



**General Certificate of Education**

**English Language and Literature  
5721**

*Specification A*

**NTA1      Language Production**

**Report on the Examination**

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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 a campaign leaflet. The majority of candidates chose the springboard text on school meals as a stimulus for their writing. Relatively few candidates based their work on the springboard text about mobile phone masts. The better responses tended to be from candidates who used their own ideas for campaign topics as these were frequently issues about which the candidates felt strongly. Other topics included climate change, animal testing, carrying knives, bullying and smoking. Unfortunately, many of those on smoking showed little or no realisation of the July change in the law and did little more than list the horrors of smoking in restaurants with no hint of a campaign, just the advice to 'give it up'.

The best answers provided clear, but not too lengthy, information, an action plan for the campaign and contact details. Those who chose a local rather than a national campaign often had more clearly defined objectives for school meals and mobile phone masts; national 'campaigns' tended to be very generalised.

The task caused a number of candidates unexpected difficulties. Some appeared to have problems in understanding the requirements of a campaign and tended to see the role of their leaflet as simply providing ideas and opinions on a topic. This frequently led to writing that was more suitable for a magazine article or more generalised essay. These responses lacked a sense of what the reader was being asked to do as the focus of the campaign was left vague.

The question asked candidates to focus on language and style rather than layout features in a bid to discourage them from wasting time on presentation features such as elaborate graphology or pictures and diagrams. However, there were some very basic features of leaflet form, such as a title and sub-headings, that it would be useful to include. The better responses tended to show this awareness of leaflet form. Weaker responses tended to have no title or sub-headings.

Some candidates had difficulty in achieving an appropriate style and register for a campaign leaflet. The best responses managed to balance clarity of expression and engagement with the audience, but too many thought that to have popular appeal the leaflet had to be stridently colloquial and chatty. A number of leaflets on the state of school meals included exaggerated descriptions of poor school meals that even Jamie Oliver would have found unconvincing. A number of leaflets were written in the first person which was rarely appropriate in this context, and the 'I' persona remained a mysterious figure.

Candidates' technical accuracy is assessed on this question and therefore responses which contained a number of spelling and punctuation errors inevitably restricted their marks. Examiners noted that a number of candidates simply did not use the apostrophe. Other common punctuation errors included missing out commas to demarcate clauses and using commas instead of full stops at the end of sentences. Common spelling errors were homophones such as there/their, no/know, too/to, along with were/where and are/our.

Successful responses:

- showed a definite sense of campaign leaflet form and adopted a convincing approach
- gave a clear sense of what the campaign was appealing to the reader to do
- provided clear information on the issue
- showed some sophistication in the use of persuasive techniques
- wrote predominantly in the second and third person
- gave the leaflet an appropriate title and sub-headings
- provided clear information about the campaigning body that had produced the leaflet
- 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 limited awareness of campaign leaflet form and misjudged what was appropriate in terms of content and/or style
- wrote from a first person perspective
- wrote in the style of an article or essay
- provided little or no real sense of a campaign
- did not provide a title or sub-headings
- lifted material from the springboard texts
- used only very simple vocabulary and little variety in syntax
- wrote in an unsophisticated/simplistic way which was unconvincing
- showed limitations in writing skills: spelling and punctuation errors; flaws in grammar and expression.

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## **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.

Examiners noted that most candidates showed that they had a check list and some sort of framework to help them write their commentaries: starting with audience and purpose, moving on to structure and form (sometimes with the danger of spending too much time on content) and ending with vocabulary/style (although sometimes getting no further than rhetorical questions and pronouns).

Some candidates produced clear explanations of the reasons for their choices and were able to comment on the effects of a range of language features. However, a number of students continue to write generalised commentaries with little precise exploration of the connotations and effects of particular words and phrases. There were some features that the majority of candidates commented on but often in a disappointingly superficial way. The rhetorical question is frequently referred to as ‘engaging readers and making them think’; the personal pronoun, ‘to directly address the readers and draw them in’. Unfortunately, these vague comments on how the reader is appealed to do not really engage with meaning and therefore do not attract the higher marks for this question.

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’
- engaged with the meaning produced by various linguistic choices
- 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 noted only a few features
- ‘feature-spotted’ without commenting on the effects produced
- made superficial references to vague appeals to the reader rather than more precise explorations of meaning and effects
- focused primarily on content choices
- wrote very brief commentaries that gave little insight into the candidates’ aims and choices
- used linguistic terminology incorrectly
- produced writing that was not well-expressed.