



Examiners' Report Principal Examiner Feedback

November 2024

Pearson Edexcel GCSE
In English Language (9-1)
1EN2 01: Non- Fiction Texts

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Introduction

The majority of the entry was re-sit candidates and examiners commented that they did not see many higher-level responses, especially to Section A (Reading). There was some evidence that candidates had been prepared for this examination. Examiners commented that the texts about reading were accessible across the full range of abilities and candidates were able to engage with the tasks and respond appropriately. Some examiners noted that some candidates found Text 1 harder to understand than Text 2. The writing topics were ones that all candidates had experience of, although some examiners thought the format for Question 7 might have been less familiar.

More successful candidates were able to engage fully with both texts and respond appropriately. Their writing responses were engaging and effective and were mostly well controlled and accurate. Less successful candidates sometimes struggled to understand the passages and the questions. Their writing was often pedestrian or lacked coherence and had weak language controls.

Some candidates were not clear about the focus of the reading questions e.g. they responded to the evaluation questions as language analysis and the language analysis question as evaluation.

Examiners did comment on a number of blank responses especially to the reading questions, in particular Question 5 and 6. There were some indications that candidates may have attempted the writing question (Section B) first and run out of time to complete the paper.

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

- evidence that the majority of candidates had understood the ideas in the texts
- the ability to make at least some comments on language and its effects for Question 3
- the inclusion of judgements at different levels for Questions 2, 5 and 6
- writing that showed a range of ideas and suitable tone, style and register for audience and purpose
- writing that used some ambitious vocabulary and accuracy in spelling, punctuation and grammar.

Less successful responses:

- misunderstood the AO focus of the questions
- showed an insecure grasp of language and its effects and did not use relevant or accurate subject terminology in response to Question 3
- failed to support points using appropriate textual evidence, or used textual evidence that did not support the point being made

- did not attempt to make judgements in response to Questions 2, 5 and 6 or based their responses to Question 6 entirely on their own ideas with no reference to the text
- did not organise and develop ideas in their writing
- did not write with a secure awareness of audience and purpose
- did not use a range of vocabulary and lacked accurate spelling and secure control of punctuation and grammar.

Section A

Question 1

This is a straightforward question on Text One which does not require candidates to use their own words.

There were very few candidates who did not attempt to provide four points. Many candidates were able correctly to identify some points the writer makes about reading. The most popular and successful bullet points seen by examiners but were: 'people learn to love reading by being read aloud to/listening to the spoken voice', 'people learn to enjoy reading if they had a long illness', 'they enjoy reading if cut off from ordinary life/distraction from everyday life' and 'people would read if on a desolate island/isolated'.

However a significant number of candidates did not achieve full marks as they missed key words in their points e.g. 'love reading aloud' instead of 'being read aloud to' and missing the references to Penny Dreadfuls/books when making the final three bullet points. There was confusion regarding the second bullet point with many saying 'those who wrote about childhood experiences learned to love reading'. Examiners also commented on random copying of phrases with the word 'reading' in it and also quotations that stopped before the relevant point.

Question 2

This question requires the candidate to evaluate how successfully the writer shows the different ways that people learn to enjoy reading.

Examiners commented that there were some clear responses to this question with evidence of preparation however the majority of examiners commented that while it was clear that most candidates understood the text, a significant number of candidates had difficulty in developing evaluative comments.

Most candidates tried to find three reasons with evidence, as the question requested, but examiners commented that some only gave two reasons which limited their achievement.

Candidates chose to comment on being read aloud to as a child and some gave examples of listening to parents, grandparents or siblings reading to them. Reading during illness was also frequently discussed and there was recognition of the fact that there was 'not much to do whilst sick as mobile phones were not

invented' and 'books had to be enough to keep them company.' Another popular choice was the reference to being on a desolate island/isolated with some candidates commenting that the use of humour added to the success of the text.

Examiners commented that many candidates explained their chosen references rather than making a judgement about how effective these were in showing the different ways that people learn to enjoy reading. However some examiners commented that some candidates were able to offer a sufficiently clear evaluative opinion, linked to a clear explanation of the writer's ideas. There was evidence that candidates had been taught evaluative vocabulary e.g. successfully, skilfully, clearly, which sometimes helped them to focus on the question.

More successful candidates were able to use evidence from the text to evaluate writer's ideas and viewpoints about the different ways that people learn to enjoy reading with some good explanation but not many managed a developed critical evaluation. Some of the more successful responses considered the use of humour in reference to the point about the desolate island and the sense of nostalgia in reference to being read aloud to.

Less successful candidates were able to find some relevant examples but were not able to provide a valid comment to justify the examples selected. Their comments often paraphrased their chosen quotations with no further explanation of ideas or evaluation of the text. Occasionally candidates responded as if this was a language question, picking out individual words and commenting on them, missing the evaluation focus of this question.

There was some misinterpretation of 'those who have written their experience about their childhood seldom learn to like reading unless they are hungered to it.' which was interpreted as meaning that 'people who wrote about their childhood liked reading.' And also of the 'those who have written about...' reference which was misinterpreted as 'people learned to love reading by writing'.

Many candidates used examples from the given lines but examiners observed that there were a significant number who made points that were outside the line references, using the last paragraph about Penny Dreadfuls for some of their points.

Question 3

This question asks the candidate how the writer uses language to interest and inform the reader across the whole text.

Examiners saw some reasonable responses to this question but although most candidates were able to demonstrate some understanding of the text, many candidates had difficulty in explaining the effect of their chosen words or phrases. Some candidates did not seem to understand the focus of the question and responded as if it was an evaluation (AO4) rather than a language (AO2) question. All examiners commented that the majority of candidates did not use relevant or accurate subject terminology and did not correctly identify similes, adverbs, nouns, and other language devices. Many responses used 'word' as the subject terminology for terms such as nouns, adjectives and adverbs or simply used the words 'language' or 'phrase'. Some candidates referred to structure, which could not be rewarded, for the whole or part of their response. Some examiners thought that responses to this question were the weakest on the paper.

Popular points for comment were: the use of adjectives, in particular 'desolate' with some sound explanations e.g. 'suggests how we should isolate ourselves to keep us from distractions' or 'makes the reader aware that reading can be enjoyable in lonely times.' The adjective 'astonishing' was also identified as being used to express surprise, 'at a bigger number than the reader might have expected'. Quite a lot of candidates commented on 'devoured greedily', with varying degrees of success: 'the metaphor 'devoured greedily' is used to describe the readers reading', 'it implies people crave the need to read them and can't get enough.'

More successful candidates were able to explore the text and identify various appropriate references. A range of relevant subject terminology was provided to support their selections and exploration of how language is used to achieve effects. They identified single words and short phrases for comment such as 'hungered', 'devoured greedily' and 'bloody' which were often explored reasonably well, showing some level of analysis. Some linked the writer's use of 'hungered' and 'devoured greedily' and their connotations. They also commented on the alliteration of 'printed page' and its contrast with 'being read aloud to'.

Less successful candidates did not focus on language and sometimes used quotations but simply explained the meaning. There was often limited, incorrect or no subject terminology. Sometimes a linguistic device was identified e.g. 'the writer uses an adjective', followed by a lengthy quotation, a very general point about content or meaning and no identification of the specific word or explanation of its effect. There were also those who wrote about structure in particular, the use of 'First' and 'Secondly' to structure the article. These less successful responses often made generic comments on the effects of their chosen features e.g. 'to grab the reader's attention' or 'to interest them to find

out more' without further explanation. A few candidates wrote responses without any reference to the text in support, with comments such as: 'The author uses complicated language which impresses the reader and makes them agree with what he says'.

Occasionally candidates wrote a response to Text Two. These were rewarded but were penalised for using the wrong text (not reading the instructions carefully).

Question 4a

This is a straightforward question on Text Two which does not require candidates to use their own words.

Most candidates achieved two marks on this question. The most common points identified were 'it is pleasant', 'it provides an inexhaustible store of literature', 'it is a never-failing source of entertainment' and 'it provides information of all kinds', although all points were seen. The most common reason for not achieving marks was using the previous paragraph e.g. 'more and more widely known' or 'more and more familiar'.

Question 4b

This question requires candidates to understand implicit meaning and ideas in a text. Many candidates used quotations to answer this question and some of these were appropriate responses but candidates should try to use their own words to show they have understood the implied information and ideas.

Many candidates were able to provide two reasons, commonly 'they want to share the cost' and 'they want to share the books'. Other popular points were: 'they want to improve the lives of their employees/advancement' and 'they want to educate their workers'.

Incorrect responses identified users of the library: 'families', 'co-operating coteries,' or 'book clubs' rather than reasons for using it. Some used single words such as 'pleasure' or 'profit' or vague statements such as 'to become a family' or 'to read books'.

Question 5

This question required candidates to evaluate how successfully the writer persuades readers that books from Mudie's library will provide entertainment for everyone.

As with Question 2, examiners commented that many candidates struggled to be evaluative and did not move much beyond explaining or paraphrasing the text. Similarly to Question 2, a significant number of candidates did not give three reasons. Examiners noted that there were quite a few blank responses and also those with very little written. However a few examiners commented that responses to this question were more successful than those to Question 2.

The majority of candidates agreed that the writer was successful in presenting the library as providing entertainment for everyone. The popular supporting evidence included references to books being in the house for 10 years with comments such as: 'They are an essential part of the home.' or 'This proves how people keep going back for more.' A number of candidates used 'everybody's library' to show inclusivity: 'provides for everyone and not just anyone specific' or 'ensures readers that everyone is welcome'. Many commented on the times and places where reading might occur: 'the fireside gives a sense of coziness that lures people into using the books'. One candidate commented 'The writer has taken the books everywhere, which shows how important they are to him and how he could not imagine going on holiday without them'. There were also many references to the question and response at the end giving a sense of being lost without the books and hence proof of their value. There was some slight misunderstanding of the reference to 10 years, where a few candidates thought it referred to a single book.

More successful responses explored three points, supported these with appropriate evidence and evaluated how successful the writer had been in persuading readers that books from Mudie's library will provide entertainment for everyone. They were more precise in their selection of detail and were able to provide clear personal judgement about the text as well as their explanation of the chosen references.

Less successful responses were often brief and undeveloped making a small number of points. There were some responses which gave a generalised opinion but without any textual references and some others where sections of the text had been copied out but with no comments. Less successful candidates sometimes listed out their chosen references without clear explanations of the writer's ideas.

A number of candidates used material from outside of the given extract.

There were a number of blank responses.

Question 6

This question requires candidates to evaluate how successfully the text shows that Mudie's library will improve everyone's lives.

Examiners saw a few convincing responses where candidates showed some developed analysis of writer's ideas and critically evaluated how successful the text was in showing that Mudie's library will improve everyone's lives. However most examiners commented that many candidates did not evaluate the text and responses often did not move beyond explanation. All examiners commented on a significant number of blanks and very short/undeveloped responses which may have been a time management issue.

Most candidates, who attempted this question, engaged reasonably well with the task and were able to give some opinions and support their comments with examples from the texts. The majority of responses included straightforward comments although some examiners thought there was some evidence of sound explanation but not many candidates were able to provide developed analysis of the ideas. Most candidates were able to provide two to three straightforward comments on the writer's ideas with some valid references.

Candidates thought the writer was successful in showing that Mudie's would improve people's lives and one even went as far as to say, 'I'm a big fan of Mudie's so far.' They were able to identify references such as 'information for all kinds', 'pass on the books', 'hundreds of volumes' and 'what should we do without Mudie's' and offer comments on them. They also identified 'inexhaustible store' and 'never-failing source of entertainment' as the key reasons for success and made points such as 'The sheer number of books available means everyone is catered for' and 'inexhaustible' means that everyone will find something they enjoy.' There were also many references to the friendliness: 'All subscribers are friendly and cooperative.' and to the importance of sharing and communicating. The final question and answer were also often quoted as proof that Mudie's was so important to people.

More successful responses were able to explain ideas and offer some informed evaluative opinion with appropriate references. They were able to agree and/or disagree with the statement. They were able to offer an overview evaluative opinion and then prove their opinion with supportive reference from the text. Some considered the impact of the library outside of reading e.g. education, employment, social skills. They used evaluative phrases such as 'I fully agree with...' or 'I partially agree...'

Some examiners commented that there were a number of less successful responses. These responses included those where candidates had not focused on the task, instead made general statements, with very little reference to the text e.g. 'I don't believe books are for everyone.' Some misinterpreted the question. Instead of evaluating how far they agree that the text shows Mudie's library will

improve everyone's lives, they just evaluated how reading or visiting a library could support people's learning. Therefore, they did not provide references nor ideas from the writer in their responses. These responses often went on to write about their thoughts on the internet, mobile phones, and people consuming information online. Some candidates wrote about their own experiences of reading. Other less successful responses used very lengthy quotations and then briefly explained their meaning, often simply paraphrasing the quotations.

Occasionally candidates wrote a response to Text One. These were rewarded but were penalised for using the wrong text (not reading the instructions carefully).

There were a number of blanks or very short or undeveloped responses which may have been a time management issue.

Section B

Examiners observed that many candidates made use of the planning box although many simply listed techniques to be used rather than the content of their ideas. Examiners commented that when it was used successfully it helped candidates to provide more structured responses.

There were some very brief and blank responses to this section which may have been a time management issue.

Question 7

This question asked candidates to write a review a review of a book, a film or a television programme for a website aimed at young adults.

A05

This question was tackled with varying degrees of success. Unfortunately, many candidates seemed to misunderstand the task because of the title 'Try something different' or the opening of the task making a reference to social media. Some wrote essays or articles about social media and its dangers. Other responses featured recommendations for hobbies such as taking up football or going to the gym as alternatives to 'sitting in front of a screen'. These responses were off task and therefore did not meet the 2nd A05 bullet point in the mark scheme, which impacted on their final mark. Some candidates gave a list of recommended T.V. programmes or films which was perhaps slightly closer to the task but still not 'a review'. Even those who had copied out the introduction did not always write reviews.

Candidates who were able to create a relevant response to the question appeared to understand the basic requirements and style of a review for their peer group although some examiners commented that some candidates did not seem familiar with writing reviews. Examiners noted that where candidates attempted to write reviews, the majority of the response was a retelling of the plot rather than offering opinions or a review. A significant number of candidates made use of the suggested opening paragraph which should have helped the focus of the response.

There were responses where candidates wrote reviews. Harry Potter books and films were popular as were series like *Breaking Bad* and *Game of Thrones*. Quite a few candidates wrote about non-fiction books aimed to improve mental health e.g. 'This book filled gaps I wasn't aware were empty.' (*The World is My Oyster*). A book entitled *Atomic Habits* was also mentioned a couple of times. Several candidates reviewed '*Friends*'.

More successful candidates sustained a sense of purpose and audience throughout. They were able to select a book, a film or a television programme, then provide a summary and their personal opinions on the chosen title for the

review. They used a range of rhetorical devices to promote their chosen book, film or TV series. They selected examples of interesting, exciting or successful features, without simply retelling the plot or describing events at length and were able to be selective and to employ stylistic devices such as directly addressing the reader and leaving them wanting to know more. They organised their responses with effective use of persuasive tone, style and register.

Less successful candidates wrote a straightforward account of something they had seen or produced responses that were not reviews, without much sense of purpose and audience. They were able to comment on why watching a film or reading a book would be better than scrolling social media. Examiners commented that some candidates did not seem familiar with writing a review. A number offered reviews without specifying what they were reviewing.

Question 8

This question asked candidates to write a letter to their local newspaper about a plan to close their local library. This was the more popular choice.

Examiners commented that some candidates who chose this option seemed quite well-prepared and offered a range of sensible ideas in an appropriate format.

A05

Most of the candidates who attempted this question were familiar with the letter format, using at the very least a basic salutation and sometimes ending with a sign off. The letters generally were written using an appropriate tone. There was a strong sense of purpose and audience, at least at the beginning of the responses, and usually at the end too. Many of the letters were following the bullet points in the question to structure their responses, which allowed for clear development and often clear paragraphs. Candidates offered letters that were mostly in favour of keeping the library., They presented clear views about why the library should stay open, with reasons such as how the library benefits the reading ability of children, provides a quiet revision venue for students and a space for people to access the computers or to meet. The responses also presented their views about the alternative uses for the building, such as a café for people to meet, a food bank for less fortunate people etc.

More successful responses were well organised and logically sequenced, with some thoughtful development of ideas. They utilised effective rhetorical devices, such as rhetorical questions, direct address and repetition – the best employed the use of effective emotive language. Many wanted to keep the library and one of the most common reasons was that it provided a quiet place in a world where it was otherwise difficult to find one. 'A warm space for all age groups to use in this cost-of-living crisis' was also cited as important. Another common reason was that 'it helps kids stay away from social media'. Arguments for closing it

often suggested it was neglected: 'more likely for a child to fall through the floor than be sparked with imagination' or irrelevant: 'books are slowly becoming outdated', 'books are becoming less relevant' or 'The library is stuck in a time warp.' There were many who wanted to turn it into 'some kind of community hub with a range of facilities' or similar idea. This theme was often developed in detail and with close reference to a specific locality, giving a sense of authenticity. Reducing the size and converting part of it into a café or play area was also a popular idea. They would often concede that if the library had to shut as a library then they had plenty of alternative options for it. They considered their audience and consequently targeted their ideas towards appealing to local residents and the way in which they will benefit from keeping/replacing the library.

Less successful responses were often brief or unstructured. They tended to lack planning and were often disorganised and not logically sequenced. These candidates wrote very basic and straightforward arguments about the closure of the library often little more than a list 'It could be a school, an office block or a home for old people.' Some did not have the features of a letter but jumped straight into their argument. These responses often did not always address the bullet points given and showed little awareness of purpose and format.

There were some extremely brief responses.

AO6 (Question 7 and 8)

Most candidates were able to make some attempt to select words, sentence structures and punctuation to suit the task. They were able to express and order information and ideas with some correctly spelt vocabulary, some control of punctuation and some accurate paragraphing. Most candidates were able to communicate successfully even if there were errors. Word choices showed some adaptation to the topic being written about.

Examiners commented that vocabulary was often varied although there were spelling errors. Complex words were sometimes correct but there were frequent careless errors which suggested a lack of proof reading. Nearly all examiners commented on weak punctuation with some responses using very few full stops or capital letters.

More successful candidates were selective with their vocabulary choices and used a range of appropriate linguistic techniques, e.g. rhetorical questions and direct address to communicate their ideas. Vocabulary range was well-chosen for the task they had selected with some spelling errors for more complex words. These candidates wrote fluently with a range of structural devices. Some used sentence structures to create deliberate effect. They had control of spelling, punctuation and grammar.

Less successful candidates were often repetitive with their word choices and, in particular, with their sentence structures. They often used very basic sentences or struggled with basic punctuation leading to a lack of clarity in places. They sometimes had limited vocabulary and poor grammar and made frequent errors, often obscuring meaning.

Common errors commented on by examiners were: missing basic sentence punctuation; comma splicing; missing or misused apostrophes; problems with homophones; misspelling of basic vocabulary; not capitalising 'I' for the personal pronoun; missing capital letters at the beginning of sentences and random capitalisation of words; grammatical errors such as problems with sentence structures, subject-verb agreement and verb tenses.

Examiners remarked that a common spelling error in Question 8 was 'library' (misspelt as libary/libray/librey/libarey), which could have been copied from the text. Some also commented that there seemed to be an increase in the use of 'gonna' and 'wanna', which may be attempts at an informal register but sometimes it did not seem deliberate.

Summary

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

- For short-answer Questions 1 and 4a ensure that you are responding briefly and selecting information, not just writing out a section. Highlight the relevant lines in your extract booklet and read the question carefully. Ensure you answer on the correct text as well as using the correct lines. For Question 4b try to find ideas that are implied in the given text rather than just selecting phrases or quotations from the text.
- For Question 3, make sure you focus on language features e.g. word choice, alliteration, personification, simile, metaphor. Remember to focus on the effects of your chosen examples on the reader and not just explain their meaning. Try to use appropriate correct subject terminology.
- In Questions 3 and 6, 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 for comment. 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. Remember to use examples from the whole of the text.
- For your responses to Questions 2, 5 and 6, remember that you evaluate every day, and more so than ever with online feedback and posting of opinions and ideas online. Read the question carefully – what is it you are giving your opinion on? You do not need to comment on language and structure here unless this supports your evaluation. Remember always to link your evaluative points to the text and give examples from the text to support your evaluation.
- Remember to find three reasons for your opinion and support them with examples from the text for your responses to Questions 2 and 5.
- For Questions 7 and 8 (the writing questions) read the question carefully and make sure that you write in the correct format and have a clear sense of the purpose and audience for your writing.
- 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.
- Plan your writing, even just briefly. You have been given a planning box to do this. 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 cohesive and coherent way. If you start presenting an idea, make sure you are developing it.
- Take care throughout with accuracy: spelling, punctuation and grammar. Try to give yourself enough time to check your work for errors.

- Focus on timing during the examination and use the number of marks available for each question as an indication of how long you should spend answering each question. Make sure you try to answer every question.