



GCE Examiners' Report

Subject English Language
Level GCE
Summer 2024

Introduction

Our Principal examiners' report provides valuable feedback on the recent assessment series. It has been written by our Principal Examiners and Principal Moderators after the completion of marking and moderation, and details how candidates have performed in each unit.

This report opens with a 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 then looks in detail at each unit, pinpointing aspects that proved challenging to some candidates and suggesting some reasons as to why that might be.¹

The information found in this report provides valuable 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 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 12 months after the examination.	Portal by WJEC or on the WJEC subject page
Grade boundary information	Grade boundaries are the minimum number of marks needed to achieve each grade. 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. For linear specifications, a single grade is awarded for the subject, rather than for each unit that contributes towards the overall grade. Grade boundaries are published on results day.	For unitised specifications click here: Results, Grade Boundaries and PRS (wjec.co.uk)

¹ 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.

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Executive Summary

Unit 1: 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).

General Observations:

- Section A: There was strong engagement with analysis and contextual understanding, with some candidates making meaningful connections across texts.
- Section B: There was a good grasp of contemporary English concepts, though some responses were pre-learned rather than text specific.

Recommendations for Centres/Areas for Improvement:

- Encourage candidates to engage with provided texts, avoiding pre-learned responses.
- Remind students to use prior knowledge of 21st-century English relevantly, rather than making general points.

Unit 2: In this unit, candidates have the choice of two questions based on the language issues of Language and Power or Language and Situation. Each question has three tasks assessing the same assessment objectives.

General Observations:

- Both question sets (1a-c and 2a-c) were accessible.
- There were no significant time management issues; most candidates completed all tasks within the 2-hour timeframe.
- A small number of candidates made rubric infringements by completing tasks from both questions.

Recommendations for Centres/Areas for Improvement:

Questions 1a/2a

- Use extracts as starting points only.
- Apply a range of language frameworks to both extracts and personal examples.
- Link concepts, issues, and theories to specific language features.

Questions 1b/2b

- Aim to write close to the recommended word count.
- Make conscious language decisions with a varied vocabulary and punctuation.

Questions 1c/2c

- Address relevant language issues and concepts (e.g., power relationships, politeness).
- Use evaluative language to discuss language decisions.

Overall, candidates should aim for balanced responses that effectively integrate analysis, context, and creative elements to achieve higher marks across all tasks.

Unit 3: This unit assesses candidates' knowledge of Early Modern English (EModE) and their ability to analyse language changes over time through two main parts; short answer questions where AO1 is assessed and an extended essay question where AO2, AO3 and AO4 are assessed.

General Observations

- **Short Answer Questions:**
 - Candidates demonstrated clear understanding of Q1 requirements.
 - There was improved focus on grammatical features specific to EModE in Q1d.
 - Time management issues were observed, with some candidates spending too long on Q1, affecting their Q2 responses.
- **Extended Essay Question:**
 - Candidates effectively engaged with opinion texts, despite lack of advance genre information which was not supplied this year.
 - Texts allowed meaningful discussions of context and language choices related to opinions on theatre audiences.
 - Successful responses included contextual analysis and productive comparisons across texts.
 - Timing issues led to undeveloped responses for some candidates.

Recommendations for Centres/Areas for Improvement:

- Short answer questions – Work on improving identification of word classes in context.
- Extended essay questions – Focus on meaning in the context of the extracts provided.
- Work on time management for sustained and developed essays.

Unit 4: 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.

General Observations

- Most candidates were well-prepared, with robust engagement in both sections.
- In section A, candidates generally balanced their analysis of the two texts and effectively applied linguistic terminology.
- Section B saw creative and engaging responses, though some candidates did not meet the 400-word guideline or did not plan their responses adequately.

Recommendations for Centres/Areas for Improvement:

Section A

- There was balanced analysis of both texts.
- There was a clear focus on the question's driving phrase.
- There was a diverse use of terminology.

Centres should:

- Clarify definitions of key features like pronouns and adverbs.
- Avoid focusing too narrowly on a few features.
- Ensure balanced attention to all aspects of the texts.

Section B

- Most candidates understood the genre and used creative elements effectively.
- Some articles lacked depth due to insufficient planning.
- Successful articles often incorporated hobbies like cooking or crafting in an engaging and authentic way.

Unit 5 (NEA):

Overview of the Unit

This unit allows candidates to independently research an aspect of language and identity. They can gather primary and secondary research on one of the following topics:

- Language and Self-Representation
- Language and Gender Identity
- Language and Culture
- Language Diversity

General Performance Overview

Candidates performed well across all sub-aspects, utilizing a range of data types (spoken, written, and multi-modal) and exploring diverse domains (e.g., reality TV, text messages). Most investigations fell into Bands 3, 4, and 5, with few in Band 1.

Comments on Individual Questions/Sections

General Trends: Issues arose when tasks lacked explicit references to identity, impacting data collection and analysis. Confusion was noted in categorizing self-representation versus cultural investigations.

Approaches to the Item: Candidates were well-advised, collecting original primary data. Some centres had all candidates focus on similar topics (e.g., celebrity interviews), prompting advice for more originality.

Successful Responses:

- a sharp focus on language and identity
- broad primary data collection
- sophisticated linguistic analysis
- perceptive exploration of language concepts and issues
- insightful application of theories.

Areas for Improvement:

- make titles specific rather than general
- make responses analytical rather than descriptive
- focus on language and identity
- extend linguistic analysis
- check work for errors.

Areas for improvement	Classroom resources	Brief description of resource
Avoid using pre-learned responses	Essay writing skills	A series of resources to develop essay writing skills
In Unit 2 use the extract as a starting point only.	Craft an essay using wider examples	A blended learning resource – crafting an essay using wider examples.
In Unit 3 and 4, work on improving identification of word classes in context.	Practical approaches to language levels	A handy sheet of terminology which can be applied to any piece of writing
All Units – improve knowledge and understanding of grammatical features and word classes.	Teaching grammar	Online CPD with practical approaches to teaching grammar.

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UNIT 1: 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 climate change activists. Text A was an extract from a tabloid newspaper outlining a clash between the London Metropolitan Police and environmental activism group Extinction Rebellion. Text B was an extract from an online profile published in Time magazine, introducing young Swedish environmental activist Greta Thunberg as Person of the Year for 2019. Text C was a vision statement by Extinction Rebellion, published on their website. Candidates were asked to analyse and evaluate how the language used in each of these texts represented attitudes to climate change activists. 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 emotions generated by activists and their work).

In Section B, candidates were asked to read data taken from the comments thread beneath a YouTube video, posted by American make-up influencer and stylist Jeffree Star. In this video, Star reviews Sailor Moon, a new make-up collection inspired the Japanese Manga cartoon series of the same name. Candidates had to use their knowledge of contemporary English to analyse and evaluate the ways in contributors used language in the comments thread. 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, 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.

Centres would do well to remind candidates that they *are* encouraged 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, responding to the data they have been given in *this* examination paper, rather than making more general points, would prevent bunching of marks at the top of Band 2 and the bottom of Band 3. 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 relevant to the texts in question.

Comments on individual questions/sections

Section A

In Section A, candidates mainly a solid grasp of the key language constituents, with many considering how contexts shaped meaning.

Connections were strongly considered on the whole, with candidates teasing out aspects of representation of climate activists from the three texts throughout their discussion, dealing with Text A first, then moving on to Text B and connecting the representation of ideas in A and then doing the same with Text C.

Characteristics of successful responses

- 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 and more general linguistic features was demonstrated. Clear links were established between language features and the representation of climate activism as a social, political and cultural phenomenon, represented as a nuisance in Text A, and as an act of civilisational rescue in Texts B and C.

Areas for improvement

- In less successful responses, candidates simply made general points about the activists, ignoring the nuances about how the activists are represented as vandals in Text A, or as quietly impactful in Text B, for example. Unlike last year, it appeared there was little misreading of the source texts, which was gratifying to see. 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.

As with last year, in Section B, more candidates anchored their discussion within a successful grouping of the data according to the attitudes expressed by the contributors, or indeed their identities. For example, they looked at language use by an aspiring make-up influencer (Text 5) versus the language used by an openly cynical contributor (Text 8). 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.

There was analysis that teased out specific aspects of factors affecting the construction of meaning, e.g. to convey cynicism or enthusiasm about Star and his reviews.

Characteristics of successful responses

- A feature of successful candidate responses was the connection made between the aforementioned contextual factors and the overall colloquial and international nature of online comment thread posts, which often, but not always, includes Non-Standard English, due to the digital nature of the platform.

Areas for improvement

- In unsuccessful responses, candidates skimmed through the surface features of 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.

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UNIT 2

Overview of the Unit

Candidates have the choice of two questions based on the language issues of Language and Power or Language and Situation. Each question has three tasks assessing the same assessment objectives, outlined as follows:

Questions 1a and 2a assesses AO1 focusing on the application of analytical methods, use of terminology and coherent written expression and organisation worth 20 marks; AO2 focusses on the exploration of language issues and concepts worth 10 marks; and AO3 analysing and evaluating contextual factors affecting the construction of meaning worth 10 marks. A total of 40 marks was available for these questions.

Questions 1b and 2b assesses AO5 in which candidates have to demonstrate expertise in creative writing either in fiction or non-fiction texts for a specific audience and purpose while adhering to appropriate genre conventions. A total of 20 marks was available for these questions.

Questions 1c and 2c assesses AO2 exploring language issues and concepts (worth 10 marks) and AO3 analysing evaluating contextual factors affecting the construction of meaning (worth 10 marks) in relation to their own language use for their creative writing task in Questions 1b or 2b. A total of 20 marks was available for these questions.

Question 1a focused on Language and Power in which candidates were given a Penalty Charge Notice, a parking ticket, as a written text. They were asked to use the extract as a starting point, analysing and evaluating how written language is used to manage people's behaviour in both the extract and their own written examples. Question 1b asked candidates to write an extract from a story in which a character gets into trouble. Question 1c asked candidates to write a commentary for the text they had produced, analysing and evaluating their language use.

Question 2a focused on Language and Situation in which candidates were given an extract from the spoken transcript an episode of *The Supervet*, a real-life documentary TV series, in which a dog owner is consulting the vet about his dog's serious back condition. Candidates were asked to use the spoken transcript as a starting point to analyse and evaluate how participants interact in difficult situations, referring to other examples of spoken interactions in which speakers are facing a difficult situation. Question 2b asked candidates to write an advisory webpage aiming to give wellbeing advice to teenagers. Question 2c asked candidates to write a commentary for the text they had produced, analysing and evaluating their language in use.

Candidates' general performance demonstrated that both Questions 1a-c and 2a-c were accessible. The majority of candidates achieved marks in Bands 2-4 with only a very small number of candidates achieving marks in Bands 1 and 5. There were no significant issues of time management in respect of managing the three different tasks within the timeframe of 2 hours. However, occasionally Question 1c/2c was slightly shorter. A very small number of candidates committed a rubric infringement where they had completed tasks from both Questions 1 and 2.

Comments on individual questions/sections

Question 1 Language and Power

- Q.1 (a).** Candidates generally made good use of the written parking ticket (Penalty Charge Notice) and were able to engage with the instrumental power focus in respect of the language producer and explore the effects upon the car driver target audience. Candidates generally focused their answer predominantly on an analysis of the extract with brief reference to their own written examples either 'bolted' on at the end or briefly referenced within the response. Higher achieving responses had more of a balance of the analysis of the written text and wider examples of written texts in which people's behaviour was being managed. There was an issue of some candidates using spoken language examples as opposed to written language examples which could not be credited. Wider examples looked at speeding tickets, examination hall notices and non-payment letters. A common feature was that candidates would make passing superficial reference to wider examples without any analysis of supporting examples. More successful candidates addressed the focus of the question 'managing people's behaviour', although lower achieving responses would adopt a more generic textual analysis approach. Stronger responses integrated analytical methods, discussion of concepts and issues and evaluation of contextual factors throughout the response in relation to both the extract and their own examples. Relevant theories such as Fairclough's Language and Power, synthetic personalisation, Wareing's power types, etc, were often quoted, but higher achieving candidates would link this more specifically to the extract rather than their own examples.
- (b)** Candidates engaged generally effectively and enthusiastically with this creative writing task focusing on an extract from a story. The majority of candidates generally wrote approximately 350 words as suggested in the question, however, lower achieving candidates would often fall short of this response and there would be gaps in narrative development. There was often good evidence of conscious crafting in respect of characters being in trouble, however, lower achieving candidates would often only mention briefly a character being in trouble. Examples of effective narrative types would be young people getting in touch with the police, parents and school. More extreme examples of trouble would be zombie attacks! High achieving candidates would paragraph and structure their narrative extract, however, some candidates did produce whole short stories, which was not required. Written technical accuracy was higher in the most successful candidate and errors more evident in the least successful responses.
- (c)** Candidates used the first person effectively to account for their conscious language decisions. Higher achieving candidates would analyse a range of language features (word, phrase and sentence level analysis) covering lexical, semantic, grammatical, discourse and pragmatic frameworks. These language features were generally explored in relation to the contextual factors in the production and reception of meaning (AO3). Commentaries were generally more lacking in addressing AO2 focusing on the language issues and concepts relating to the actual task. Issues such as asymmetrical power relationships between characters who found themselves in trouble were explored or applying Goffman's face threatening act theory to good effect.

More successful commentaries addressed the nature of the task and engaged with narrative and character development as well as literary genre conventions.

- Q.2 (a)** Candidates generally made effective use of the spoken transcript from the reality TV programme *The Suprvet* focusing on the roles of both the dog owner and the vet in dealing with a difficult situation. Candidates would often predominantly focus on an analysis of the spoken language transcript with passing references to wider contextual examples of spoken language in difficult situations. Often these examples would be superficial without supporting language analysis. Candidates either tagged on their own examples at the end of the extract analysis or weaved in the examples throughout their analysis. A few candidates did refer to written examples instead of spoken interaction examples and these could not be credited. Successful wider contextual examples included parents telling children about the death of a close family relative or teachers telling students about a low grade in their work. Some candidates did refer to the power asymmetry in the relationship between the vet and the dog owner and whilst this was relevant, some candidates did focus on this too much as opposed to exploring the language features of difficult situations in spoken interactions. Higher achieving candidates would effectively address all three assessment objectives, although lower achieving candidates would have an imbalance of addressing analytical methods using appropriate terminology and exploring language issues and concepts. Theories such as Brown and Levinson's negative politeness, Goffman's face theory and Grice's maxims of co-operation were seen in many responses, however, stronger responses would link these directly to specific language features in the extract and their own examples. Strong responses would keep the focus on difficult situations in spoken interaction, whereas lower achieving responses would be more a general spoken language discourse analysis focusing on the extract.
- (b)** Candidates generally engaged effectively with the non-fiction task of producing an advisory webpage aiming to give wellbeing advice to teenagers. Appropriate registers were included, and relevant/effective content used to advise teenagers on a plethora of topics ranging from general wellbeing, exam stress, relationship problems with peers and family, social media, etc. The vast majority of candidates employed direct address/synthetic personalisation which was sustained throughout the texts. Website form was appropriately represented with references to where images would be and the use of effective engaging headlines, subheadings and the use of bullet points. Candidates generally were close to the 350 approximate word count; however, it was noticeable that lower achieving candidates fell well below this with short pieces of about 200 words and this was clearly reflected in meeting the demands of the task in addressing appropriate wellbeing topics with advice. Written technical accuracy was better in the most successful candidates and errors more evident in the least successful responses.
- (c)** Candidates used the first person effectively to account for their conscious language decisions. Higher achieving candidates would analyse a range of language features (word, phrase and sentence level analysis) covering lexical, semantic, grammatical, discourse and pragmatic frameworks. These language features were generally explored in relation to the contextual factors in the production and reception of meaning (AO3). Commentaries were generally more lacking in addressing AO2 focusing on the language issues and concepts relating to the actual task.

Issues such as the expert knowledge of the writer in providing wellbeing advice was explored in some commentaries to good effect. Higher achieving commentaries clearly addressed the needs of the task, audience, purpose and genre conventions of an advisory webpage. Candidates did refer to computer-mediated communication (CMC) which was relevant, although some commentaries did dwell on this aspect as opposed to addressing a range of concepts, issues and contextual factors.

Characteristics of successful responses

- making good use of the printed extracts in (a)
- integration of analytical methods, discussion of concepts and issues and evaluation of contextual factors throughout the response in relation to both the extract and their own examples in (a)
- good written technical accuracy in (b) with appropriate structural features used throughout the writing
- analysis of a range of language features in 1 and 2 c, covering lexical, semantic, grammatical, discourse and pragmatic frameworks.

Areas for development:

Question 1a/2a

- candidates need to ensure that they meet the requirements of question 1a/2a by only using the extract as a starting point
- candidates need to apply a range of language frameworks to both the extract and their own wider examples
- candidates are advised to read the question carefully, noting that the extract is “a starting point”, suggesting they start with analysis and evaluation of the extract, but then focus more on providing a range of different wider contextual examples. These contexts should have specific language examples which are analysed and evaluated in relation to the question
- concepts, issues and the use of theories should be linked directly to specific language features
- candidates should note whether the mode of communication is written, spoken or multi-modal in nature and provide appropriate examples.

Question 1b/2b

- candidates need to be aware of the recommended word count, and try to meet it, in order to meet the requirements of the task
- candidates should read the requirements of the question, for example, if they are asked for an extract from a story, then a complete short story is not required
- candidates should continue making conscious language decisions as well as using an appropriate range of vocabulary and punctuation.

Question 1c/2c

- candidates should consider appropriate language issues (for example, power relationships and politeness) and concepts (audience, purpose, tenor, register, genre conventions) in order to address AO2 which is worth 10 marks.
- candidates should use evaluative language in order to comment upon their conscious language decisions in the production of both non-fiction and fiction texts
- candidates should be encouraged to analyse a range of words, phrases, clauses and sentences which they have constructed meaningfully for the specific task, audience, purpose, etc.

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UNIT 3

Overview of the Unit

The first part of this unit comprises four short answer questions which assess 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 by describing distinctive Early Modern English language features concisely and accurately and by using precise linguistic terminology to identify examples (AO1). Question 2, the extended essay question, assesses candidates' ability to analyse and compare noteworthy features in three unseen texts chosen from different historical periods of English. Candidates, guided by the question focus, 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 meaning and issues explored in 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 demonstrated that candidates were clear and had been well taught about the different requirements of each of the four parts of Question 1. For example, there were noticeably fewer candidates this year who included comments on archaic spelling and lexis in Question 1d (which cannot be credited) as this question tests candidates' knowledge of distinctive grammatical and punctuation features of Early Modern English. Whereas most candidates were generally secure on word-class identification, there were still some candidates who struggled with this and for whom it became a limiting factor. Centres should note that it is acceptable to answer Question 1a in bullet points, but thereafter responses to Questions 1 b-d should be in complete sentences. There is, however, a balance to be struck here in terms of timing. Responses to the short answer questions should be concise as spending too long on over-long responses may not leave enough time for the extended essay which carries 60 marks. The mean attempt rate for questions 1a-d was over 99%. The mean marks for questions 1a-d were comparable to previous series – with a slight dip for question 1b as fewer candidates were able to precisely identify '*meny*' as a determiner. It is pleasing to note that the mean mark for question 1d (the most demanding of the short answer questions) has not fallen in 2024. This shows that strong performance on this more challenging question has been sustained.

For Question 2 there was no advance information given this year about the genre of the unseen texts which would form the focus of the essay question. Despite this, candidates engaged very effectively with the genre of opinion texts this year. Overall, they were able to make meaningful points about the writers' views of theatres and their audiences.

The three texts this year took different forms: Text A an Early Modern English extract from a letter from the Lord Mayor of London, Text B a Modern English extract from a travel guide and Text C a Present-Day English online blog from an amateur theatre reviewer. This allowed for meaningful discussion of context and evaluation of the different ways in which strong opinions about theatre audiences were delivered in each text. There was also significant scope to make productive connections between the texts (AO4) by noting Text A's focus on closing theatres to promote public order and safety (from the spread of disease), Text B's particular focus on the unacceptable behaviour of women audience members and Text C's targeting of just two audience members for criticism, rather than audiences in general.

Most candidates managed their time effectively, but there were some responses which were undeveloped (less than 3 sides) due to timing issues. As mentioned above, in some cases this appeared to be caused by over-written responses to the short answer questions. There were also some candidates who approached the question entirely using formulaic headings such as formality/informality, status of the writer, audience etc. and this left little time for a developed exploration of context and meaning (AO3) for each text and was therefore limiting. Pleasingly, this year there were very few candidates who approached the essay question by listing language change features thereby repeating what is assessed in Question 1. Candidates have been clearly well-advised by centres about maintaining focus on meaning in context (AO3) in their essay responses. Pleasingly, the attempt rate for Question 2 this year was 100%. The mean mark for Question 2 in 2024 is more in line with 2019 performance and only very slightly lower than in 2023 when advance genre information for the essay was given to candidates.

Comments on individual questions/sections

Q.1 (short answer questions)

Most candidates were able to successfully demonstrate their linguistic knowledge and understanding of language change concepts in the short answer questions and were clearly aware of the different requirements of each question.

- (a) As noted above, it is acceptable for candidates to answer 1a in the form of bullet points. The identification of word classes in this question was generally secure, however the archaic spelling pattern of the noun 'citie' was ie/y *interchange* ('suffix' was credited provided that ie/y substitution was cited, not i/y). Centres should please note for the future that ie/y is an example of an EModE interchange.
- (b) Most candidates were able to identify the word class of 'maners/manners' (noun) and comment on spelling inconsistency with the consonant 'n'. There were fewer candidates who were able to identify 'meny' as a determiner, although they were able to comment upon the variation ('e' used rather than PDE 'a') reflecting pronunciation. Candidates are reminded to use the line references provided to identify the precise function of the word (and therefore its word class) in context.
- (c) It is pleasing to note that candidates have been well-advised by centres to be as precise as possible when noting verb inflections. Most candidates here were able to provide *both* the tense of the verb and the person of the inflected ending of 'hath' (present tense, third person verb inflection) which is required to gain full credit.

Most candidates were also able to identify the word class of ‘them selves’ (pronoun) but then needed to reference the grammatical feature using precise terminology (‘non-compounding’ or ‘open compound’). It was not sufficient to say ‘them selves’ is one word in PDE as this is not precise enough to gain credit.

- (d) As noted previously, most candidates were clearly aware that this question tested their ability to identify and describe EModE *grammatical structures* and *punctuation patterns* (not points about archaic spelling and lexis which cannot be credited here). It was good to see that a considerable number of candidates were able to provide concise examples of some complex EModE grammatical features (e.g. use of the subjunctive, passive voice and periphrastic ‘do’ for emphasis). It was also pleasing to note that when candidates were referencing the use of multiple clauses in EModE many were able to support their points with concise examples and named clause types (e.g. main clauses, or subordinate clauses such as non-finite etc). A few candidates, however, selected grammatical features in the text and noted that they were still present in PDE. This could not be credited as the question asks for features that are ‘typical’ of Early Modern English. Overall, centres and candidates are advised to look in detail at the mark schemes for this and past papers for further guidance in approaches to Question 1d.

Characteristics of a successful response:

- clear understanding of the different requirements of each of the questions 1a - d
- concise, but not overlong, 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 identification and description of typical or distinctive spelling, grammatical or punctuation features of Early Modern English

Areas for improvement:

- accurate identification and description of word classes in context
- noting that comments on archaic spelling or lexis cannot be credited in 1d
- developing skills in the identification and naming of specific clause types in multi-clausal sentences (for Question 1d).

Q.2 (essay)

In this question candidates are tested on their ability to analyse and evaluate the content and meaning of three texts which have been selected from different historical periods. In their responses candidates should connect their points about language features (which should be described using accurate terminology) to relevant language concepts or issues and also to the contexts in which the texts were first written. Throughout their responses candidates should also make and explore noteworthy connections, comparisons and contrasts across the three texts.

This year although candidates were not given advance information about the texts, they were able to engage very effectively with the opinion text genre. The different forms of the texts allowed for a focus on the diverse ways in which the three writers used language to deliver their opinions about theatres and theatre audiences. Most candidates were able to use the contextual information productively to frame their analysis.

For example, noting the focus on criminality and immorality which was signalled in Text A (e.g. with the listing of criminal types such as '*thieves, horse-stealers...*' and '*lewd and Ungodly practices*'), the German writer's shock at the English audience's treatment of those on stage in Text B (e.g. with the dynamic verbs '*throw*' '*shail*') and the personal, expressive nature of Shona's blog in Text C, with its non-standard capitalisation and punctuation (e.g. *BUT WHO CARES!!!*) reflecting very 21st Century, digital norms. There were perceptive discussions and evaluations (AO3) of the ways which the three writers connected with their respective audiences (the use of honorifics in Text A, the encouragement that readers make up their own minds in Text B and the direct address to the regular blog reader in Text C). Many candidates were able to thoughtfully engage with contexts (AO3) and explore the sense of danger created in Text A with reference to the plague ('the time of Sickness'), historic judgements about women's behaviour in Text B ('infinite shamelessness') and references to digital culture in Text C ('LIVESTREAMING, 'texting'). Some candidates were also able to contrast the exclusive and negative attitudes to lower social classes signalled in Texts A and B with the more inclusive and tolerant attitude to theatre audiences in Text C ('excited kids happy to be out of school'). It was good to see that candidates were clear about the importance of comparison (AO4) in their essays and that they were able to structure their essays successfully in different ways, not necessarily working from the oldest to the newest text.

Weaker responses had much less focus on meaning in context. Some of these comprised mainly of feature spotting with a general focus on less significant features such as first-person pronouns. Some largely consisted of unsupported observations about the status of the writer or their audience, or points about formality or informality with little reference to the specific content of the three texts. In some there were attempts to apply theory (e.g. Grice, Lakoff and Fairclough) which in these cases was not helpful or relevant. The application of pre-learned essay structures was also a limiting factor for some candidates who would be better advised to use the question focus, close reading and contextual information to guide the selection of their points. It was pleasing to note this year that there were very few candidates whose essays focused exclusively on language change points (effectively repeating the material assessed in the short answer questions). Centres have clearly reinforced this message effectively. Finally, as mentioned above there is still an issue with the length of responses for a number of candidates. A response of just two sides or less is not sufficient to develop analysis and comparison and is therefore self-limiting.

Characteristics of a successful response

- well-developed and supported essays which focus on meaning in context
- thoughtful selection of noteworthy points of connection, contrast and comparison
- productive engagement with contextual information which is used to support language analysis
- consistent language focus with accurate use of a range of terms at word, phrase and sentence level

Areas for improvement

- careful focus on meaning and content, linked to context
- consistent language focus and support with use of a range of terms
- focus on detailed language analysis rather than application of linguistic theory
- work on timing to ensure sustained and developed essays
- careful selection of points for analysis and comparison, rather than the use of pre-learned essay structures.

WJEC GCE ENGLISH LANGUAGE

GCE

Summer 2024

UNIT 4

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.

Once again, candidates seemed to have been well prepared for this unit. The vast majority of candidates found the two texts to be accessible and engaged robustly with the language features displayed. Most candidates demonstrated a clear understanding that AO1 is double weighted in Section A, and therefore ensured that they mobilised their approaches to language analysis, using their understanding of linguistic terminology to drive their response. A minority of responses did not attend explicitly to the question that was set, however, and did not spend enough time focusing on the ways people use language to construct something. Instead, they conducted more generalised analyses of the features of the transcripts. 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 magazine articles that were both engaging and creative in their approach to convincing adults to take up a hobby. A small number of responses fell short of the indicative 400-word guidance, and only a very small minority of candidates seemed to have planned out some markers for content before they began to write.

In general terms, the vast majority of candidates constructed analyses that attended to both texts in Section A in an even manner, devoting broadly equal effort to each transcript. Virtually all candidates responded to the key genre pointers in Section B, in contrast to 2023 where a significant minority of candidates misread the genre.

Comments on individual questions/sections

Section A: Analysing Spoken Language

The two texts focused on spoken interactions in which participants were involved in creating something. Text A had a defined broadcast context of a cookery programme, whilst Text B was simply the transcript of father and daughter making a candle from a kit at home. When discussing Text A, most candidates were able to analyse the ways in which the two presenters worked as an entertaining team, using humour and specialist knowledge, to present an engaging and educative experience for the viewer at home. Most candidates were also able to unpack the ways in which the two presenters used banter and other informal language features to present warmth and friendship as they narrated the baking process.

In Text B, most candidates were able to focus their analysis on the ways in which the father used a series of questions to guide his daughter through the process, and virtually all candidates made some analysis of the way he used language towards the end of transcript to manage a potentially hazardous step in the process. In general, in response to this question, the vast majority of candidates found plenty of language features to explore, and there were very few responses that were too brief. As noted above, there were very few instances of candidates spending too much time discussing one transcript and therefore providing an unevenly balanced discussion. There were a few examples of candidates planning out the key elements of their responses to make sure they provided an analysis that did justice to the depth of their understanding.

AO1

As last year, there were very few instances of feature-spotting, and most candidates linked the language features they identified to an analysis of their effect. Again, as last year, very few candidates wasted time simply summarising what was happening in the two transcripts, and the vast majority seemed to make sure they got into a rhythm of conducting a detailed analysis early on in their discussion. In most cases this meant that they were able to showcase the depth and detail of their linguistic understanding. Some candidates deployed a working knowledge of detailed linguistic terminology to great effect, although many lacked accuracy when identifying adjectives, adverbs or different types of pronouns. Very few candidates restricted their analysis to an exploration of spoken language features only, continuing a pleasing trend from last year, although there were still a few discussions that perhaps spent too long focusing on emphatic stress and micropauses. These two features were certainly available in the two transcripts as analytical touchpoints, but as many candidates demonstrated, there was plenty more to write about. The majority of responses were mostly accurate in terms of expression, and many were confidently styled, moving deftly from point to point.

AO2

As last year, most candidates used appropriate textual support, and there was very little use of unfocused, over-long quotation. Most candidates had clearly been prepared well in this regard as there were very few responses that made limited or even infrequent use of textual support. Once again, there were many very successful examples of candidates making concise, relevant references to language theories, and there were several examples of candidates invoking theoretical discussion at arm's length from the texts, or that had very little to do with the texts. Discussions of politeness forms, or theories of conversational relevance, were deployed at least sensibly, and often effectively, and in the particular context of Text B, most candidates linked their analysis to their understanding of parent-child interactions. It was very positive to see that the vast majority of candidates dipped into their theoretical understanding as and when they could make use of it and did not allow it to dominate their discussion in ways that might smother their analysis. Again, it appears that candidates have been well-prepared in this approach.

AO3

The vast majority of candidates explored the effect of contextual factors in ways that were at least sensible. For example, in Text A, most candidates made reference to the need for the presenters to use language that would be effective in a broadcast context, generally then going on to make the point that the private, familial context of Text B provided a different kind of scaffold for the transcript.

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 Dave Myers communicated his understanding of the cultural context of the dessert, or that Si King communicated his pleasure concerning the final product. In Text B, they discussed the effective way in which the father used language to call a pause to the candle making process at key moments.

Characteristics of successful responses:

- an evenly balanced analysis that attends to the complexities of both texts
- a clear and repeated focus on the driving phrase in the question ('language to interact...as they make something')
- a range of terminology deployed across the different language levels.

Areas for improvement:

- a lack of clarity on the definitions for key features, particularly types of pronouns and adverbs
- avoiding responses that only focus on a small number of spoken language features
- avoiding responses that focus on one aspect in both texts (for example, informality features) and then not moving beyond this.

Section B: Creative Recasting

Virtually all candidates understood the text type that was required in the task and set about constructing a written response that would persuade adults to take up a hobby. The key stylistic features and formal features of generalist magazines seemed to be understood by most. Many candidates creatively made use of imagined converts to the delights of hobbies and included quotations and interviews with hobbyists and/or mental health experts.

AO2

Most candidates demonstrated that they had at least a sensible awareness of the writing genre set out in the question and constructed an article that tackled the concept of hobbies from a variety of angles.

AO5

Much of the writing in Section B was accurate and sound in terms of expression and formal organisation, and there were many examples in which candidates managed to adopt a fluent and engaging authorial voice. The vast majority of candidates managed to generate enough material, although a small number fell well short. Here, perhaps, greater use of planning time may have helped to flesh out different potential aspects of content at the outset. Instead, the majority of candidates clearly write and plan at the same time. Although this can be successful, the lack of a plan can cause candidates to veer off course as they construct their response. It was clear that some candidates this year chose the idea of getting physically active as their first hobby example, and then constructed an article that was fundamentally about the benefits of exercise, somewhat losing sight of the focus of the task. One area where many candidates really shone this year was their approach to linguistic choices.

The vast majority made many competent and sensible choices that complemented the genre and purpose of the article, and many built upon these foundations to produce writing that was purposeful, containing a pleasing variety of consciously, often confidently crafted stylistic features. In the better responses, candidates displayed excellent judgement in how to deploy these features over the course of their article. Many students made use of the transcripts and referred to cooking and craft activities as potential hobbies. In almost all cases, these references were neatly woven into their article in a way that was authentic and engaging.

Characteristics of successful responses:

- exploring the notion of hobbies from a variety of angles
- maintaining a balance between general persuasive structures and details about particular activities or hobbies
- writing was thought-provoking and authentically persuasive.

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 structure the key elements of a response
- leave time to check for careless errors in accuracy and writing consistency.

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GCE

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UNIT 5 Language and Identity

Overview of the Unit

This component allows candidates the opportunity to independently research an aspect of language and identity. Candidates have the opportunity to gather primary and secondary research in relation to one of the following aspects of study as defined in the specification:

- Language and Self-Representation.
- Language and Gender Identity.
- Language and Culture.
- Language Diversity.

AO1 assesses analytical methods and quality of written communication. AO1 is worth 40 marks and there are three strands: AO1a focuses on analytical methods and interpretation of the topic, worth 20 marks; AO1b looks at the use of linguistic terminology, worth 10 marks; AO1c assesses coherent written communication and organisation, worth 10 marks. AO2 explores concepts and issues, worth 20 marks and AO3 focuses on evaluating contextual factors affecting the construction of meaning, worth 20 marks.

The focus of the NEA is exploring the relationship between language and identity. Candidates then choose one of four sub-aspects of study as identified above.

Similar to previous series, candidates performed well in response to all of the sub-aspects of study, with candidates exploring a full range of different data sets, covering both spoken, written and multi-modal text types. A full range of domains were explored, from reality TV shows through to self-representation, individual text messages and transcript data. As in previous series, only rare occasions of Band 1 investigations were seen. The majority of investigations were awarded Bands 3, 4 and 5, again in keeping with previous years.

It was very pleasing to see that WJEC centres were generally accurate and well within tolerance. There was only one centre in which the rank order was not agreed by both the moderator and Principal Moderator. A Stage 3 review was undertaken, and the PM marks were applied as opposed to a scaling. It is worth noting that this centre was new to WJEC. There was only one other centre in which one candidate was out of tolerance.

Comments on individual questions/sections

General trends/patterns of performance.

As indicated above, the majority of candidates were awarded Bands 3, 4 and 5 by centres and these were agreed by the moderating team. There were fewer candidates in Bands 2 and rare candidates in Band 1. Moderators still found issues relating to task setting by some centres in which candidates did not have explicit references to identity, and this was often reflected in the data collected and, in the analysis,/evaluation of that data.

There were more candidates this year who had not chosen specific sub-aspects of study (self-representation, gender, culture or diversity) and, as a result, more confusion was seen. For example, self-representation investigations focused on the language of celebrities, but this should have been categorised as culture. Also, self-representation should be focusing on the candidate's own use of language.

Candidates have clearly been advised and guided well by centres, with candidates collecting their own primary data for the purpose of investigation. Investigations were generally very original in approach, and this is pleasing to see. A few centres, however, adopted similar approaches where, for example, all candidates chose celebrity interviews, focusing on culture or gender identity and then candidates chose two celebrity subjects. This centre was advised to give candidates a wider choice. On the whole, however, centres are preparing candidates very well for this NEA unit.

Investigation titles which had a sharper focus on language and identity were more successful as well as those where a breadth of primary data had been collected. Candidates achieving Band 5 investigations showed original interpretation of their chosen language and identity focus. They applied a range of sophisticated linguistic analytical methods, and they explored language concepts and issues with perception. Contextual factors were analysed and evaluated in the light of the construction of meaning in a highly confident and illuminating manner. Theories were applied insightfully.

Investigations with broad titles and no explicit reference to language and identity in the titles were less successful. Candidates were also less successful when more descriptive and superficial responses were made in relation to the data and where there was less focus on the language and identity topic. This resulted in a limited linguistic analytical method and frequent errors being made. In less successful responses, concepts, issues and the use of theories were basic and superficial, often making sweeping generalisations about the nature of the data. Basic and limited contextual evaluation of the construction of meaning was also seen in these less successful responses.

Language and Self-Representation

This sub-aspect of study is pursued by some candidates, but it is not the most popular aspect of study. This is an opportunity for candidates to explore their own language in a variety of different contexts and think about the extent to which they show their identity through a range of language features or question whether their language is merely a reflection of who they are. Unfortunately, some candidates use "Self-Representation" for the aspect of study on the NEA where they have focused on a celebrity, which is in fact a Culture or Gender investigation, depending upon the identity focus. Candidates can explore issues and concepts, such as accommodation, face, politeness, co-operation strategies, either through spoken language transcripts, or written or multi-modal forms of communication.

An example of an investigation title would be:

Using relevant data, analyse and evaluate to what extent the self uses language to construct their identity in a variety of different contexts.

Language and Gender Identity

This aspect of study remains very popular with candidates. The moderation team saw investigations which ranged from how Dolly Parton and Taylor Swift use language to advocate for female empowerment, to Katherine Ryan's use of misogyny and prejudice for comedic purposes.

Centres are reminded that there is a breadth and wealth of gender and language research out there and candidates are encouraged to research these given that there are still many investigations suggesting that Lakoff is the “one stop shop” for gender. Some go a little further to suggest that this 50+ year old theoretical research is outdated. Candidates are encouraged to explore deficit, dominance, difference, diversity, communities of practice and performativity approaches to gender research which will enable them to analyse and evaluate their primary data more illuminatingly.

An example of an effective title would be:

“In a society that is still heavily immersed in the believe that women must become mothers, childless women are often at the forefront of media attention”. Using relevant data, analyse and explore how the language and identities of childless women are presented within mainstream media.

Language and Culture

A wide variety of different cultural subjects were explored within this sub-aspect, which continues to be a popular aspect of study with candidates. Examples included exploring to what extent right-wing political ideologies have changed over time; Taylor Swift; Jane McDonald; Anna Nicole Smith; Kanye West; and media representation of trans-gender people within the British media. Candidates should be careful to ensure that culture investigations do not become media, sociological, historical or political in focus, as opposed to being focused on language and identity. Centres should explore data issues in the respect of the use of song lyrics. There are always challenges and potential pitfalls in respect of this type of data given the identities of the performer, song writer(s), etc.

An example of an effective title would be:

Using relevant data from interviews and speeches, how does Imran Khan use language to express changes in his identity at different stages in his public life?

Language Diversity

This is an aspect of identity study which is not popular with candidates. However, original and interesting investigations have been seen in respect of Caribbean English verses Multicultural London English and Standard English, Wenglish from a bilingualism perspective and occupational dialects, such as the language of politicians.

An example of an effective title would be:

Using relevant data, analyse and evaluate to what extent Wenglish speakers use language to construct personal and social identities in different contexts.

Advice to centres:

- Ensure that all candidates have an explicit reference to both identity/ies and language within their titles. Please see the WJEC GCE English Language and NEA Professional Learning materials for further advice.
- Centres should ensure that candidates have placed their investigation under one of the four prescribed sub-aspects of study, as defined in the specification: Language and Self-Representation; Language and Gender Identity; Language and Culture; Language Diversity.

- Centres are reminded that Language and Power is not a sub-aspect of study for this NEA unit. Power issues can be explored within data analysis as an AO2 issue, but the focus needs to remain on identity and the specific aspect of study.
- Ensure that all candidates are aware of the 2500-3500 recommended word count. Where word counts are not met or exceeded, assessors should make some comment within the 1c section of assessor summative comments on the AO1c to indicate that this has been naturally reflected within the awarding of this strand of AO1.
- Centres should consult the yearly NEA Professional Learning which contains examples of standardised work, and these should be used for comparison purposes as part of future internal assessment and standardisation.
- Please ensure that all NEA coversheets are signed and dated by both assessors and candidates. This is a requirement for all candidates and not just those selected as part of the sample. The moderation team may request further samples if required and problems can arise if candidates have gone on study leave.
- Candidates should be advised to consider a breadth of different sources for primary data in order to investigate their chosen focus. Two sets of data can often limit the scope and effectiveness of exploring the identity focused question.
- Candidates studying the Gender Identity topic should consult the breadth of gender theoretical approaches developed over the past 50 years.
- Candidates should be reminded to apply theories, concepts and issues to specific language features within their investigations.
- Candidates are reminded to apply contextual factors to specific language features and patterns within the data, as opposed to making generalised comments about context.
- Centres are advised that it is useful to attach the data to the investigation, although this is not stated in the specification. Moderators spend time looking at the data in relation to the investigation.

The Principal Moderator and moderation team would like to thank all candidates and staff for their hard work in producing the NEA submissions this year. All investigations were a pleasure to read and moderate. The moderation team were impressed with the degree of accuracy in assessments and centres' willingness to act upon the recommendations made in previous centre reports.

Supporting you

Useful contacts and links

Our friendly subject team is on hand to support you between 8.30am and 5.00pm, Monday to Friday.

Tel: 029 2240 4292

Email: gceenglish@wjec.co.uk

Qualification webpage: [AS/A Level English Language \(wjec.co.uk\)](https://www.wjec.co.uk/AS/A-Level-English-Language)

See other useful contacts here: [Useful Contacts | WJEC](#)

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