



**General Certificate of Education**

**English Language and Literature  
5721**

*Specification A*

**NTA1      Language Production**

**Report on the Examination**

*2007 examination - January series*

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## General

Question 1 assesses candidates' ability to write for a given audience and purpose, using a stimulus text(s) as a springboard for their writing. Question 2 assesses their ability to analyse the language choices they have made in order to suit their audience and purpose.

## Question 1

### *Assessment Objectives*

In this question candidates are assessed on their ability to:

- show understanding of the ways contextual variation and choices of form, style and vocabulary shape the meaning of texts;
- demonstrate expertise and accuracy in writing for a variety of specific purposes and audiences.

### *The Task*

The question asked candidates to write an extract from a biography. The springboard text – an extract from a biography on Billy Connolly – was provided to give students an example of a style and approach that could be appropriate. There was a wide range of subjects in the responses, from celebrities to relatives. Grandparents and parents were popular. A few attempted a complete history from birth to present day and so left no time for the interesting detail an extract would have provided. But the best were selective and created real and interesting characters. Those who chose to write about friends were, on the whole, less successful. The piece often turned out to be more about their relationship with the writer than about the subject.

Candidates who wrote the most convincing biographies had clearly used the springboard text to help them. It is likely that less successful candidates had not thought carefully enough about what was required by the task, or considered how the springboard text might help them. Most candidates had no problem in writing about a person, although a few wrote about themselves in the style of autobiography and clearly hadn't read the question carefully. Only a few candidates showed a complete misunderstanding of the task, writing short stories, rather than a biography.

Whilst some responses were technically accurate and well-expressed, all examiners commented on the disappointing standard of punctuation overall. Many of the more able candidates still made basic errors. Particularly noticeable were missing commas to separate clauses and missing punctuation at the beginning and end of direct speech.

Successful responses:

- showed a definite sense of an appropriate form for biographical writing and adopted a convincing approach
- focused on the person who was the subject of their extract
- wrote predominantly in the third person
- wrote an extract rather than a complete piece
- produced writing that was well-structured
- showed range and variety in vocabulary and syntax
- produced writing that was technically accurate and well-expressed.

Less successful responses:

- showed very limited awareness of biography form and misjudged what was appropriate in terms of content and/or style
- wrote autobiographical accounts in the first person
- wrote in the style of fictional narrative
- used only very simple vocabulary and little variety in syntax
- wrote in a very unsophisticated/simplistic way which did not give a convincing sense of the genre
- showed limitations in writing skills: spelling and punctuation errors; flaws in grammar and expression.

## Question 2

### **Assessment Objective**

In this question, candidates are assessed on their ability to:

- draw on their knowledge of literary texts and features of language to explain and comment on the choices made in their own writing.

Some candidates produced very clear explanations of the reasons for their choices and were able to comment on the effects of a range of language features. However, it was noticeable that a number of students wrote very generalised commentaries with very little precise exploration of the connotations and effects of particular words and phrases. Nearly all candidates now realise the kinds of features they should write about and most can provide a relevant example for simile, alliteration, vocabulary and occasionally syntax. But the explanations often remain vague: there seems to be a standard phrase to use about any adjective or metaphor (provides a picture, makes it flow) rather than a specific comment on the one they have chosen to use.

Successful responses:

- used a framework with confidence and accuracy
- showed an overview of the aims for their writing and their language choices within this
- showed a clear sense of audience, purpose and form
- produced an analysis which explored a range of linguistic features
- demonstrated a secure understanding of linguistic terminology
- used terminology as tools to explain language effects, rather than simply 'feature-spot'
- used examples from their own writing to illustrate points made about language
- showed an ability to express ideas clearly and accurately.

Less successful responses:

- made only general points about language and style, lacking real analysis of specific language features
- did not provide an overview of the aims and purposes for the writing
- had a patchy sense of a framework and only 'spotted' a few features
- 'feature-spotted' without commenting on the effect produced
- focused primarily on content choices
- wrote brief commentaries which gave little insight into the candidates' aims and choices
- used linguistic terminology incorrectly
- produced writing that was not well-expressed.

## **Mark Ranges and Award of Grades**

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