

AS

ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE

Paper 2: People and Places
Report on the Examination

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General

Now in its second series, this has been another successful year for Paper 2: People and Places. It was clearly apparent, that schools and colleges have prepared students well for the demands of the paper with the vast majority of students able to complete the three different tasks required in the allotted time.

In all the tasks, the paper called upon the students' knowledge and understanding of the key concepts of:

- genre
- representation
- point of view
- register
- literariness.

It was pleasing to see them engaging with these concepts throughout the tasks, with some students actively exploring the significance of these explicitly through analysis (Question 1 and Question 3) and demonstrating understanding of these creatively (Question 2).

Almost all students showed clear engagement with the texts selected from the Paris Anthology for Section A although there was evidence of less secure understanding for Text B around contextual factors mainly due to confusion around the mode of the text, its purpose and its audience. Clearly some students were most comfortable when analysing linguistic features belonging to the written mode rather than the spoken. This was also apparent for Section B where some students struggled to understand the multi-modal nature of the task specified for the re-creative writing question. This was further reflected in the commentaries where some students either made incorrect comments about the mode of their re-creative writing or more commonly, omitted to discuss it entirely. More successful candidates recognised the multi-modal nature of the task and responded enthusiastically producing lively video advertisements that showed an assured understanding of associated genre conventions.

It is clear that most candidates had a sound understanding of the assessment objectives and requirements for the tasks with many able to identify language features relevantly with accurate terminology (AO1). At the lower end, responses were characterised by some vagueness and imprecision which hindered discussion of meanings and effects. However, most students were able to discuss language features selected in meaningful ways by integrating context within their responses. It is worth remembering however, that AO1 refers to more than just the ability to apply linguistic terminology but credit is also given for the application of relevant concepts and methods for example, pragmatics, synthetic personalisation etc. to help students meaningfully explore the use of language either in the Paris Anthology or in their own recreative writing. Students should also take care with their written expression and use an appropriate academic register.

Section A

Question 1 – Remembered Places

This question assesses the candidates' ability to discuss how the two selected extracts from the texts that they have studied in the AQA Anthology represent Paris with a key focus on comparison. Students are being asked to call upon their classroom study of the texts within the Anthology to explore:

- the ways in which speakers and writers present places, societies, people and events
- the ways that narrative can sometimes be seen as a personal journey for writers and speakers
- the influence of contextual factors on the content and focus of narratives
- the affordances and limitations of different media
- different genre conventions and different purposes in communicating ideas and viewpoints about travel, people and place
- how people and their relationships are realised through point of view, attitude, specific registers, physical descriptions, speech and thought.

Section A assesses the students' performance in three Assessment Objectives:

- AO1: Apply concepts and methods from integrated linguistic and literary study as appropriate, using associated terminology and coherent written expression (10 marks)
- AO3: Demonstrate understanding of the significance and influence of the contexts in which texts are produced and received (20 marks)
- AO4: Explore connections across texts, informed by linguistic and literary concepts and methods (10 marks).

Nearly all students were able to engage with these two extracts, however it was clear that for many students, they were most confident with exploring language features and contextual factors in Text A, the travel blog, than for Text B, the multi-speaker discourse. Consequently, this led to some imbalanced responses favouring Text A which limited the mark awarded for AO4. Most students were able to identify specific language features in the extracts with some accurate terminology and explanation about meanings and effects linked to relevant contextual factors. Almost all students made some clear and valid comments about the contexts of productions and reception with many also showing some engagement with the genres of the texts. However, aspects of mode gave the most difficulty with some candidates showing some misunderstanding of the mode for one or both of the texts or overlooking the significance of mode in the texts entirely.

Some valid comparisons between the texts were made by almost all students however those that structured their responses by making sound comparative points to use as a springboard for meaningful discussion of language features and contextual factors were most successful. Similar to last year's series, some candidates decoupled the instruction to 'compare and contrast' from 'how the speakers and writers *present* Paris' focussing purely on the content of the texts rather than specific features within the texts themselves and this impacted the potential levels for achievement for AO1 and AO4, as both of these contain 'strands' that ask for reference to be made to representation (as outlined in the Assessment Guide).

As a general overview, successful responses:

- showed a more explicit awareness of the Assessment Objectives and their relative weighting in structuring answers and for informing decisions about which aspects of the texts to explore
- linked Assessment Objectives within paragraphs: for example, used AO1 to identify specific language features that reflected the presentation of Paris and linked these with AO3, the contextual motivations for presenting Paris in the ways identified
- used Text A and Text B's contrasting presentations of Paris as a means of making connections for AO4
- showed discrimination by making careful selections of linguistic features at different language levels to explore in relevant and interesting ways
- showed high levels of linguistic precision and confidence with identifying and analysing specific features from a variety of language levels
- appreciated the links between contextual factors and language use, and evaluated the effects of context
- wrote confidently about a range of contextual factors, showing some perception
- understood that the focus was on the presentation of Paris and foregrounded this in their discussion.

As a general overview, less successful responses:

- used very generalised labels such as 'words' and 'phrases'
- used specific terminology to identify features but did not offer exemplification as support
- listed terminology in a feature spotting manner and did not use these features as a tool for analysis of the texts
- made reference to individual word classes (nouns, adjectives and adverbs) but these were not always accurately identified or purposefully developed
- used signposting phrases such as 'in comparison' but actually offered an unrelated point to the previous paragraph or sentence
- lacked confidence in exploring spontaneous spoken language
- Misunderstood mode

In terms of specific exploration of the extracts**Successful responses:**

- identified the genre and purpose of Text A as an online blog functioning as a digital diary to recount personal experience and explored how this is reflected in the language features utilised by the writer
- explored the mode of Text A demonstrating understanding of its multi-modal affordances and ability to interact with its wide audience of potential tourists or those interested in Paris
- explored the literariness of Text A in relation to its purpose to both inform and engage its reader
- identified the audience for Text B as being essentially internal/the interlocutors themselves
- understood the mode for Text B as being spontaneous spoken speech and explored relevant linguistic features that reflect the mode

- focused on the representation of Paris through specific language choices in Texts A and B, as well as other meaning-making resources such as the visual aspects of the graphological and typographical choices of the text producer in Text A

Less successful responses:

- overlooked the multi-modal nature of Text A approaching it entirely as a written text or made speculative comments about the audience being a young audience assuming that older audiences are incapable of using technology or the internet
- misunderstood the mode and audience of Text B identifying it as a multi-modal text with an audience of potential tourists or those wanting information about Paris
- explored irrelevant graphological features, orthography and punctuation in Text B again showing misunderstanding of the mode
- misunderstood the speakers' feelings and the representation of Paris in Text B as being 'unpleasant' and 'boring'
- made simplistic connections between representation of Paris in both texts focussing on positive representation of Paris in Text A compared with wholly negative representation in Text B
- compared the content of the texts rather than how it is presented by making basic comparisons for example, they both mention the 'metro' or 'the accordion'

Section B**Question 2 – Re-creative Writing**

The sole Assessment Objective here is AO5: Demonstrate expertise and creativity in the use of English to communicate in different ways. (15 marks)

This task enabled a number of students who had struggled more with the textual analysis of Question 1 to demonstrate creativity and competence in the manipulation of language for specific effects and gain solid marks in this question.

In this task students were being asked to make creative decisions about the presentation of Paris and an apartment for visitors to stay there in the form of a script for a promotional video advertisement to be shown on YouTube. The task required students to shape their scripts through their language choices by working within the genre conventions associated with multi-modal texts and more particularly, that of video advertisements.

Nearly all students recognised the purpose of the task as being to persuade an audience to stay at the publicised apartment and wrote with awareness of an adult audience of potential tourists. Where students were less successful, it was largely because they had not recognised the multi-modal aspect of the specified task and produced responses that purely reflected the written mode lacking genre conventions associated with video advertisements and thereby generally limiting the mark they could be awarded to a level 2 as they had not successfully met the requirements of the task.

In contrast to last year's series, some students did not meet the 200 word guidance and produced responses that were significantly below the suggested word count which was self-penalising as it typically meant they were unable to sufficiently display the creative skills required by the task.

Some students did not use the guidance in the rubric bullet points and chose to focus most of their response on Paris as a holiday destination and only fleetingly referred to aspects of the apartments itself which again limited their mark as they had not recognised the requirements of the task to publicise the apartment.

Students who understood the requirements of the task and recognised the mode as being multi-modal and employed genre conventions associated with video advertisements effectively, produced some highly successful responses. Some students used different voices to either represent the company 'Haven in Paris' itself, or used the speech of previous visitors who had stayed at the apartment in order to present the apartment positively to its audience. Other students used parentheses to indicate images to support the text of the script and highlight the visual mode or used prosodic cues to indicate its spoken mode. Examiners accepted any approach as valid as judgements on performance were based upon the three strands being assessed for AO5:

- creation of a new and original piece of writing
- use of the base text as a starting point/springboard
- control of any chosen style(s).

Successful responses:

- were not over-dependent on the base text and instead either made judicious use of relevant parts, or used it as a springboard for some interesting ideas to promote the apartment to an adult audience of potential tourists
- paid due attention to the second bullet point which required a focus on aspects of the apartment itself that would attract a visitor to want to stay there
- adopted a lively voice and appropriate register for its adult audience and purpose to persuade
- utilised details from the base text in appropriate and often imaginative ways rather than repeating part of its content
- used genre conventions associated with video advertisements in convincing ways and showed secure understanding of the mode
- demonstrated a clear awareness of the wider anthology and were familiar enough with scripts from YouTube to use those as style models
- demonstrated 'flair' through their chosen register and their understanding of the needs of the adult audience of potential tourists

Less successful responses:

- omitted reference to the second bullet point and wrote almost entirely about the location of the apartment to sound more like a promotional video for the tourist board about Paris itself
- used lifted words or phrases from the base text most notably 'it's a steal', 'well-located, clean and comfortable', 'pure magic' etc showing little signs of manipulation or originality
- lacked genre conventions associated with a script for a video advertisement
- wrote in a style and register that purely reflected the written mode rather than showing understanding of its multi-modal nature
- produced brief responses that were unable to display the creative skills required by the task
- adopted a register that was inconsistent with an adult audience and misjudged what tourists would find attractive about the apartment and its location

Question 3 – Critical Commentary

In this critical commentary students were asked to identify ‘four specific examples of language’ and explain their reasons for using them. They were also guided to contextual aspects that they should consider (purpose, audience, mode and genre), the meanings that they intended and the overall organisation of their commentary. These instructions directed them to the Assessment Objectives being tested in this question:

- AO2: Analyse the ways in which meanings are shaped in texts (5 marks)
- AO3: Demonstrate understanding of the significance and influence of the contexts in which texts are produced and received (20 marks)
- AO5: Demonstrate expertise and creativity in the use of English to communicate in different ways. (5 marks)

AO2 awards both the quantity of features identified (ie the extent to which they meet the four required examples of language) and the quality of the students’ discussion of these. It is also the choice of features that drives their ability to meet AO3, the exploration of contextual factors. The organisation of the commentary —ie the structural presentation of the examples selected—and the accuracy of expression is assessed in AO5. Students could score well in AO5, even if other aspects of the commentary were weaker, just by taking care in their own writing.

Overall, the majority of students were able to select some examples of language but there was some confusion as to what constitutes an example of language. For example, there were a number of students who identified the use of ‘images’, ‘music’ or ‘register’ as a language feature. In other cases, candidates were vague about the language feature identified; ‘lexis’, ‘persuasive language’. The best responses focussed carefully on different levels of language that also enabled them to explore AO3 in meaningful ways for example the use of different types of sentence – declarative, imperative, interrogative, exclamatory - specific lexical choices such as superlatives and modal verbs - the use of prosodic cues or direct address/personal pronouns.

By ‘language feature’, we mean a specific example of language that students have chosen to use at any of the language levels (grammar, lexis, discourse and so on). For example, students could make reference to their use of a group of modified noun phrases, a certain kind of pronoun, terms of address, lexical fields, sentence types, superlative adjectives, deictics and so on. These should have been consciously chosen by the student with particular interpretative effects in mind, and consequently allow them to explain why they included them. While there is no hierarchy in the type of language level selected by the candidate, it is evident that some students selected language features that lent themselves towards a tendency for more broad or generalised comments than others. For example, many candidates chose to write about rhetorical questions but frequently the comments on meanings and effects referred to ‘draw the audience in’, or ‘make them think’. Such comments could not be awarded higher than a level two for AO3.

It is worth repeating the guidance from last year’s Lead Examiner’s report that whilst it is acceptable for students to comment on isolated language choices, particularly when they are used in striking and clearly intentional ways, students should also be aware of and write about how they create textual cohesion through patterns of language use. This means that they could comment both on one single use of a minor sentence for effect and on the use of various groups of adjectives across their writing as examples of one ‘language feature’. To help students and direct their choices more successfully, it might also be helpful to use the ‘Key terms and guide to methods of language analysis: Glossary’. As an overview, the Assessment guide for Section B also

outlines what is meant by an example of language, relating this to the Specimen Assessment Material.

As was the case in last year's series, comparatively few students followed the rubric and only selected four features with some students choosing to select upwards of six or more features. This meant that however good the quality of discussion, some students missed out on the top level because they had referred to an extensive range of features rather than the four specified and hence lacked the sense of 'judicious' selection of examples that the level 5 descriptor requires. However, in contrast to last year, there were a number of students who did not identify at least three language features and so missed out on AO2 marks. This was due to a lack of precision in the use of language terminology, inaccurate use of terminology or a lack of exemplification of the feature identified.

There were fewer examples of general introductory paragraphs than last year which freed students up to write a more detailed exploration of the chosen features and meant that students mostly linked the examples of language features to ways in which their use linked to purpose, audience mode and genre. However, a recurring theme was that students often neglected to look at all four contextual bullets in the mark scheme and sometimes focussed their entire responses on one or two contextual factors most notably purpose and genre with less discussion of audience and mode.

In terms of AO5, the majority of students were able to access level 3 or above but some did not use paragraphs to organise their ideas or clearly signposting the feature to be discussed from the outset. There is no one prescribed way to set out the answer and students took different approaches to layout and organisation with some using sub-headings and others using clear topic sentences. Important to examiners was the ability to see what examples of language were being selected and some students made this more difficult as it took a whole paragraph of discussion before it was evident what specific feature was being discussed.

More successful responses:

- identified language features with precision —such as 'noun phrases', modal auxiliary verb' and sentence types such as 'imperatives' etc.
- carefully selected language features that enabled them to make meaningful comments about meanings and effects
- showed selection in the four examples chosen using these to link to different aspects of context
- showed range in their choices of language examples by selecting them from a variety of language levels
- recognised the genre of video advertisements and could explore its effects on their choice of language features
- offered thoughtful discussion of the multi-modal nature of the text and its influence on the selection of language choices
- explored and evaluated other aspects of context that were relevant to the examples of language
- produced a commentary that was well-structured with clear identification of features to be discussed either by using headings or paragraphs with clear opening topic sentences that referenced the language feature.
- took care with the technical accuracy of their writing

Less successful responses:

- Offered vague or imprecise reasons for language such as ‘words’, ‘lexis’ or did not refer to a language feature itself e.g. ‘music’, ‘images’ etc
- Identified language features but did not give specific examples from their own text as support
- Incorrectly labelled language features for example, choosing the third person pronoun when the example used was ‘we’
- Selected examples of language that had been copied from the base text – for example, the noun phrase ‘pure magic’
- Overlooked some of the contexts listed for discussion especially mode and audience
- Made broad and generalised comments about context such as ‘to attract the audience’s attention’, ‘to stand out’ or ‘to make them think’
- Lacked paragraphs or signposting of the language feature to be discussed
- Demonstrated errors in expression, punctuation and spelling

Use of statistics

Statistics used in this report may be taken from incomplete processing data. However, this data still gives a true account on how students have performed for each question.

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

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

Converting Marks into UMS marks (*delete if appropriate*)

Convert raw marks into Uniform Mark Scale (UMS) marks by using the link below.
[UMS conversion calculator](#)