly referenced in the title and analysed/evaluated throughout the investigation.
- At times, the primary data did not have the breadth, depth and richness required. Centres should avoid relying on one or two sources. However, a few centres had data sets that were too broad and this is also to be discouraged.
- Candidates should be encouraged to explore language across a range of levels.
- Too often, gender investigations relied too heavily on Lakoff's deficit approach and/or other outdated theorists. Centres and candidates should consider the gender theoretical perspectives from the 1970s through to the present day.
- At times, there was a greater focus on the topic area (gender, culture, etc) and not on identity. Clearly focused titles can help to avoid this.
- A range of language concepts and issues with underpinning theories should be analysed and discussed in direct relation to the data set rather than general description.
- There should be evaluation of how contextual variation affects the construction of meaning. Candidates should avoid lots of general contextual information without close linking to a specific language pattern or feature within the data.
- Centres and candidates are reminded of the advisory word count of 2500-3500. Folders which fall short of that range or are excessive will be self-penalising in applying the assessment objectives. Candidates need to ensure that time is built in to edit and re-draft their final submissions.
- Candidates should include a copy of the data with the investigation and website links to media sources without transcripts of spoken data are to be discouraged.
- Candidates should focus on original production of the English Language and not texts which have been translated from other languages.
- Whilst candidates can successfully represent key patterns of language using graphical representations, for example, bar and pie charts, these should be referenced explicitly and analysed and evaluated with examples from the data. Too many charts can detract from the quality of engagement with the data.
- Centres should encourage candidates to focus on one main aspect of study. Candidates who consider both gender and culture can end up with broad and less focused identity-related language investigations.
- Centres should continue to consult WJEC CPD materials and resources on NEA and consult any previous WJEC centre moderation reports available on the secure website.

Task marking

Comments on approaches to internal marking

WJEC centres have a very good understanding of the application of both the assessment objectives, their weightings and banded assessment criteria. The majority of centres provided language investigations which had detailed marginal annotations using the vocabulary of the banded criteria, for example, 'perceptive', 'sophisticated', 'effective', 'insightful', 'competent', 'sound', 'basic', 'limited', etc. Summative paragraphs at the end of the language investigations were very useful to moderators as indeed were the full completion of the NEA folder assessment sheets to be completed by internal assessors. Highlighted and annotated copies of the assessment criteria grids was seen in the majority of folders. It was very clear to the WJEC NEA moderation team how marks had been awarded within centres in the majority of cases. In addition, there was also evidence of rigorous second marking and internal standardisation having taken place in centres where there was more than one assessor. All of the above demonstrates excellent assessment and moderation practice.

Centres were clearly applying appropriate and generally accurate standards of assessment in relation to the full range of folders seen ranging from Bands 2 to 5. Occasionally, some candidates were over-rewarded for AO1a analytical methods when candidates had just selected different language features without identifying specific patterns or idiosyncrasies. Equally AO1b using specialist terminology was sometimes over-rewarded when there was some inaccuracy in identification or imprecision in labelling, for example, talking about an adjective and providing the example of 'the windy day'. Some candidates were over-rewarded for AO1c where there were more frequent lapses in written expression or the organisation of the investigation could have been more effective. Occasionally, AO2 and AO3 were slightly over-rewarded if there was generalisation and less specific application to the data concerned.

Centres are reminded that all NEA coversheets need to be signed and dated by the candidate and assessor. In addition, the individual scores for each assessment objective and the folder total should be accurately stated. Please ensure these are updated further to any adjustments made during internal standardisation.

The WJEC NEA moderation team commend the candidates and staff for their submissions which were a pleasure to read and moderate.

We look forward to next year's submission.

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: 029 2240 4292

Email: gceenglish@wjec.co.uk

Qualification webpage: https://www.wjec.co.uk/qualifications/english-language-as-a-level/#tab_contacts

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CPD Training / Professional Learning

Access our popular, free online CPD/PL courses to receive exam feedback and put questions to our subject team, and attend one of our face-to-face events, focused on enhancing teaching and learning, providing practical classroom ideas and developing understanding of marking and assessment.

Please find details for all our courses here: <https://www.wjec.co.uk/home/professional-learning/>

WJEC Qualifications

As Wales' largest awarding body, at WJEC we provide trusted bilingual qualifications, straight-forward specialist support, and reliable assessment to schools and colleges across the country. With more than 70 years' experience, we are also amongst the leading providers in both England and Northern Ireland.

We support our education communities by providing trusted qualifications and specialist support, to allow our learners the opportunity to reach their full potential.



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ⁱ *Please note that 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.*