

AS English Language Paper 1 SAMs commentary

This resource explains how the questions in the specimen assessment materials for AS Paper 1 address the assessment objectives, with some suggestions as to how each task might be approached. This is not intended to be an exhaustive list of every point that could be made, but it provides teachers and students with some guidance that will support their work on this paper.

AS Paper 1 Questions 1 and 2

Analyse how Text A uses language to create meanings and representations.

Analyse how Text B uses language to create meanings and representations.

The AOs assessed in these questions are A01 and A03, and these are made clear to students through the question wording. A01 is pointed to through “Analyse how Text A uses language”, and A03 is pointed to through “create meanings and representations”.

A01: Apply appropriate methods of language analysis, using associated terminology and coherent written expression

These questions test students’ ability to carry out a text analysis, which is a fundamental linguistic methodology in its own right. In order to analyse how the text uses language to create meanings and representations, students will need to apply appropriate methods of language analysis to demonstrate how different features of language are used within the text for this purpose (e.g. semantics and grammar)

Clearly, in their response to these questions, students will need to use correct and relevant terminology for the context in order to accurately demonstrate how the text uses language to create meanings and representations (e.g. connotations of words and different sentence types).

Students will need to use coherent written expression in their answer in order to efficiently communicate how the text uses language to create meanings and representations.

A03: Analyse and evaluate how contextual factors and language features are associated with the construction of meaning

Through this question students will be focusing on the construction of meaning, including evaluation and analysis of those language features associated with it.

They need to show they understand how the language features build into patterns of meaning to create representations and interpretations. This involves the interpretation of the features identified and labelled and credited in A01.

In addition, for Text A students might focus on how opinions and experiences are described and represented through language. Different or shared viewpoints of the message board posters might be examined and the stance or position of different posters discussed. The contextual factors affecting meaning – the online nature of the discourse and the interaction between posters – might be another area to explore.

For Text B, students might choose to look at how the newspaper represents itself as a trusted authority, the different participants in proms (pupils, parents, schools, suppliers) are described and representations of gender constructed. The contextual factors affecting meaning – the newspaper source of the text and the surrounding advertisements and links – would also be useful to examine.

AS Paper 1 Question 3

Compare and contrast Text A and Text B, showing ways in which they are similar and different in their language use.

The AO assessed in this question is A04, and this is made clear to students through the question wording. A04 is pointed to through “Compare and contrast” and “ways in which they are similar and different in their language use”.

A04: Explore connections across texts, informed by linguistic concepts and methods

By comparing and contrasting the texts, showing ways in which they are similar and different in their language use, students will clearly be exploring connections between them. They may look at similarities and differences in terms of intended audience or purpose, mode or genre, for example. Exploring these connections will require students to refer closely to linguistic concepts about variation – for example, different levels of formality.

In comparing and contrasting the texts, showing ways in which they are similar and different in their language use, students will be employing a commonly used linguistic method of analysing norms and variations.

Note: While it is possible for students to repeat points made in Questions 1 and 2 about contextual factors in their answers to Question 3, there is a clear difference in what is being assessed by A04. Some of the same points about individual texts might well be relevant (mode and technological factors, for example) but A04 focuses more on a comparison and contrast of the two texts together.