



# Examiners' Report Principal Examiner Feedback

November 2024

Pearson Edexcel GCSE  
In English Language (9-1)  
1EN0 02: Non-fiction and Transactional  
Writing

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This report will provide exemplification of candidates' work, together with tips and comments, for Questions 1-9 of Paper 2 of the Pearson Edexcel Level 1/Level 2 GCSE in English Language (9-1). This was the November examination for 2024.

The qualification consists of three components:

Unit 1: Fiction and Imaginative Writing - 40% (examination)

Unit 2: Non-fiction and Transactional Writing - 60% (this examination)

Unit 3: Spoken Language Endorsement (non-examination assessment)

This report will focus on Unit 2: Non-fiction and Transactional Writing.

The paper is assessed through a 2 hour 5 minute examination. The total number of marks available is 96. The reading and writing sections on this paper are linked by a theme.

This focus of this component is:

### **Section A – Reading**

Study and analyse selections from a range of non-fiction texts.

This paper features two unseen non-fiction extracts from 20th- and 21st-century texts. One of these texts is literary non-fiction. The word count across the two extracts is approximately 1000 words. The minimum length of an extract will always be 300 words. The specification identifies that:

'Text types studied should include a range of non-fiction forms, such as journalism (for example articles and reviews), speeches, journals and reference book extracts. Text types should also include literary nonfiction, such as selections from autobiography, letters, obituaries and travel writing.'

The questions are on Text 1 (Questions 1 to 3) and Text 2 (Questions 4 to 6). Question 7 is on both texts.

There is a mixture of short and extended response questions on the extracts. Candidates' ability to synthesise across two texts will be assessed in a separate question, 7a, which will focus on similarities in the texts. The final question of this section, 7b, requires candidates to compare the writers' ideas and perspectives and how they are presented in the two texts.

### **Section B – Transactional Writing**

This section allows students to explore and develop transactional writing skills, for example letters, articles, reports.

There are two writing tasks, linked by a theme to the reading extracts. Candidates pick one question to respond to. It is possible for the same form (for example a letter, an article) to be present on both tasks in the same paper but with a different focus and/or audience.

For this series, the two tasks were to write the text for a speech about a happy memory or an article for a newspaper with the title 'Packing the Perfect Picnic'.

The Assessment Objectives for this paper are:

### **Section A: Reading**

AO1:

- Identify and interpret explicit and implicit information and ideas (Q1, Q2, Q4, Q5)
- Select and synthesise evidence from different texts (Q7a)

AO2: Explain, comment on and analyse how writers use language and structure to achieve effects and influence readers, using relevant subject terminology to support their views (Q3)

AO3: Compare writers' ideas and perspectives, as well as how these are conveyed, across two or more texts (Q7b)

AO4: Evaluate texts critically and support this with appropriate textual references (Q6)

### **Section B: Writing**

AO5:

Communicate clearly, effectively and imaginatively, selecting and adapting tone, style and register for different forms, purposes and audiences (Q8 or Q9)  
Organise information and ideas, using structural and grammatical features to support coherence and cohesion of texts (Q8 or Q9)

AO6: Candidates must use a range of vocabulary and sentence structures for clarity, purpose and effect, with accurate spelling and punctuation (Q8 or Q9)

### **General overview**

It was clear that candidates were all able to respond to unseen 20th- and 21<sup>st</sup> century non-fiction in the examination. They were able to read substantial pieces of writing, including whole and extended texts that make significant demands in terms of content, structure and the quality of the language. Throughout the qualification, candidates had been prepared very well and all had, at different levels, developed the skills of interpretation, analysis and evaluation.

It was also clear that candidates used what they learned about different text types to support their transactional writing, which is advised in the specification. It was pleasing to see that candidates had been given the opportunity to practise a range of non-fiction writing techniques and planning and proofreading skills, with many using the planning box offered for the writing section.

The responses of candidates had many positive features. Examiners were impressed by:

- the level of knowledge of and engagement with the texts

- completion of the questions in the paper in the time available and the attempt to cover of all of the assessment objectives
- the inclusion of judgements for AO4
- the ability to make at least some comparisons for AO3
- writing that showed a range of ideas and suitable tone, style and register for audience and purpose
- the use of a variety of vocabulary and sentence structures in writing.

Less successful responses:

- struggled to comment on, explain or analyse structural points in terms of their effect on readers in AO2 responses
- failed to support points using appropriate textual evidence, or used textual evidence that did not support the point being made
- did not use the correct text for their extended responses to Questions 3 and 6
- did not answer or lacked focus on the question in Question 7. Parts a) and b) both ask a specific question, not just similarities between the texts and ideas and perspectives broadly
- lacked organisation in their writing
- connected but did not develop ideas enough in their writing
- lacked accurate spelling and secure control of punctuation.

Examiners reported that candidates engaged with the texts and that they appeared to engage with the writing questions and had varied ideas and perspectives.

Overall, examiners were very impressed with the performance of candidates and with the range of responses they saw – responses were placed in all levels of the mark scheme. As Principal Examiner for this paper it is always a privilege to read responses and to see the engagement, interest and hard work in the responses candidates complete.

### **Question 1**

The majority of candidates were able to achieve the full two marks in this question.

The questions are designed with ramping in mind and to encourage achievement and this question in the main showed the confidence of candidates in reading the lines given and finding the information.

This question requires understanding of AO1: 'identify and interpret'. The important advice for this question is to read what is being asked for and select the correct information.

All of the answers from the mark scheme were seen to varying degrees.

### **Question 2**

The majority of candidates achieved two marks in this question and there were a range of responses to choose from.

This question requires understanding of both parts of bullet 1 of AO1: 'identify and interpret'. For this reason, responses that interpreted information from the lines and put this into their own words were acceptable. The question makes it clear that either quotations or own words are acceptable. All of the examples given in the mark scheme were seen in responses, either as quotations or own words, with the most popular being 'spent many days preparing the food', they do most of the packing the night before and gathering things to take with them.

### **Question 3**

This question discriminates well on this paper. The mark scheme for this question indicates that 'The mark awarded cannot progress beyond the top of Level 2 if only language OR structure has been considered.' It was pleasing to see that the majority of responses had considered both language and structure and that candidates had been encouraged to be aware of structural points. The majority of candidates were able to pick out both elements of language and structure in the text using well-selected quotation/references.

The minimal responses where language AND structure were not dealt with were a good discriminator, as was the way the effects of language/structure had been explained. The best responses showed detailed and confident analysis of language and structure, weaving this with how techniques interested and engaged the reader. These responses were specific about how effects were created, and the analysis was closely linked to the evidence used. The most successful responses think about the type of text the extract is from and how this is designed and created for the reader it is written to or for.

Generally, candidates were able to identify and often explain features of the writer's use of language. Most responses talked about the journey or size of the family ('half a train' / 'fleet of cars'), wealth (servants) and the nature of the Himalayas. The use of listing was commented upon in many of the responses.

Some candidates identified and explained the use of metaphors, oxymoron and alliteration with a degree of success.

More successful responses were able to comment on structure because of the obvious examples of listing of people transport and foods. Those who supported that point with lengthy quotes of said lists did not always develop points to move to exploration, for example of how the sheer scale of the amount of food showed either the wealth of Jaffrey's family or her own interest in the topic. Language comments were mostly restricted to the adjectives describing the landscape although many responses noted the metaphor of the slit almonds.

Less successful responses made were quite generic comments and explanations. Quite a few students made generic points related to paragraphing or good words with no specific reference to the text.

Structure remains a good discriminator in this question, with some very vague and generalised comments about listing and sentence length.

#### **Question 4**

Almost all candidates achieved the mark available for this question and there were a range of points in the mark scheme to choose from. In the rare cases where marks were not awarded it was due to incorrect lines being used or the question not being answered at all. It was pleasing to see candidates being encouraged to be succinct in their answers where only one mark is available.

#### **Question 5**

Again, the majority of candidates achieved the mark available for this question and there were a range of points in the mark scheme to choose from.

The questions are designed with ramping in mind and to encourage achievement, and this question requires understanding of both parts of bullet 1 of AO1: 'identify and interpret'. Again, it was pleasing to see candidates being succinct in their answers where only one mark is available.

#### **Question 6**

This question differentiated well, with examiners noting that candidates were able to make many at least some informed judgements about how successfully the writer shared her memories. Candidates in the mid-levels were commenting on and explaining ideas and events in the main, with straightforward opinion at the beginning and end of their responses, predominantly 'successfully', with appropriate and relevant references. The vast majority felt that the writer was successful in sharing her memories. The most successful responses used embedded quotations to support the points being made.

Many candidates took the 'SITE'/'TIES'/'SPITE' approach and this helped develop responses. Most candidates also attempted to use evaluative phrases in their responses in order to give their judgements.

Where responses were successful, they identified the methods used to communicate the power of memory, understanding the visceral and sensual image was used to convey the significance of the moments remembered. It was pleasing to see candidates using analytical verbs such as 'successfully' and 'masterfully' throughout their response, and many candidates offered a secure judgment about the text. There was a clear appreciation of the chaos and fun of the childhood memory in understanding and analysis of impressions presented in the text.

The most successful responses considered the extract in its entirety. The quality of evaluative language was a good discriminator, as was the focus on the question. The mark scheme for this question indicates that 'References to writer's techniques should only be credited at Level 2 and above if they support the critical judgement of the text.' The most successful attempted to discuss themes, events and settings, identifying food and family as themes and the unexpected arrival of relatives plus the playing in the sea as events. The best responses also identified the settings of the trip north and the beach picnic. However, in some cases, apart from stating that these were the writer's memories, some were unable to evaluate them tending to describe and comment instead of explain. The best noted the effect of the use of the present tense the listing of foods and relatives and the ideas of the senses.

The least successful responses tended to be narrative-based and tried to work chronologically through the text, making arbitrary comments about family rather than focusing on the memory itself.

Overall, candidates' responses were focused and for many, relevant points were provided. However, some responses lacked adequate development and a critical and sustained judgement. This resulted in some responses failing to achieve marks beyond Level 3, even though the choice of relevant references was fairly successful.

## **Question 7**

### **Question 7a**

Most candidates were achieving at least Level 2 for this question. The questions are designed with ramping in mind and to encourage achievement, and this question requires understanding of the second bullet point of AO1: select and synthesise.

Responses in the mid-levels offered at least two or three similarities, demonstrating clear synthesis and valid evidence. Responses at the highest levels gave a number of similarities, demonstrating detailed synthesis and appropriate and relevant evidence. Almost all responses were able to give at least one similarity, although with little synthesis or evidence. This series, as in previous series, some candidates did not read the question properly. The question is not about similarities between the texts, but similarities between the picnics.

Examiners expressed some frustration that this was not being followed by

candidates, in spite of continued advice in reports. It was possible, given that the texts are about someone's experiences, to accept some points about 'the texts', but the simplest way of achieving marks here is to find similarities linked to the question. Commenting on similarities in language used, for example 'both use similes', may not be answering the question.

Most looked at the family, journey, playing in water and food, supported by appropriate examples. In most cases, the similarities were just listed without any significant development and some candidates did not include textual evidence which hindered their ability to go into detail and gain Level 3 marks. In some cases, candidates tried to write more than was required for only 6 marks – it is important to remember how many marks are available for different parts of a question/question.

This question requires understanding of the second bullet point of AO1: select and synthesise. In a minority of cases candidates attempted to examine differences, and these differences were credited in the answers to 7b (these are marked together the online marking system).

### **Question 7b**

It was pleasing to see that in almost all of the responses marked, candidates had compared the two texts to achieve at least Level 2. The mark scheme for this question indicates that 'Responses that are unbalanced will not be able to access Level 3 or above, where explanation of writers' ideas and perspectives is required alongside a range of comparisons between texts.' It was pleasing to see that almost all responses were able to compare texts, even at a basic level.

Responses at the mid-level of the mark scheme considered a range of comparisons between the texts, with comment and explanation of writers' ideas including theme, language and/or structure. At this level, the use of references was appropriate and relevant to the points being made. Almost all candidates appeared to know that they needed to support their ideas with quotations from the texts.

The lack of focus on the question again was a problem for many candidates – there needed to be a focus on family events. This part of the question is NOT asking for a comparison of two texts. The question is very clear that ideas and perspectives are required about family events.

Most candidates that answered this question had a number of different comparisons to choose from and they engaged well with some of the less obvious similarities between the two texts. There was clear understanding of the nature of both texts demonstrated, although sometimes focus was more heavily weighted towards one text.

More successful responses looked at both texts together as opposed to doing one text and then the other, with focus on family, food, travel and location. Some stronger responses compared the relative closeness and wealth of the families with others commenting on humour in Text 2. A reasonable number of responses were able to compare the ideas of family, places, times and the way children were viewed by their families. There were interesting criticisms of the first text, for example how wealthy the family was as evidenced by the transport

they could afford and the rich range of food. Candidates felt that having servants do the preparatory work showed a cultural disregard for those not as privileged. There was misunderstanding of the fact that the 'ladies' also helped prepare – the interpretation was that this was misogynistic as the men had the 'higher jobs' of organising transport / accommodation, for example. A few noted that the Text 1 picnic was more 'formal' and the family had no choice about attending compared to the 'freer' atmosphere in Text 2. The different times and locations were relevant in the case of these texts to the discussion of cultural differences between the family events.

Less successful responses were more content-focused and lacked points about how writer's techniques were used to present the family. Responses at the lowest levels considered one or more obvious comparisons between the texts, with comment on writers' ideas. Lower-level responses which listed points sometimes achieved more 'range' but failed to develop points sufficiently. The range of comparisons, level of comment on both ideas and perspectives and the use of references was a discriminator.

## Writing

### General Comments

The writing question is the final section of the paper. Candidates are advised to spend about 45 minutes on their writing and there are 40 marks available on both papers. Considered in the overall % of the marks available on the papers, this is significant. Examiners are always impressed by candidates' writing, and by the development they are able to achieve in the time they have, their individual style and level of thought and creativity. In an examination situation and a paper of this length candidates do incredibly well to produce a response to an unseen question.

The planning box continues to be used effectively by candidates when it is used. It was pleasing to see that even at the lowest levels candidates were able to offer a basic response. They always had straightforward use of tone, style and register, with audience and purpose not always clear. At these lower levels candidates tended to express but not always connect ideas and information, with limited use of structural and grammatical features and paragraphing.

The main areas that discriminated the writing responses were:

- whether candidates could meet both parts of the first part of bullet one in the mark scheme for AO5. For example, they often expressed ideas to achieve in Level 2, but these ideas lacked the order for the second part of that bullet. In Level 3, they may have connected ideas but not developed them.
- the consideration of purpose and audience to achieve the high levels in AO5
- the success of tone, style and register in AO5
- the spelling of basic vocabulary in AO6, for example homophones, words with double consonants
- the accuracy of punctuation and use of varied punctuation in AO6, for example comma splicing, missing apostrophes, missing capital letters at the beginning of sentences, random capital letters
- the use of a range of sentence structures for AO6
- strategic use of vocabulary to achieve Level 5 in AO6 - seen where candidates really consider their reader and their message in the choice of words.

Examiners were impressed by the range and quality of responses, and noted that candidates were engaged, creating very enthusiastic, interesting and engaging responses, often using a lively tone. Examiners felt that there was a great range of responses from these questions and that where candidates thought carefully about the genre and intended audience and purpose, their writing was more secure.

There was a growing understanding of the demands of the question, and candidates generated some thoughtful responses to the stimulus.

Both questions showed candidates had the ability to style and shape their work to suit the style and tasks set.

### Overall comments on AO5:

The first bullet point in the mark scheme is where examiners go first. Has the candidate written appropriately for audience and purpose? Candidates should consider who their audience is and what they are writing to do and for, in order to create a voice that is appropriate, effective or sophisticated. What do they want to do with their writing? Do they want to shock their reader? Advise and support them? Argue a case for something? Once they are clear on this, they can ensure they sustain this voice. A lively, excitable voice can be difficult to sustain successfully throughout, and equally a straightforward tone which is essay-like and ends with 'In conclusion' can be straightforward and unsuccessful.

### Overall comments on AO6:

The responses achieving the higher AO6 marks were fluent, used paragraphs well and had a good use of a range of vocabulary as well as grammatical features and punctuation. Successful responses used a wide range of accurate and ambitious vocabulary. The most successful responses focused on variety of sentence types and punctuation for effect, using complex and simple sentences with a range of paragraph structures, used for effect, including the use of short paragraphs for impact. In the best responses there was a strong use of varied sentence structures, and an impressive level of accuracy in spelling and punctuation.

Less successful responses had frequent errors, did not use paragraphs and wrote in a manner which was hard to follow (consider the need to 'express and order ideas' in the mark scheme at least). These responses often started sentences in the same way and vocabulary was in these cases quite repetitive and simple with many spelling errors of simple words. Common issues were using language within an appropriate context, inconsistent spelling, variable punctuation, lack of paragraphing, comma splicing, lack of sentence control, absence or misuse of apostrophes, homophones (weather/whether, your/you're and there/their, in particular) and problems with capital letters.

Examiners reported that they rarely saw varied or extensive punctuation used beyond questions. There was, however, a careful focus on paragraphing, including the very effective use of single sentence paragraphs.

Handwriting remains an issue, often making it difficult to decipher what a candidate had written. Examiners will do their best to read responses, however, they cannot credit varied / selective / extensive vocabulary if they cannot read it.

## Question 8

Overall, candidates responded enthusiastically to this question, with some interesting responses that examiners felt worked well as speeches. Lots of memories were about wins in sports, such as football and boxing, or spending time with family. Others included snowboarding, fireworks night party, being away from school during lockdown, learning to row a boat, science experiments at a river, voluntary work, holidays, visiting family members, recovery from an injury, playing with family or friends, special books, films or TV shows, riding on a bike track and succeeding in a hobby. Where candidates achieved well, they adopted a lively and engaging tone, drawing on a range of rhetorical devices to share their memory with the audience.

The format of a speech was generally upheld, with deliberate features such as rhetorical questions, statistics, direct address and humour used to engage the audience. Less successful responses were not structured to include a conclusion, other than finishing their accounts with the final action of whatever event was being narrated.

One examiner noted:

'There were some fabulous responses to this writing task showing an in depth understanding of what constitutes a happy memory, whether that be a specific and short occasion, or a lengthier build up to an important event.'

Many candidates gave a synopsis of the background to their happy memory, whilst others focused on the event or memory itself throughout their response. Some of the more successful responses described the people involved, the activity or event and aspects of the environment with some detail and clarity. Most candidates considered the positives of the happy memory, but not all considered the negative aspects. A few candidates only considered the negative aspects and how these spoiled the happy memory which seemed somewhat contradictory.

Where responses were not as successful, they tended to be brief responses with little focus on the purpose or audience, instead just briefly commenting on a happy moment. They also tended to be straightforward and informative in tone and did not pay purposeful attention to the crafting of their speech to include rhetorical techniques.

## Question 9

Most effective responses effectively engaged with their audience and related anecdotes as part of their writing about picnics that were successful or unsuccessful.

The candidates had some excellent ideas about packing for picnics and most used appropriate conventions. Where responses were successful, they thought carefully about the benefits of taking part in a picnic and worked to make this personal to their readers, taking a lively and supportive tone. There was a great deal of information about what to pack for a picnic, the importance of picking the perfect spot and consideration of who to go with and what can be done beyond the actual picnic itself.

The less successful responses were more narrative responses about picnics. The bullet points were usually followed and enabled candidates to organise their answers. Some candidates were able to introduce a degree of humour and were able to adopt some of the techniques used in the texts such as listing. As with Question 8, less successful responses did not have a clear conclusion and answers often ended simply with the final item to pack for the picnic. Some were successful in writing humorously about the need to cater for various awkward family members.

A few candidates presented this as a narrative account, rather than transactional writing, but they did this quite successfully by imagining themselves, or a fictional character, having a wonderful day out with family or friends for a picnic. Some of the more successful responses considered all three bullets with careful consideration of each. Essentials to take on a picnic included both food related items (utensils, food, drink, cooker, barbecue, cooler, balanced diet) and other essential equipment (ball, frisbee, swimsuit, suncream, hat, camera). The most popular destinations were a park, by a lake or river, seaside, on a hill, in the garden or in a field. Advice included consideration of transport, clothing, allergies, pets, checking the weather, order of packing to avoid squashed food, checking the tides and who best to go with.

One examiner noted:

'I enjoyed reading these articles. The responses that did well thought carefully about the tone – I read some excellent articles offering advice on having a picnic for a first date – both humorous (at times) and informative.'

## Paper Summary

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

- For short-answer Questions 1,2,4 and 5 ensure that you are responding briefly and selecting information, not just writing out a section. Highlight the relevant lines in your source booklet and read the question carefully. Ensure you answer on the correct text as well as the correct lines.
- For Question 3, it can be tempting to look out for the usual features of language (alliteration, personification, simile, metaphor) and structure (lists, repetition, short sentences, questions). These can be commented on well. The most successful responses, however, think about the type of text the extract is from, and how this is designed and created for the reader it is written to or for.
- In those questions where reference to the whole extract is needed, it is important to consider what references you will use and consider what examples are most significant. Discriminating references are seen where you pick out specific examples across the extract that link to your points, not just where you comment on every feature seen.
- In Questions 3 and 6, make sure you are using the correct text from the Source Booklet. Question 3 is on Text 1 and Question 6 is on Text 2.
- For question 7a, always comment on similarities. You can comment on differences in 7b. There are only 6 marks for 7a, so be brief and succinct here.
- In 7b, link comparisons back to the ideas of the writers and their perspectives on the question focus.
- When you are writing, always think about your reader, what ideas you want them to understand and how you want them to react at different parts of your writing; then choose the most useful words, phrases or techniques available to you to achieve those effects. Think about 'how do you want your reader to feel?' and 'how will you achieve this?' to encourage more conscious crafting of writing.
- Plan your writing using the planning box, even just briefly. Think carefully about how you will begin to write so that it is engaging for your reader from the very start. As you begin to write, know where you will end. This will help you to write in a manner that is cohesive and coherent for your reader. If you start presenting an idea, make sure you are developing it.
- Take care throughout with accuracy: spelling, punctuation and grammar.
- Focus on timing during the examination and use the number of marks and space available in the answer booklet for each question as an indication of how long you should spend answering each question. Consider the advice that 'sometimes less is more'.
- Make sure you use the correct space for your answer in the answer booklet. If you need additional space, use an additional sheet, rather than any un-used pages in the answer booklet.
- Take care with handwriting. Examiners will do their best to read responses, however, they cannot credit your use of varied/selective/extensive vocabulary if they cannot read it.

