

GCSE

English/English Language

ENG1F Understanding and producing non-fiction texts
Report on the Examination

4700/4705
November 2015

Version: 0.1

Further copies of this Report are available from aqa.org.uk

Copyright © 2015 AQA and its licensors. All rights reserved.

AQA retains the copyright on all its publications. However, registered schools/colleges for AQA are permitted to copy material from this booklet for their own internal use, with the following important exception: AQA cannot give permission to schools/colleges to photocopy any material that is acknowledged to a third party even for internal use within the centre.

General Comments

This was an extremely small series and represented the linear re-sit, with an entry of almost 7,000. As such, it was marked by a small, experienced team. Just like last year, there was a noticeable divide in the cohort sitting the examination, which suggests many centres perhaps did not consult the report from last time and act on it. Many candidates had clearly benefitted from some very good teaching in the first half of the autumn term and handled the paper and its demands extremely well – showing clear skills and applying sensible methods and planning to the questions. Other candidates, however, appeared to be just ‘having another go’ at the exam and seemed to have had, or done, no preparation at all. It is costly for centres to make exam entries and it is advisable for all re-sit candidates to have some targeted teaching and revision. In this exam, for example, there were 98 candidates who did not reach the F/G borderline mark. Surely, they would have clearly benefitted from having another year’s study before sitting the exam again.

Question 1a

Most candidates responded well to this task and answered correctly - with 86% gaining the full four marks. In a re-sit exam, however, where the emphasis is on improvement, it is still worrying that fourteen per cent of the candidates could not list four things correctly from the text. This was, in almost all cases, due to careless reading – the most obvious mistake being to write down any four things from the text rather than focus on the shopping project itself or copying out incorrectly from the text or making incomplete statements such as ‘Jordan collected 470’, which does not make complete sense in the context of the task. .

Question 1b

There seem to be very many routes to gaining two marks for this question and this time 76% of candidates did just that. They made statements about Jordan’s reasons, they made supported statements about Jordan’s reasons, they made statements and an occasional inference. However, only a very small proportion (5%) of candidates seemed familiar enough with the mark scheme to realise they needed to make more than one supported statement and more than one inference and thereby achieved full marks. Some candidates had helpfully noted ‘P.E.E x2’ by the question but then didn’t do that in the actual answer. The candidates who highlighted the focus of the task in their response – beginning sentences with ‘One/Another of Jordan’s reasons was that he ...’ tended to do better and stay on track, but to say this is a basic comprehension task, it’s worrying the number of candidates who just do not have a basic method at their fingertips.

Question 2

This was an improvement on previous years (though exactly the same method is required as for 1b, so it was interesting that performance was much weaker on 1b). Only 2% of candidates remained in Band 1, with the vast majority scoring 5 out of 8. Here we tended to see more supported statements and candidates had no difficulty on the whole, in identifying the problems that Jack Monroe faced – most were supported appropriately. Some inferences were simple paraphrase of either the statement or the quotation, some a very simple engagement, but many candidates were able to latch on to Jack’s determination to improve her situation, her consideration for her son, her resilience. There were many thoughtful inferences made here. 11.6% of candidates reached Band 3 this time.

As has been mentioned previously, the lessons to be drawn from Q1a, 1b and 2 remain the same each series:

- encourage candidates to read the question carefully as well as the text.
- highlight the focus of the task and refer to it in each new point made in 1b and 2

- use the mark scheme with candidates to ensure they know precisely what to demonstrate for Band 3 marks and have a clear method for basic comprehension – make a statement, support it, make an inference from it.

Question 3

The charity letter worked very well for most candidates with a mark of 6 out of 12 being the mean mark. This showed that candidates were able to identify a number of the language features used to persuade and inform in the text and provide examples of them. However, the accompanying effect work remained generalised and simple. It was really the ability to comment on effect that was the discriminator in this task. However, a very promising 16.7% of candidates were able to make more than one sensible comment on effect and achieved 8 out of 12.

This question, along with Q4 really showed which candidates had been thoroughly prepared to re-sit and which had not. A very worrying 14% of candidates did not progress beyond Band 1 and we observed a number of errors which have not been seen in this quantity since some of the very first exams of the specification: candidates writing about presentation features for Q3, candidates mixing up language and presentation, candidates writing a summary of the content, candidates writing their own opinion of homelessness.

Question 4

Realistically, weaker candidates wrote far too much, achieving all of their marks within the first page and then just going on to do more of the same on more and more features.

There were interesting visual images on all three texts and some contrasting and effective use of colours. However, weaker candidates still opted to write about bold headings, white backgrounds and paragraphs. Selecting a couple of the most interesting and obvious features to write about in reasonable detail really is the key to success in this question. Some candidates have now got into the good habit of providing examples, by employing a ‘say what you see’ method and this takes them up to 5 marks. Some candidates were also capable of comparing quite well. Many candidates this time, worked very hard on their comments on effect, making some very sensible suggestions as to the image of Jordan in the supermarket and the image of Harvey and his dog in the charity letter. There were also some thoughtful ideas about the use of bright, cheerful colours in source 1 and the greys of the essential items pile in source 3. The comments on the house logo of the charity text were nicely done, with many candidates commenting on its welcoming orange colour representing warmth and its open door. This led to a very healthy 21.8% of candidates achieving 7 marks or above, which was very pleasing indeed.

Question 5

Question 5 was generally enjoyed by most candidates, and the task lent itself to a more controlled, concise response from many, helping them with their timing for Q6. 15% of candidates achieved a mark of 8 or more for content – the vast majority achieving marks in the region of 6 or 7. Most candidates achieved the correct register for the audience. Some misread the task and invited students to pay to attend a party in college to raise funds for a homeless charity. Others tended more towards persuasion than information. Stronger candidates had a firm focus on the task and a firm focus on informing – providing a whole range of information about times, places, what to bring, what was needed, how to get involved. They also had a strong ideas as to what would be appropriate and had clearly carefully considered the St Mungo’s leaflet before writing.

Most responses had a reasonable structure with generally accurate spelling and punctuation in the main. Some candidates who struggled with agreement would have benefitted from another years teaching before tackling the paper.

Question 6

This question worked well for very many candidates and many examiners commented on how pleasant this question was to mark – with some purposeful speeches, which had just the right tone and register and could have been real. Stronger answers were mature, sensible and had a range of interesting ideas about supporting the local community. We saw sport themed speeches, requests for help to save community centres, ideas about tidying local parks and building gardens for local primary schools. 7.4% of candidates made it into Band 3 on Q6 – less than last year - though a healthy 29.8 were performing at the top of Band 2. Weaker responses tended towards the generic and did not attempt to unpack the phrase ‘community activities’ at all, and repeated it all the way through their response as though it was a ‘given’ as to what these activities would be.

One worrying statistic here is that 2.3% of candidates did not attempt this 24 mark question, suggesting some clear work is needed on timing and technique for some before they attempt the paper again.

Technical skills were, on the whole, good for many candidates. Whilst sentence demarcation and issues with agreement or Standard English can be a problem for some, the vast majority were able to use varied sentences in the persuasive task. Spelling was generally good, with most candidates showing they could spell at least some complex words. Many candidates writing at foundation level managed to write whole pieces with only the occasional slip in spelling, which is brilliant. The apostrophe is still alive and well and often to be found in the correct place.

Overall, there should be some well-deserved improved grades for many candidates in this series, who should be very proud of their progress and success. Others would benefit from another academic year’s firm teaching on basic comprehension and analytical skills, as well as developing skills in the planning of writing tasks.

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

Grade boundaries and cumulative percentage grades are available on the [Results Statistics](#) page of the AQA Website.

Converting Marks into UMS marks

Convert raw marks into Uniform Mark Scale (UMS) marks by using the link below.

[UMS conversion calculator](#)