

Examiners' Report

June 2022

International GCSE English Language B 4EB1 01

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Introduction

The texts about good grammar and the impact of technology on the English language were accessible across the full range of abilities and candidates were able to engage with the tasks and respond appropriately.

Examiners' comments were evidence of some good teaching and learning in preparation for this examination in the responses seen and many candidates seemed well prepared on the whole. Examiners saw some good responses across all the questions. Examiners said they did not see much evidence of loss of learning because of the pandemic, although one examiner did comment that some weaker responses, especially to Section A, might have been as a result of loss of learning.

More successful candidates were able to engage fully with both texts and respond thoughtfully and articulately. Their writing responses were often engaging and effective and were well-controlled and accurate. Less successful candidates sometimes struggled to understand the passages and the questions. Their writing was often pedestrian or lacked coherence and had weak language controls.

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

There were a number of blank responses, notably for Question 7 and for Section C, which may indicate issues with timing.

There were some candidates who copied out all, or considerable chunks, of the extracts in response to Question 8. This can never be a successful way to respond as the candidate is required to produce their own work and show the ability to adapt the original texts for a different audience and purpose.

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

Examiners, as always, commented on how much they enjoyed reading some of the responses to Section C.

Question 1

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

The majority of candidates responded correctly and the most popular correct responses were the first two bullet points on the mark scheme: 'people think she keeps some sort of file' and 'people are afraid of being judged/ making a mistake'. The few incorrect responses identified points such as 'these people might be surprised that I don't have *The Elements of Style* memorized' and 'I make mistakes too' which did not answer the question.

Examiners did comment that many candidates were writing too much and giving too many points for this one mark question and perhaps spending too long on it.

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

Question 2

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

Most candidates provided correct examples of the ways the writer says good grammar is important such as 'it represents you in the world', 'it sends a message about your authority' and 'it sends a message about your attention to detail'.

Some candidates used references to other parts of the extract and ignored the reference mentioned in the question. The most commonly incorrectly used section was 'Good grammar helps you communicate clearly and get what you want'.

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

Question 3

The question asks the candidate how the writer presents her ideas about the importance of good grammar.

Examiners commented that most candidates demonstrated at least some understanding of the text and some awareness of the devices used to present ideas.

Examiners commented that most candidates were able to demonstrate some understanding of language techniques and how these were used to present the writer's ideas about the importance of good grammar. Candidates were able to identify a range of features and support them with examples from the text such as rhetorical questions (although not all questions are rhetorical), short sentences eg 'Let's get to it', first-person eg 'I get that', sub-headings and direct address eg 'aren't you trying to communicate?'. However a significant number of examiners commented that candidates did not comment on the effects of their chosen features on the reader.

Successful responses were developed, analytical and examined a range of language and structural features used by Megan Krause, exploring the impact on the reader and the intended effects. These candidates used embedded quotations and explored and analysed these in depth. There was plenty for these candidates to say about the passage which was rich in language features. Word level analysis is nearly always a feature of these responses which show the ability to analyse word choice in depth. These candidates offered secure analytical comment on more perceptive language points such as the use of humour, the hyperbolic phrase 'poor grammar heralds the fall of civilization', single sentence paragraphs and some were able to confidently analyse the final paragraph and appreciate points made about the power of language.

Some responses began quite well but once they reached the description of the three different grammar groups they slipped into paraphrasing what the writer said rather than how.

A number of responses that did identify techniques failed to make specific reference to the writer's intended effects, saying little more than 'this interests the reader' or 'this makes the reader want to read on'. There was also evidence of 'feature spotting' where candidates identify (correctly) particular language features and offer textual support but do not explain them. Occasionally candidates adopted a list-like approach to this question, identifying techniques and choosing appropriate references but doing no more.

Less successful candidates produced responses that were content based without much focus on 'how the writer presents her ideas'. These tended to focus on 'what' the writer said rather than 'how' the writer presented her ideas about the importance of good grammar. Some of the weakest responses were simply summaries or direct copies of the text.

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

This is an extract from a successful response to Question 3.

The writer starts by listing the pros and benefits of good ~~grammar~~ grammar. "poor grammar... can damage ~~your~~ credibility". The writer uses contrast to clearly illustrate that despite "texting and verbal slang" being acceptable poor grammar can damage credibility and have an impact (possibly negative) on "the way others perceive you or your brand." Thus illustrating the importance of good grammar in the first paragraph.

~~The writer~~ Krause then goes on to explain the types of people that use good or bad grammar starting with "purists". The syntax allows for a clear understanding of all the points to be laid out clearly for the reader to understand and be convinced of the importance of good grammar. The writer illustrates "purists" as an authority that understands grammar; they are the ones you go to to know when to use "who" or "whom". This shows the writer using pathos to appeal the reader that if you use good grammar people turn to you to understand something.

The writer contrasts the pure good grammar of the 'purists' by talking about those who "don't-know-don't care" and 'rebels'. ~~They~~ These adjectives present those who don't regard ~~good~~ the importance of good grammar in a negative light.

The writer describes them as "far too hip" or holding the belief of "what's the big deal?" regarding good grammar showing that if you don't regard the importance of good grammar you do not care enough or are a hippy who cares more for "enlightenment" rather than "irritating rules" however this appeals again to the pathos and as the words that Krause uses do not make disregarding good grammar as a good thing.

After looking at those who ~~don't~~ don't believe in the importance of good grammar the writer again presents their argument to contrast the negative light of the cons of bad grammar. The writer says that "good grammar is a brand ambassador", the adverb word ambassador is a positive word denoting authority; good grammar is a "trust signal" and trust especially with a brand is a good thing.

^{writer}
The ^{writer} continues the text in a positive light after exploring the ~~the~~ opposing side of their argument. Presenting the reasons why "good grammar" helps you communicate clearly. The writer uses the authority of an author to present the point that "the better grammar, the clearer the message." showing that to be understood clearly ~~the~~ one must use and understand the importance of good grammar to send a clear message.

The writer again to conclude pleads to the pathos and emotion of the reader "language is beautiful... and worthy of respect" broadening their argument not just as good grammar but emotion and humanity. "Humanity is a beautiful thing" and this begins the paragraph using emotive language not to describe both the reader and the author to connect the reader to both the author and their argument that of the importance of grammar. "Language is the tool... Good grammar honours the power and beauty of words". To conclude the writer use a myriad of ways to present the idea of the importance of good grammar showing the positives and the negatives without being harsh and finally appeals to the emotion of the reader that good grammar means to value and respect language as a whole.



ResultsPlus
Examiner Comments

There is some thorough understanding and exploration of language despite some sections of re-telling and general comments. The section of references is detailed and appropriate, overall. There is not a perceptive understanding shown, as comment is more exploratory than analytical. Mark = 8, Level 4.



ResultsPlus
Examiner Tip

To improve this to a Level 5, the candidate would need to analyse the writer's techniques using word-level analysis and perceptive comments on the effects of the structure. For example the comments in the final paragraph of the extract would need to be further developed.

This is an example of a less successful response to Question 3.

The writer presents her ideas in labelled paragraphs. She uses rhetorical questions to speak more directly at the reader 'Who has not gazed in wonder at a starlit night?'. She uses ~~repetition~~ repetition to get her point across more 'Why is good grammar important?' 'Why is grammar important?'. The writer uses ~~dialogue~~ ^{quotes}, taken from another person, to share her experience with somebody who doesn't care about grammar 'You'll find these people rolling their eyes often and adding, "What's the big deal? You know what I meant"'. The writer also makes references to other texts related to her point ' "The better the grammar, the clearer the message, the more likelihood of understanding the message's intent and meaning," author William Bradshaw wrote in an article'. The writer uses ~~st~~ a variety of sentences in her writing. The writer puts across her opinions very strongly, appearing like not one person can change her mind: her stance is very rigid. The writer uses a wide variety of punctuation.



The candidate identifies features and supports them with quotations showing some understanding. However the candidate does not always comment on the effects of their chosen features. The references are valid but not developed. Mark = 3, Level 2.



In response to this question it is important to not only correctly identify features and support them, but to try to make some points about the intended effects of these features on the reader. This would have lifted this response to a Level 3.

Question 4

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

The majority of the candidates responded correctly with the most popular responses being 'old internet people' and 'full internet people'. The rare incorrect response used the wrong line references or referred to the wrong text.

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

Question 5

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

Most candidates answered correctly with 'increase in informal writing' and 'had to evolve new ways of expressing irony, tone, gesture, slang, abbreviations, in-jokes and silly accents'. The latter point usually identified only one of the ways but this was acceptable.

Incorrect responses were sometimes incomplete eg 'increasing the volume', 'irony' or 'gesture,' or split points eg 'had to evolve new ways of expressing irony' and 'had to evolve new ways of expressing tone' which are both bullet point 2 on the mark scheme. Other unsuccessful responses chose material from outside the line references.

Some examiners commented that candidates were writing too much and making too many points for this two-mark question and perhaps spending too long on it.

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

Question 6

The question asks the candidate how the writer presents ideas about the effect of technology on the English language.

Some examiners commented that candidates' performance was similar to that in Question 3, however other examiners observed that candidates did not do as well on this question.

Most of the candidates were able to identify how the writers presented ideas about the effect of technology to varying degrees. They were able to find techniques used by the writer and support them with relevant quotations, however some examiners commented that a number of candidates did not develop their comments on the intended effects of these techniques. Most candidates were able to identify the use of an expert eg 'Gretchen McCulloch', the informal tone eg 'Goodness knows', humour eg 'why old people like SHOUTING in their texts' and the use of lists eg 'irony, tone, gesture, slang, abbreviations, in-jokes and silly accents'. They were able to comment on the language used although there was often a tendency to explain what the language meant rather than how it was used for effect.

Successful responses used supporting textual evidence to illustrate the points they were trying to make, judiciously selecting apt examples of language and structure and then analysing their impact on the reader and authorial intent. They also knew language techniques and stylistic devices at a greater depth, could identify them in the text, used better linguistic terminology in their writing and offered a variety of valid points. A number related the writer's techniques successfully to the intended audience, recognising that the mockery of older people eg 'using the cat emoji to ask if the cat has been fed' suggested a younger target readership. They were able to discuss the use of humour and hyperbole and sometimes offered word-level analysis.

Some examiners observed that some candidates were confused by the writer's references to Gretchen McCulloch and they had difficulty identifying which ideas were the writer's and which were Gretchen McCulloch's. Some candidates thought the writer was opposed to McCulloch's ideas.

There was evidence of 'feature spotting' where candidates identify (correctly) particular language features but do not explain them. Occasionally candidates adopted a list-like approach to this question identifying techniques and choosing appropriate references but doing no more.

Less successful responses struggled to develop their responses beyond identifying obvious features with a little comment. They often used over-long quotations in support. The least successful tended to re-tell the events or simply copied out sections of the text.

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

This is an extract from a very successful response to Question 6.

The author lists several ways in which technology has affected the English language, to show the diverse effects of the internet. He writes: 'The internet has rapidly changed the way we communicate'. The adverb 'rapidly' gives the impression that the internet has had a fast, far-reaching effect, and the pronoun 'we' allows the reader to question their own use of language and how the internet affects it. Groun also speaks of the increasing 'volume and importance of informal writing'. The juxtaposition of 'importance' and 'informal', contrasting formal and casual, demonstrates the drastic changes taking place due to the internet. The noun 'volume' is multivalent meaning loudness or scale, suggesting that language has changed in more than one dimension. The asyndetic list: 'irony, tone, gesture, slang, abbreviations, ~~all~~ in-jokes, silly accents etc.' shows the vast range of changes. The lack of conjunctions suggests a rapid change, and the use of 'etc.' implies that there are even more ~~ways~~ changes than those already listed.

The writer uses humour to inject a light-hearted tone to the article, suggesting that linguistic change is not to be feared. The opening paragraph juxtaposes a real text message with:

'the end of civilisation as we know it'. The contrast between an insignificant occurrence and the apocalypse (emphasised by the monosyllabic 'end') pokes fun at overly strict grammar specialists. The fact that the writer uses some new linguistic fads himself, like 'LIKE SHOUTING' and '*emphasis*' shows that he himself embraces the new changes and encourages the reader not to fear the pace of change. He also says 'idk (I don't know)' and 'lol (laugh out loud)', with parentheses to suggest that he even finds the new language slightly eclectic and sympathises with the reader.



ResultsPlus
Examiner Comments

There is perceptive understanding and analysis of language and structure, with discriminating use of references. This is a full mark response which fulfils all the criteria for a mark at the top of Level 5. Mark = 10, Level 5.



ResultsPlus
Examiner Tip

Note how the candidate has focused on and analysed individual words and phrases to show how the writer presents his ideas.

This is a less successful response to Question 6.

Richard Godwin presents his ideas by giving statistics and facts for the most part of the text. For example, in the second paragraph of the article he starts quoting Gretchen McCulloch, a Canadian linguist, making the article feel more informative and adding a tone that at first feels more strict. However, as * you read on the facts feel more like the writer telling you fun facts rather than boring statistics that might make the reader feel concerned about the society that we currently live in.

Godwin ~~was~~ uses humor in sentences to give encourage the reader to read on. For example, when he says "... or worried about how many exclamation marks to use in an email to their boss or wondered why old people LIKE shouting in their texts." He uses the words "worried" and "wondered" to help the reader to relate to what

he's saying. By saying worried he relates to the reader with a common emotion, which makes the reader feel seen and making the text feel relatable. By using the word "wondered" he makes the reader want to continue reading on, because their wonders may be answered by the author. When he uses the ~~the~~ quote "LIKE SHOUTING* in their text" it adds humor, which makes the sentence even more effective.

The way the author represents his ideas is by giving statistics, ~~infor~~ facts and humor. It is effective because it hooks the reader and encourages them to keep reading on.



There is clear understanding and explanation of language, but there are also some generic comments. The selection of references is appropriate but not developed. Mark = 5, Level 3.



To improve the mark, the candidate would need to provide more examples of how the writer uses language and structure for effect and develop their points on the intended effects of the writer's choices.

Question 7

This question requires candidates to compare how the writers convey their ideas and perspectives. Examiners commented that the majority of candidates were able to identify and discuss basic similarities and differences at a minimum, and a number produced well-thought out comparisons of the extracts. Some examiners commented that candidates engaged well with the task and most understood the need to make points of comparison but other examiners thought candidates found this task more demanding.

Most candidates made comparisons between the texts and wrote about both. They were able to identify similarities and differences between the texts and support their ideas with valid references. Points of comparison included: both texts use humour, both texts use questions, Text 1 is a blog/Text 2 is an article, Text 2 referred to outside experts whereas Text 1 was based largely on the writer's opinion, Text 1 focused on the importance of grammar and Text 2 focused on how technology has changed the way we communicate. Some examiners commented that the responses to this question mostly resulted in the selection of obvious points and a comparison of these with some supporting textual references.

Some candidates compared the writers' techniques and did not relate these comparisons to the writers' ideas and perspectives. They wrote about what the writers used in terms of language and structural devices but did not really elaborate on how these techniques helped them to present their ideas and perspectives.

More candidates are writing responses that are comparative throughout eg identifying points of comparison from each text in an integrated response. This is a successful way to respond to this task. There were some candidates who wrote about each text individually and then wrote a comparative comment at the end. Examiners commented that these responses were not as successful as those candidates whose responses were comparative throughout.

Some candidates offered a range of comparisons but did not support their points with references to the texts which limited their achievement.

Successful candidates were able to structure their responses comparatively by taking the various features of the text and comparing and contrasting them throughout. Their responses were balanced. More successful responses focused on a wide range of the writers' approaches in conveying their ideas and perspectives, embedding relevant words and phrases as quotations. They did not make general or obvious comparisons but were able to identify more perceptive comparisons eg that both texts dealt with the importance of clear communication (although from different perspectives), both texts end on a positive note, and both employ tone and humour.

Less successful candidates made few comparative comments. They tended to respond by listing comparisons, one after the other, often with no references. Some of these responses provided more quotation than comment, or wrote a great deal more about one text than the other. They sometimes gave summaries of the texts and concluded their response with a brief overview of perhaps one or two similarities. Some less successful candidates focused on inappropriate points of comparison such as the use of full stops, dashes, commas, or that the texts included a picture, some even comparing the pictures. Some candidates paraphrased the texts, retelling the passages or directly 'lifting' from the texts.

Occasionally candidates answered this question as if it was Question 10 on the legacy specification. However, these responses were in the minority and the majority of candidates had clearly been prepared for the demands of this question.

Some examiners commented that there were more unfinished or blank responses to this question than any other. This may be a time management issue or candidates prioritising Section B and C over Section A. Candidates should be encouraged to respond to every task.

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

This is an extract from a successful response to Question 7.

Both texts have the same opinion: grammar is important. Text one is more clear ~~about it~~, for example, when ~~she~~ that she thinks this she says "your grammar, spelling and punctuation represent you in the world" it makes the reader understand that ~~a~~ grammar does affect what people think about you, and your professional image. Text two, however, does not talk about using "proper" grammar. He talks about the impact grammar has on our society. For example, when he says "you can see a sentence such as ~~'LOL -D@T is teh haxxorz'~~" (a real example of an online gaming forum) as evidence of end of civilization as we know it." we understand that grammar, as uninteresting as it might seem, is more impactful than we give it credit for.

Both authors present their ideas in a

humorous, light-hearted tone. ~~Text~~ The author in Text One, Megan Krause, uses direct ~~language~~ address to the reader and colloquial language, as well as adding sentences that everybody has heard, for example, "What's the big deal? You know what I meant!" is a sentence that we can relate to, either we have thought of it or we've heard it. As well as making the text more relatable, it adds humour to the text. The author of the second text, Richard Gidycz, however, uses modern, colloquial sentences to add a somewhat sarcastic tone to his text. For example, when he says "Older people tend to be fond of the 'over-literal-emoji' - say, using the cat emoji to ask if the cat has been fed." This quote helps to add to the humorous tone in the text. Both writers use humour effectively, because it makes the reader want to continue reading.



There is a wide range of comparisons supported by references that are balanced across both texts with some exploration of ideas and perspectives. Mark = 11, Level 4.



Note how the candidate compares both texts throughout the extract.

This is an extract from a less successful response to Question 7.

Both writers talk about the english language and grammar in ways that their views come across clearly. In text one the writer has outlined ~~his~~^{her} ideas by laying it out like an article. She has used numbers as bullet points which make it easier for the reader. In text two the writer presents the ideas with a lot of short paragraphs. Both are different but effective.

In text one the writer is quite blunt in saying the importance of good grammar. "Good grammar honors the power and beauty of words." Using language that is very powerful and impactful makes a big difference. In text two the writer is much more humorous and not as serious. "Older people tend to be fond of the over-literal emoji - say, using the cat emoji to ask if the cat has been fed." Using language that will perk up the reader enables the writer to have the impact that they want.

In text one the writer asks questions which make the reader think and writers like having that impact. "Why is grammar important?" Such a basic question yet one that will make you stop and contemplate. In text two the writer ~~is less~~ has less questions but rather uses slang. "There was a rash of reports criticising the abbreviation filled txt spk that teenagers were apparently using." The ~~use~~^{use} of 'txt' and 'spk'

are slang and that is sometimes a good way of communicating your views. It shows ^awide range of understanding of current ^{affairs.} ~~affairs~~



ResultsPlus
Examiner Comments

There is a range of comparisons with some explanation of the writers' ideas and perspectives with generally appropriate references. Mark = 8, Level 3.



ResultsPlus
Examiner Tip

To achieve a higher mark, the response would need to have a wider range of comparisons and to develop their points about the ideas and perspectives.

Question 8

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

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

AO1

Most candidates referred to the three bullet points and managed to cover a reasonable number of points. Most were able to make fairly equal use of the texts, with Text 1 providing the most material for bullet points 1 and 3 (the problems caused by unclear written communication and why good grammar matters), and Text 2 being most useful for bullet point 2 (the positive effects of technology on written communication). Some candidates merged their responses to bullet points 1 and 3 which was acceptable as long as they were fully covered. The majority of candidates took an organised approach to the bullet points and wrote about them in order. Candidates were able to make appropriate use of their experience, eg thinking 'lol' means 'lots of love', rather than 'laughing out loud', and the confusion that arises from this.

More successful candidates were able to refer perceptively to information and ideas whilst maintaining the required tone and register. They were able to include a wide range of ideas and cover all three bullet points in detail, adding their own examples to make their website contribution more personal eg using anecdotes about times they had been misunderstood and the consequences, or examples of the missing punctuation, for example in the question 'Shall we eat Grandma?' and the confusion it can cause .

Less successful candidates were able to select and interpret a small range of bullet points, sometimes paraphrasing the content of both articles, especially when referring to the last bullet point ('why good grammar matters'). In the least successful responses there was evidence of much lifting from the original texts without any attempt to re-work the material.

AO4

Most candidates tried to write in an appropriate style and tone and there was a sense that they were trying to create a website contribution. They were able to communicate their ideas clearly and sometimes persuasively, with a clear sense of audience. These candidates adopted a range of techniques including writing in the first person, using rhetorical questions and direct address and anecdotes to engage their reader. A significant number of candidates were able mirror the techniques used by the two writers of the texts. Many responses adopted an advisory or persuasive style, assuming that they were writing to encourage people to improve their English. However some examiners commented that a number of candidates did struggle to create a convincing form, tone and register for a website contribution.

Successful candidates were able to create a lively and engaging style that suggested they had a well-developed understanding of the required approach. They used a wide range of techniques to communicate their ideas, often adopting a highly persuasive tone and selecting techniques such as humour, direct address and rhetorical questions to communicate their ideas. Some were quite entertaining using a strong personal voice and humour. Better candidates were able to use personal experiences confidently and appropriately to relate to the audience. Their register was sustained throughout their responses. It was clear that they had been well-prepared for the demands of the task.

Less successful candidates communicated at a basic level and had problems sustaining the required register throughout their response. Some did not convey any sense that this was supposed to be a website contribution, writing in a style that resembled a speech, a letter, an article or an essay.

Some candidates wasted time drawing website-style formats with features like tabs/buttons at the start of their responses. These used up valuable time and could not be rewarded because the task is assessing reading and writing skills.

AO5

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

Most candidates were able to use spelling, punctuation and grammar to make their meaning clear. They were able to communicate clearly with reasonably accurate sentence structures and a range of vocabulary. Spelling was often correct and many candidates tried hard to use a range of sentence structures and punctuation for effect. Most employed some paragraphing, sometimes using the given bullet points to help them. However some examiners commented that expression, grammar and punctuation were not always secure. Some examiners commented that it was pleasing to see evidence that candidates were checking and correcting their work.

More successful candidates used a varied range of correctly spelt vocabulary with some ambition and used a range of appropriate punctuation and different sentence structures to help them create particular effects. These responses employed accurate paragraphing which could be for effect. There was often evidence of proofreading.

Less successful candidates sometimes struggled to communicate their ideas and their language controls were not always secure, especially with regard to grammar. Some examiners commented that weaker candidates had problems with grammar and expression, despite good spelling and punctuation. Other examiners noted that punctuation was an issue with candidates writing long, one sentence paragraphs or using very little sentence punctuation.

Common errors commented on by examiners were: missing basic sentence punctuation; the use of very long, unstructured sentences; comma splicing; missing or misused apostrophes; problems with homophones; misspelling of basic vocabulary; not capitalising 'I' for the personal pronoun; missing capital letters at the beginning of sentences as well as random capital letters within sentences; verb tenses and other grammatical errors. Examiners also commented on misspellings of words given in the texts eg 'gramma' or 'grammer' for 'grammar'.

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

This is an example of an extremely successful response to Question 8.

Introduction

Hey everybody! It has come to my attention that this website has been asking for contributions about the importance of clear communication.

I've recently been thinking about that topic, so in this ~~website~~ article I will be giving my opinions on this. I want to find out why people are always bugging you about the importance of ~~using~~ "there" and "their"?

understanding the difference between
And ~~how~~ why it feels forbidden to use a bit of slang when writing an email to your boss? Come along with me, and I'll show you why!

Unclear communication is miscommunication.

This sounds fool-proof. Of course, everybody knows that you have to be clear ~~on~~ ~~what~~ ~~you~~ ~~even~~ while writing important essays or emails. But it is not only in those situations. Research shows that it is 67% more ~~like~~ likely for people to take you less seriously when your grammar, punctuation and spelling ~~mis~~ are off. So it is important to have these set right ~~for~~ ~~people to take~~ to get what you want. You have ~~to~~ to be clear; you might not know when you have to have clear communication and no grammar errors. Maybe a pop-quiz your English teacher set. Maybe when ~~a~~ your mom asks you to send a text to your very judgemental grandparents. Maybe when you have to write a complaint to a store because the product was not what you expected. And by the way, no, autocorrect cannot save you this time - sometimes even machines make mistakes! It is up to you to put your best image forward!

I'm not lazy, it is just more convenient

Let's admit it, we have all thought this.

It can be dreadful to always think about your spellings and have perfect grammar. Sometimes abbreviating your texts (for example, using "TTYL" instead of "Talk to you later" or "BRB" instead of "Be right back") and there is nothing wrong with that; there is just a time and place that for some reason, some people seem to misjudge. Of course you can text your peers like this, or when you're not expected to have a formal tone (I don't think that anyone cares if you say 'I'm at the yogurt shop, TTYL!' instead of 'I am currently at the yogurt shop, I will write back to you on the evening!'). However, using slang and abbreviations does not mean that you get to make a plethora of grammar mistakes. You can still use slang and have good punctuation and no grammatical or spelling mistakes! Let me show you how.

Grammar is a Tool not a Task

This is a Fact: when writing, your ^{writing} grammar is like a window to how you are as a person. If your grammar is used incorrectly, your spelling mistakes are evident and your punctuation is comical at the charts. Unfortunately now

impression is not going to be good. But if you're careful with your grammar, spelling and punctuation it shows that you care, that you pay attention to detail and maybe it may even subconsciously transmit that you're hard working. ~~For~~ Good, clear communication can help you get what you want. Want to apply for a job interview? Want to make a good impression with your teachers? Want to give your opinion on the internet? Good grammar is the way to go! The possibilities are endless!

not extra homework, just like advice.

As summer is approaching, the last thing anyone wants is extra homework (we're all tired of sitting in our desks all day) ~~but~~ ~~listen~~, ~~right~~ am I right?) but listen: ~~good~~ good communication takes you places. So do yourself a favor and spend time improving your communication skills.

I am going to close this article and wish ~~you~~ that you take my advice on this. Remember, grammar is not a task, it's a tool.



This is a full mark response.

A01

There is a wide range of relevant points and well-focused comments with perceptive references to information and ideas. Apt and persuasive use of the given bullet points.

Mark = 10, Level 5.

A04

Perceptive, subtle and sharply focused throughout. Sophisticated use of form, tone and register.

Mark = 12, Level 5.

A05

Manipulates complex ideas successfully using extensive vocabulary. There is precisely used punctuation with a range of accurately used sentence structures.

Mark = 8, Level 4.



Note how the candidate has covered all the bullet points in detail and maintained the sophisticated form, tone and register throughout the response.

This is an example of a less successful response to Question 8.

Every second of every day, people are communicating. The methods and purposes change, but it is always happening. Sometimes, though, misunderstandings can occur. While it happens for any reason, it is generally unclear written communication.

The problems caused by mistakes in written communication can vary, but some are quite common. The common problems include spelling errors that change the meaning of a sentence, changing the order of words, and using the wrong words (for example, there and they're) and more. These problems can lead to more major ones, in some cases.

The more recent advances in modern technology are helping a great deal with the problems. For example, predictive text learns what words and phrases a person uses most and automatically adds them in similar texts. Also, there are types of error-checking software. They compare text to a built-in database and tell the user if it is correct or not.

The reason why this is important is because good grammar matters. This is because good grammar is a sign of intelligence. Usually, people write resumes, when they want to find a job, so one of the first things a future employer sees is the applicant's grammar.

In conclusion, good grammar is important, but can be compromised by writing mistakes. The mistakes are mitigated by error-checking software.



A01

There are a reasonable number of relevant points with the bullets points used appropriately, but the response lacks the development to be secure.

Mark = 5, Level 3

A04

Clearly communicates, with a clear sense of purpose. Straightforward use of form, tone and register.

Mark = 5, Level 3

A05

Expresses and orders information and ideas. Some varied vocabulary and some control of a range of punctuation.

Mark = 5, Level 3



This response could have been improved by having a wider range of ideas used from the two texts and using a stronger register.

Question 9

AO4

Examiners commented positively on some candidates' responses to this question. However some examiners thought that some candidates struggled to develop and sustain a response. The topic 'English has changed greatly as a result of the internet and modern technology.' was accessible and many candidates who chose this question had clear and informed opinions. There was some occasional misreading of the task eg how English is used on the internet; how has English changed the internet; how the internet has changed England.

Most candidates were able to communicate their ideas successfully and understood the nature of discursive writing. Most agreed with the statement and many discussed it appropriately writing about, for example, how the English language has constantly changed overtime, or how standard, traditional English will always be very important in the world of work and that modern 'text speak' etc. was inappropriate in that context.

More successful candidates adopted a persuasive and argumentative tone and had clearly been prepared to write this kind of response. They wrote in an engaging and lively manner, offering strong arguments with balance where they considered both sides of the discussion before completing with a strong conclusion. These responses generally took a broader view and looked at the positives and negatives of change and generally came to a more balanced judgement. They often pointed out that English had been evolving for thousands of years and that changes caused by technology were just a continuation of this process. It was clear that these candidates had been fully prepared in meeting the demands of this type of task and had been prepared with a range of appropriate skills to tackle the task in a focused and sustained manner. They often demonstrated a range of appropriate techniques for an argument and used them to skilfully craft their responses. There was a good range of rhetorical techniques present in the arguments and the purposeful inclusion of techniques such as the use of questions, expert opinion, anecdotes and listing, designed to convince the reader of their own side of the argument.

Weaker candidates had problems with both maintaining a clear argument and structuring their responses. Weaker candidates sometimes struggled to find enough ideas and these responses became repetitive or were brief. They often relied heavily on the texts for their ideas.

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

AO5

Most candidates were able to develop and express information and ideas in suitable way with the use of appropriate structural and grammatical features. They used a range of correctly spelt vocabulary and were able to punctuate with some control.

More successful responses had full control of spelling, punctuation and grammar. These candidates were able to use a wide range of structural devices together with accurate spelling of a wide vocabulary and correctly using a wide range of punctuation.

Less successful responses were often repetitive with their word choices and sentence structures and had many errors. They had poor language controls and weak paragraphing.

There was evidence of good spelling and reasonably accurate punctuation but most examiners commented on candidates who had problems with grammar and expression such as problems with tenses and sentence structure including missing words. Examiners commented on the lack of paragraphing in many responses. These problems limited the effectiveness of the communication.

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

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

This is a very successful response to Question 9.

It's the 18th century. You; a writer, ~~sits down~~ sit down at your desk. The English countryside ~~glimmers~~ glimmers with bright yellow^{sun} and meadows of green grass out of the ~~the~~ window. You pick up your ~~a~~ quill and scratch the parchment with joy. You take inspiration from the world around you, and ~~these~~ literary masters that came before you. You pour the contents of your heart onto the page, smiling to yourself as you recall fond memories.

But in ~~the~~ reality, it's the 21st century. The world out the window is merely grey, with the sounds of angry honking cars and sirens irritatingly loud. The scene is anything but inspirational. Your macbook has frozen for the eighth time today, and ~~when~~ when it finally starts working properly, it is simply a white screen. You hang your head in your hands as your mind is flooded with annoying thoughts. All you need is a little time to write. Yet you simply cannot switch off, because ^{you're} ~~you're~~ bombarded with notifications. There really is no hope.

This is what English has become in the 21st century.
No inspiration, no room for imagination. ~~No~~ No ability to think for yourself, because technology has replaced any ~~the~~ abilities you may have had in proof-reading with the ugly red squiggly line of the classic Microsoft Word. ~~an~~ You no longer need to think for yourself anymore.

There are no green meadows or yellow sunshine to ^{take} ~~be~~ inspiration. They have been replaced with grey buildings and industrial estates. The ^{grey} clouds frown in sadness above it. How is one possibly supposed to produce anything worthy of publication, at times like this?

Some, although few would argue the opposite. They would

say that English has become more valued than ever; ~~because~~ It is enjoyed more, and seen as 'vintage.' But the reason why writing has become more valued is because it's so rare! True, passionate literacy has been wiped away by the ~~worried~~ worries of the ~~work~~ world. Demolished by the demolition of meadows, destroyed by deforestation. Climate change, among others is one of these worries. People have started reducing their book and paper usage as a result. But this simply removes the joy of writing and reading. Receiving a handwritten letter ~~to~~ is one of the most personal of gifts, and so is writing it. Why be forced to remove this passion? All because of a problem that humans have created. Because of ~~their~~ their destruction with the use of ~~their~~ technology, the hope of returning to 'the way things were' is simply out of reach. The forest fires will eventually fizzle out, leaving a tree-less, paper-less ~~world~~, joy-less world behind. Who knows how much time we have left?



A04

In an engaging response, the candidate communicates in a perceptive and subtle manner, almost always sharply focused on the task even though they take an original, unusual approach. There is sophisticated use of form and structure.

Mark = 19, Level 5

A05

Complex ideas are manipulated with a range of grammatical features. Vocabulary is extensive and strategically used, with punctuation accurately used to aid emphasis.

Mark = 10, Level 5



Note the imaginative interpretation of the title that is always fully focused. The opening sentence immediately grabs the reader's attention. Note the wide variety of sentence structures used.

Question 10

Question 10 was the most popular question.

AO4

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

Candidates interpreted this question in a wide range of ways. The popular themes for the message were challenges, holidays, bullying, sick parents/relatives/friends, messages about education/results or being selected for a top football/sports team. Often the plot included receiving an ominous text or social media message but messages also came in bottles, letters and painted on doors, written on beaches and hoardings, signed and anonymous. Some examiners commented that if there was a common denominator, it was that the message was nearly always bad news for someone. A number of candidates successfully used personal experiences to inform their narrative. Occasionally candidates were over-ambitious, producing extremely long responses with complicated plot-lines. Often candidates chose to reveal the message at the end of their writing and, whilst in some cases this appeared to be a deliberate strategy, examiners commented that sometimes it seemed to be an afterthought.

Examiners did comment on a number of unnecessarily gruesome and gory stories. It was felt that these were perhaps influenced by themes on contemporary television, films and computer games. These unpleasant plots sometimes struggled to maintain focus on the title.

Most candidates were able to communicate with clarity, with an appropriate sense of purpose and some apt use of form, tone and register. They were able to create a narrative with a central plot device and more or less credible characters who moved through a set-up into a conflict which was resolved (or not) in the final paragraph. They tried to bring the qualities of surprise, drama, suspense and excitement to their narratives. There were attempts to include flashbacks, dialogue, character and setting descriptions and techniques that would create suspense, pathos and tension.

More successful candidates were able to write entertaining and engaging responses that sharply focused on the task. These responses had fewer characters which were well-developed and a well-thought-out plot, designed to entertain. They were able to use figurative techniques and wide-ranging vocabulary judiciously to achieve particular effects for their reader. Often they had a focus and confidence which was convincing and enjoyable to read. They were able to compel the reader to be entertained or thrilled. The best responses were tightly plotted and covered a limited timescale.

Less successful candidates lacked development of ideas or the ability to maintain a narrative or tended to write basic narratives without any great awareness of form, tone and register. They struggled with clarity, with over-complicated or muddled storylines and weak endings that were not closely related to the events that had unfolded. They used plots from films, television series and computer games which were barely adapted for purpose. Their responses were often lengthy with repetitive and unfocused plot ideas. Sometimes the message was added at the end of the story with little sign-posting making the response to the title tenuous.

A few examiners commented on first-person narratives with cliff-hanger endings for dramatic effect that were unfortunately premised on an impossible conclusion: "... and then I died" or endings with it all being a dream.

Examiners commented that candidates were rarely well-served by writing very long responses.

Centres need to ensure candidates have a secure understanding of narrative techniques and the ability to develop a coherent personal response without relying on plots from other sources.

AO5

Most candidates were able to develop and express information and ideas in a suitable way with the use of appropriate structural and grammatical features. They used a range of correctly spelt vocabulary and were able to punctuate with some control. Most candidates were able to communicate successfully even if there were errors.

More successful responses had full control of spelling, punctuation and grammar. They were able to use a wider range of structural devices to shape their writing, employing an increasingly wide vocabulary, with spelling invariably correct and punctuation used for effect.

Less successful candidates had difficulty communicating clearly. They often did not paragraph at all and used basic sentence structures which became quite repetitive. These responses tended to use fairly basic vocabulary, and attempts to use more varied and selective vocabulary were sometimes impaired by misunderstanding the meaning of words. There were often numerous errors of spelling, punctuation and grammar.

There was evidence of good spelling and reasonably accurate punctuation but most examiners commented on candidates who had problems with grammar and expression such as problems with tenses and sentence structure, including missing words. Some examiners also commented on the use of over-ambitious vocabulary which was not effective or appropriate. Some examiners noted that the use of paragraphing was an issue for some candidates. These problems limited the effectiveness of the communication.

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

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

This is the whole of a response to Question 10.

The Message

On a dark, stormy Tuesday night, Jeff was dozing off on the silky smooth sofa, when he was abruptly woken by a startling vibration from his phone. He jolted awake and slowly picked up his phone. He unlocked it to reveal the messages from a number he didn't know or recognise. They read "Tonight. 11pm. Super Shop" and "Be there."

Jeff repeatedly read the messages as questions swirled through his head. "Why does this person want to meet me?" "What could they want from me?" At 10:30pm, Jeff left his house and slowly began to walk to the SuperShop. After what felt like 200 years, Jeff began to approach the shop with caution. He looked at the shop and was confused, all he could see were the blindingly bright lights of the lamp posts and shop's windows. Suddenly, all light vanished. Jeff's heart began to beat so fast, it became like a pounding drum. He was shaking with pure fear.

Suddenly, a man, covered by a thick black cloak, appeared. His huge, blinking yellow eyes were like a car's headlights staring into Jeff's eyes. Jeff was paralysed with fear. The mysterious man slowly raised his cloaked arm to reveal a small, blue envelope. Jeff slowly took it, and as he did, the man vanished. Jeff was drenched in sweat and slowly began to drift home. The image of the mysterious man wouldn't leave Jeff's mind, the trip home felt much different than the trip to the SuperShop.

As Jeff got home, he placed the envelope on his rough, wooden table and simply stared at it. It paralysed him and was mesmerising, although it filled him with fear to even consider opening it. He grabbed it, stroked into the living room, and threw it on his fire. He thought

with that, the strange story would be over. He closed his eyes and took a long, deep breath. He slowly opened his eyes and glanced at the fire and noticed the letter wasn't burning.

Jeff, shocked and terrified, tried to run as fast as he could, but the letter flew up and chased him, no matter how fast he ran, the ~~set~~ envelope always caught up. Eventually, in a eerie, dark forest, Jeff ~~stopped~~ stopped to catch his breath, as the letter sailed into his hand. He gave up, and finally unwrapped it to reveal...

a Christmas card. Jeff's fear melted away and he began to walk home, with a cheerful spirit.

The end.



AO4

Communication is clear with a clear sense of purpose and an appropriate form, tone and register. However, there are some disjointed sections and too many questions without clear explanations on the final page. This keeps AO4 in Level 3.

Mark = 12, Level 3

AO5

There is development and connection of appropriate information and events. The candidate uses a wide, selective vocabulary with generally accurate and varied punctuation.

Mark = 7, Level 4



Make sure that you connect all the ideas in your narrative. Make sure your endings are well-thought out.

Question 11

AO4

Some candidates produced well-written responses that were fully focused on the task of describing a gift that meant the most to them. However examiners also commented that a significant number of candidates did not focus on the descriptive nature of the task and wrote narrative responses focusing on re-telling the events rather than describing the gift itself.

Candidates chose a range of gifts to describe. These included descriptions of pets, smart phones, jewellery, cars and family heirlooms as well as more abstract gifts such as religion, life, love and friendship.

Most responses focused at least partially on description, either of the gift itself or why it meant so much, although examiners commented that many responses were narrative-based, with pockets of description. They told the story of how they received the gift with little focus on describing. The description tended to focus on how they got the gift, where they were and the people around them rather than the gift itself. Whilst back stories were often interesting, if too little time was given to describing the gift and exploring why it meant so much to the candidate, the response became less focused.

Stronger candidates had been prepared for the requirements of this response and more successful responses often demonstrated a focused and sustained attempt at crafting a piece of description. These candidates were able to stay sharply focused on the gift itself, describing it in detail and looking at the reasons why it was significant. They were often impressive with their use of imagery, symbolism and effective opening paragraphs.

Less successful responses were often pedestrian, undeveloped or unclear. These responses often struggled to describe the gift and instead told the story of the gift and how they got it and tended to become personal accounts and narratives without much description. There were some who described the joys of a birthday or Christmas Day and the gift only appeared at the end and was not described in detail.

AO5

Most candidates were able to make some attempt to select words, sentence structures and punctuation to suit the task. Most candidates were able to express and order information and ideas with some correctly spelt vocabulary, some control of punctuation and some accurate paragraphing. Most candidates were able to communicate successfully even if there were errors. Word choices showed some adaptation to the topic being written about.

Stronger candidates were selective with their vocabulary choices and used a range of appropriate linguistic techniques, eg metaphors, similes and alliteration to communicate their ideas. Vocabulary range was evident across their responses and well-chosen for the task they had selected. These candidates wrote fluently with a range of structural devices and developed descriptive and imaginative vocabulary. Better responses had full control of spelling, punctuation and grammar.

Less successful candidates were often repetitive with their word choices and in particular with their sentence structures. They often used very basic sentences or did not punctuate sentences. These candidates had poor paragraphing, limited vocabulary and poor grammar.

There was some evidence of good spelling and reasonably accurate punctuation but most examiners commented on the number of candidates who had problems with grammar and expression such as problems with tenses and sentence structure, including missing words. Some examiners also commented on the use of over-ambitious vocabulary which was not effective or appropriate. Some examiners noted that the use of paragraphing was an issue for some candidates. These problems limited the effectiveness of the communication.

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

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

This is an example of a response to Question 11.

It was a gift given to me for Christmas by a friend back in 2020. ^{*} It was a small painted pebble. It fit snugly in the palm of my hand, ^{and} it was painted to look like a small strawberry. It was a lovely deep red with yellow dots to represent its seeds and a few green painted leaves at the top of the pebble. It was beautiful. It came with a note from them. It was short and simple: "You are an amazing and beautiful individual, and I wish you could see that like I do. Like everyone does." It was so heartwarming to feel truly appreciated by another person; especially them. Despite its size and simplicity, it was still my favourite gift that year. I soon put it in a wire necklace cage around my neck; it fit perfectly. Still to this day I feel all fuzzy everytime I look at it. I remember that day and how loved I felt by them. ^{*} I hadn't asked for anything that year, so it was a surprise to receive something so heartfelt and thoughtful.

The memories attached to that small little pebble will never leave me and it has a special place in my heart. Always.

★ Holding that pebble feels like ~~holding~~ holding a bright beam of light in a dark room. It feels warm, comforting and welcoming.



A04

Whilst the response is relatively brief, it communicates clearly. There is clear sense of purpose and straightforward use of form, tone and register.

Mark = 10, Level 3

A05

There is accurate, varied vocabulary and a range of punctuation used for clarity. There is some development and connection of appropriate information. The lack of paragraphing means that this remains in Level 3.

Mark = 6, Level 3



Try to develop your ideas fully.

Remember to use paragraphs to help organise your writing.

Paper Summary

Based on their performance on this paper, candidates are offered the following advice:

Most successful candidates:

- read the texts with insight and engagement
- were able to explore language and structure and show how these are used by writers to achieve effects in response to Questions 3 and 6
- were able to select a wide range of comparisons and explore the writers' ideas and perspectives in response to Question 7
- were able to select and adapt relevant information from the texts for Question 8
- wrote clearly with a good sense of audience and purpose in an appropriate register in response to Question 8
- engaged the reader with creative writing that was clearly expressed, well developed and controlled (Questions 9, 10 and 11)
- used ambitious vocabulary
- wrote with accuracy in spelling, punctuation and grammar.

Least successful candidates:

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

Grade boundaries

Grade boundaries for this, and all other papers, can be found on the website on this link:

<https://qualifications.pearson.com/en/support/support-topics/results-certification/grade-boundaries.html>

