



General Certificate of Education

English Language 5706 *Specification B*

ENB3 **Original Writing**

Report on the Examination *2007 examination - January series*

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Once again it is pleasing to be able to report that the majority of centres are again making clear and accurate assessments and are helping candidates to fulfil their potential by directing them towards suitable tasks. It is, however, important to temper these remarks with the caveat that the entry for the January series, as ever, is somewhat atypical as the majority of centres use this as an opportunity for limited numbers of candidates to attempt to improve grades achieved in the summer series, while a small but increasing number choose to enter an entire cohort after only a term of studying at AS level. Both these factors, inevitably, have an effect on the nature and quality of folders seen by the moderating team and so generalisations made about outcomes must be seen in this context.

These issues notwithstanding, the formula for success at ENB3 still applies:

- the tasks undertaken should be clearly differentiated in terms of purpose, genre and audience
- the tasks should have a real or convincing context
- the final submissions should be carefully proof read and presented helpfully to ensure ease of moderation
- the opportunities afforded to candidates to write originally should not be restricted by tasks which are dependent on the writing of others, or are of a formulaic nature
- commentaries should select the significant discourse areas of a text, and should present comment in an ordered form, supporting points made with expanded comment or references to the text as appropriate, demonstrating a suitable level of awareness of relevant linguistic frameworks
- teachers should form a partnership with their centres' moderators by ensuring that they make them aware how the final assessments were reached, via their comments on the Candidate Record Forms (cover sheets)
- final assessments should be fine-tuned by taking full account of the standards laid down in agreement trial texts.

Centres that adhere to these guidelines will continue to find that moderators are pleased to accept their marks.

From an analysis of feedback forms submitted to centres following moderation, the following areas seem to represent the major reasons for adjustments being made to centres' marks on this occasion.

Texts were in some way inappropriate: This was sometimes because the tasks selected were insufficiently demanding, or that the folder as a whole showed insufficient range or were perhaps overly source dependent. In general, marks were reduced because candidates had chosen inappropriately, or because centres had overestimated success of texts in relation to audience, purpose and genre.

Commentaries were often over-rewarded by centres. Guidance has been given, both in these reports over the last few series and also at Centre Standardising meetings relating to this very important area – but it is worth reiterating it once again. A successful commentary will present an overview of the writer's approach to the text – selecting the most important aspects of the piece and illustrating the understanding of the significance of these factors by judicious use of a suitable linguistic register supported by examples drawn from the text. In cases where reductions were found to be appropriate, descriptive approaches to aspects of the texts was often rewarded as though they were analytical.

Other areas of centres' submissions giving moderators cause for concern were:

- copies of sources and/or style models used in the preparation of one or both texts not included in the submissions
- an over-dependence on sources, often internet based and often fully or partially unacknowledged
- draft versions not included in the submission.

Candidates should treat their research and their commentaries as an integral part of the writing process, designed to demonstrate and validate their achievements.

Here, drawn from a selection of tasks presented for moderation in this round, are some specific examples of choices which failed to live up to centre expectations, and some reasons for the lack of success:

- recipes and Horoscopes: in general these are very limiting in form and content. Repetitive structure
- a guide to fitness and an article on baby talk in one folder: this displayed little if any original writing and had clearly overlapping purposes
- a biography of a relative as a newspaper article: this demonstrated an unsuitable choice of context – not an appropriate publication: inappropriate register
- invented problem page letters: hardly a 'real' task as they are most likely to have been written by one person in the real world
- travel articles on places obviously not visited by the writer: heavily based on the writers who created the sources
- film/music reviews patched together from internet sources. Little original writing
- eating disorder/breast cancer/smoking/drugs/kick-boxing etc leaflets: little original in content or structure.

On the other hand, there were numerous examples of successful and accurately assessed submissions, and these are some examples drawn from that (more extensive) list:

- travel pieces – often based on reputable sources, especially Bill Bryson, but focused on places actually known to the writer
- short stories – frequently including style models featuring detailed annotation suggesting a close study of the genre
- novel extracts – often accompanied by a synopsis of the remainder of the plot
- magazine articles relating to subjects or personalities close to the hearts of the writers
- newspaper feature articles on current topics which genuinely affect the writers
- monologues using the persona of characters within the writers' experience
- school-based pieces such as a personal guide to the sixth form or college
- reviews of old films avoiding the information on new films available on the internet
- reviews of gigs of local bands, or bands where the writer attended the event
- a spoof web blog on Spielberg – for strictly entertainment purposes!
- stories for children – frequently including style models featuring detailed annotation suggesting a close study of the genre
- a leaflet to help those going to a music festival – clearly based on the first-hand experiences of the writer.

From the above examples it is clear that any writing based in the writer's experiences or which uses material which the writer feels strongly about, appropriately organised to suit a known format and written, with a particular audience in mind is the key to a successful submission.

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

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