
AS

ENGLISH LANGUAGE

7701/1: Language and the Individual
Report on the Examination

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General Feedback

It was clear that students of all abilities were able to access the data used for this series and were able to meet the assessment objectives. It was pleasing to see that there was comparability across the three questions. Previous issues with regard to question 3 not being answered in as much depth and detail as questions 1 and 2 have now been eliminated. This is evidence of centres successfully working with students on effective timing.

Textual Variations and Representations

Question 1

Question 1 invited students to write about meanings and representations in an extract taken from *Stylist*, an online magazine. Students showed a clear awareness of context, with those students achieving the lower marks focusing solely on mode, purpose and audience with little engagement with representation. However, the number of students who did address representation in a methodical manner once again improved this year. Many of those students who were awarded the higher marks for AO3 structured their response around various representations, mainly by writing a paragraph on each of the representations they had come up with.

Some of the key representations addressed were linked to cooking being:

- relaxing
- something quite addictive
- a way of making you a 'better' person ('properly me')
- nostalgic
- a way of making you happy.

Students also addressed representations of Laoise Casey, focusing on her being:

- brave (to quit her job)
- determined
- well-travelled
- educated
- self-aware.

Finally, some students also considered representations of the text receiver and producer. There was therefore a wide range of representations which students could have addressed in their response. However, it is important to note the need to exemplify such points by referring to specific parts of the text. This was not always the case when students wrote a very general introductory paragraph covering audience and purpose. A general paragraph stating, for example, that the audience of the text is women and the purpose is to inform, without any link to the language as evidence, is not making best use of the opportunity to make connections between context and language use.

With regard to AO1, almost all students used some appropriate linguistic terminology. There was a clear understanding from students that identification of language features was what was being assessed for this AO. However, it is important that centres remind students of the need to identify features which are of value to the task rather than any 'random' feature they have found. In order to gain the higher marks, students should try to be precise when identifying specific language features. Importantly, precision will be rewarded more than range. Real precision when labelling an appropriate number of relevant language features is far better than using more general terms to describe a wide range of less relevant features. Some centres had clearly taught their students to

be selective and precise, with impressive results. Examples of such precision would include identifying a particular feature as a ‘pre-modifying adjective’ or a ‘superlative’ rather than just an ‘adjective’.

Question 2

With regard to question 2, many of the generic points about AO1 and AO3 in question 1 are applicable once again: the most successful students identified a range of language features for AO1 and explored AO3 in detail covering genre, audience, purpose and representation. Once again, those students who were awarded the higher marks analysed a range of representations.

The representations of Nigella Lawson included her as being:

- knowledgeable
- a good cook
- close to her family (particular focus on the relationship with her mother).

Some students wrote about Lawson being represented as nervous or scared of being interviewed due to the non-fluency features evident in the transcript. Sometimes students seemed not to realise that non-fluency is an aspect of spontaneous speech – or even of deliberately planned speech that is trying to appear natural. Centres should encourage students to think carefully about how speech works, and not assume that every ‘er’ or ‘erm’ is a sign of nerves.

Another area addressed was the representation of cooking and it being:

- nostalgic
- bringing families together
- important to all cultures
- an ‘act of devotion’.

More specifically, some students considered how chicken was represented as a food source. Therefore, there was once again a wide range of representations which students could have addressed as well as commenting on audience, genre and purpose.

With regard to AO1, the students who achieved the lower marks tended to, yet again, use general terms such as ‘word’ or used linguistic terminology without any exemplification. It is important for centres to realise that to be credited for AO1 the student must give an example and label it accurately. The most successful students made judicious choices when identifying a good range of language features, using precise terminology throughout.

Q1 and Q2: A Summary

To summarise, best practice was seen in questions 1 and 2 when students:

- identified a wide range of specific and relevant language features, using precise and accurate linguistic terminology when labelling
- linked these language features to a range of contextual factors, moving beyond audience, purpose and genre and considering a range of ideas regarding representation.

Less successful responses for questions 1 and 2 included:

- a narrow range of language features identified by students (some only identifying two or three from the whole text) or a lack of precision when writing about language

- a lack of exemplification for AO1
- limited discussion of representation
- writing about context without any reference to the data (particularly in an introductory paragraph about audience, purpose and genre).

Question 3

It was pleasing to see that once again this year students' timings were good and adequate focus was given to this question. Students were able to make links between the two texts often focusing on the topic of cooking and the two women involved in the texts.

Some similarities which were made included:

- positive representations of cooking
- cooking as a nostalgic pastime
- references to childhood
- purpose
- references to the personal experiences of both women
- how both women clearly enjoy cooking.

Some differences addressed by students included:

- genre/mode
- register
- more specific cooking focus in Text B (ie roast chicken)
- amateur/professional cook.

In addition to this, those responses which gained the higher marks also compared the language of the two texts, focusing very specifically on the language choices used by the writer of Text A and by Lawson when speaking in Text B. Stronger answers exemplified points, which is vital for students to get into the higher levels. It was pleasing to see that very few students were awarded 1-3 marks; the vast majority of students did manage at least 'one/two explicit connections' in their response and even those who fell into this category were very much in the minority.

To summarise, best practice in Q3 was seen when students:

- compared and contrasted language, context and content offering a range of connections
- exemplified their discussion with specific language features, integrating linguistic knowledge into their comparisons.

Less successful responses to Q3 included:

- a focus solely on content to compare and contrast.

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

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