

AS  
**ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND  
LITERATURE**

7706/2: People and Places  
Report on the Examination

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7706  
June 2019

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Version: 1.0

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## General

In this fourth series of the specification, students generally wrote with confidence and in some detail showing engagement and understanding of the texts from the Paris Anthology. The vast majority of students:

- completed all three questions
- identified some relevant language features with accurate subject terminology either in relation to the texts in the Paris Anthology or in their own writing
- exemplified their points throughout by referring to specific textual details
- made some valid connections regarding the representation of Paris between texts for Question 1
- understood the influence of contextual factors on language choices made by writers.

It appeared that in general, students felt most confident with the demands of Section A of the paper with slightly lower marks awarded in Section B particularly for question 2, the recast task, which required students to demonstrate their skills of creativity and knowledge of genre conventions to create an audio guidebook. It is worth repeating the advice from last year's report: in order for students to perform well on Section B of the paper, centres would do well to encourage students to examine the conventions associated with the full range of texts in the Paris Anthology and experiment with replicating them successfully in their own writing.

The questions provided students of all levels with stretch and challenge and the paper proved accessible to all. It was pleasing to note how few scripts fell into level 1, with the vast majority of students able to identify at least some relevant language features with some accuracy in the use of subject terminology and valid discussion of effects. However, at the lower end, there was some evidence of students identifying less salient features for example lengthy discussions of phonology in relation to text A's use of assonance or fricatives that wasn't necessarily helpful in exploring this particular text. There was also some misunderstanding of word classes with incorrect terminology used for verb processes, nouns and adjectives indicating a lack of knowledge of some of the more basic language terminology.

As for previous years, it is worth remembering that AO1 refers to more than just the ability to apply linguistic terminology. Credit will also be given for the understanding and use of relevant concepts (ideas from language study) and methods (tools of language analysis) to help students meaningfully explore the use of language either in the Paris Anthology or in their own recreative writing.

With regard to AO3, students seemed mostly confident with identifying the influence of contextual factors on the text although there was some misunderstanding of the audience of text A. Students spoke most confidently about a range of factors related to context of production and reception but often omitted to also consider genre conventions and aspects of mode. Where students did refer to genre or mode, comments were most commonly descriptive rather than exploratory. A strong focus on both genre and mode is likely to enable students to perform well across all parts of the paper.

On this specification there are key concepts for each paper that are helpful to use as guidance for teaching. For this paper these concepts are *genre*, *representation*, *point of view*, *register* and *literariness*.

## Section A

### Question 1: Remembered Places

Students generally responded well to this question and the selection of texts seemed accessible across the ability range. As in the last series, students were able to identify at least some relevant language features with some degree of accuracy in both texts. However there was some evidence in less effective responses of feature spotting which hindered their ability to closely analyse meaning. For example in text A, some students discussed phonology and mechanically identified various ‘patterns’ of assonance, fricatives or nasals but with little evidence of this being an intentional device on the part of the writer and with over-stated claims as to its effects. There was also some common misunderstanding of fairly basic language terminology related in particular to word classes such as nouns, verbs and adjectives. For example, ‘excitement’ (text A) and ‘painstakingly’ (text B) were frequently identified incorrectly as adjectives. However, in general students identified salient language features with accurate terminology and were able to make some clear comments about effects.

In terms of AO3, most students ensured that they made clear links throughout their response regarding the influence of contextual factors on the language choices used by the text producers. However, students from some centres employed a rigid response to the way in which they approached this with mnemonics or acronyms written at the top of the response or on their plan which they then discussed in a strict order. Such an approach often limited their analysis and led to rather mechanical rather than thoughtful responses. In addition, lengthy introductory paragraphs on context unrelated to actual features in the text did little apart from merely identify contextual factors and students would do better to spend their time making clear links between context (AO3) and language features (AO1) from the outset. It is also worth repeating the advice from last year’s *Report on the Examination* that it would be helpful for students to keep in mind the three bullet point descriptors that refer to aspects of mode, genre conventions and the contexts of production and reception in order to access the full range of AO3 marks available. Students clearly felt most confident in identifying factors related to context of production and reception. In text A, most students understood the purpose to inform and advise the intended audience of parents (most likely British – although some less effective responses considered that the primary audience were children) but didn’t consider genre or mode. The same was noted with text B, with most students understanding the purpose of entertaining and informing, with the text producer retelling personal experience, but often missing opportunities to link this to genre conventions of the text. Where mode was discussed, only the most effective responses were able to discuss the planned, highly crafted nature of the texts and aspects of literariness that were associated with the written mode.

For AO4, examiners reported that students this series were in general producing much more balanced responses. The vast majority of students were able to make valid comparisons and showed awareness of the requirement to compare representations of Paris in the texts. There was an improvement this year in the way that students approached this which was evident in some of the thoughtful plans that were seen which demonstrated a clear comparative focus. However, there was some evidence of comparative discourse markers being used to signal a point of comparison where the connection made between texts was unclear or clearly not a point of comparison at all.

As a general overview, successful responses:

- showed a more explicit awareness of the Assessment Objectives and their relative weighting in structuring answers and in informing decisions about which aspects of the texts to explore
- linked Assessment Objectives within paragraphs: for example, used AO1 to work with different concepts and methods and to identify specific language features that reflected the representation of Paris. They were able to link these with AO3, the contextual motivations for representing Paris in the ways identified
- used text A and text B's contrasting representations 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 representation of Paris and foregrounded this in their discussion.

As a general overview, less successful responses:

- used very generalised labels such as 'words' and 'phrases' or applied language labels inaccurately throughout
- used specific terminology to identify features but did not offer exemplification as support
- neglected to link language features to relevant contextual factors
- focused their discussion of context on a slim range of factors most notably related to context of production and reception but did not discuss genre or mode
- used signposting phrases such as 'in comparison' but actually offered an unrelated point to the previous paragraph or sentence.

In terms of specific exploration of the extracts, successful responses:

- demonstrated understanding of the audience of text A being parents, possibly British, with the purpose to inform and advise and explored how this is reflected in the language choices utilised by the writer
- explored pragmatics in both texts and assumptions made by the writer's demonstrated through their language choices linked to their audiences
- discussed the genres of the texts: text A, as a written guide for tourists; text B as a book combining genre elements of travel writing and memoirs
- recognised the planned written mode of the texts and its influence on the language features utilised
- identified the personal, reflective nature of text B but also understood its purpose to entertain an external audience as reflected in its literariness
- explored the writer's use of humour in text B and how this is reflected in the language choices used

- made clear connections about the differing representations of Paris: in text A as a place ideal for a holiday destination for parents with children of various ages; in text B as a place of historical significance for an older, adult audience.

In terms of specific exploration of the extracts, less successful responses:

- misunderstood the audience for text A as being children, not their parents
- considered the genre of text B as being a diary for only personal use
- overlooked the written mode of the texts or merely identified the mode without discussion of its impact on the language features utilised
- feature spotting in text A particularly in relation to the use of phonology with overstated claims as to effects
- made basic errors in relation to subject terminology
- misunderstood the representation of Paris in one or both texts with some unconvincing assertions about the negative portrayal of Paris as being claustrophobic and with nowhere to play ball games (text A), or as somewhere to be avoided because of the cemetery being difficult to navigate (text B)
- made few connections between the texts or compared the content of the texts rather than how it is presented by making basic comparisons for example, they both discuss Paris, they are both written etc.

## Section B

### Question 2: Re-creative Writing

This task gives students the opportunity to demonstrate creativity and competence in the manipulation of language for specific effects. However, despite some very effective responses, in general it appeared to give students the most difficulty and was lowest-scoring question across the paper. Some students who had produced excellent responses on Section A failed to gain high marks on this question.

The task required students to shape writing through their language choices by working within the genre conventions associated with audio guide books. Students were being asked to inform and guide tourists around the Pere Lachaise cemetery. However many students did not reflect this purpose in their writing resulting in recasts which attempted to persuade the audience to visit the cemetery and so adopted a style more consistent with a promotional advertisement than that of an audio guidebook. In addition, while some students understood the purpose of informing the audience about aspects of the cemetery, they omitted the second bullet point of guiding tourists around the cemetery completely.

As in previous series, a recurring issue for less effective responses continues to be significant lifting of phrases from the base text. It is worth repeating the advice from last year's *Report on the Examination* that in order to gain marks higher than level 2, students should use the base text as inspiration and as a springboard to demonstrate their own creativity and avoid repeating words or phrases from the base text in their own recast. It was not unusual for examiners to mark responses that relied so heavily on large amounts of textual detail from the base text that there was very little of the students' own writing to assess.

Students who understood the requirements of the task and employed genre conventions associated with audio guidebooks effectively produced some highly successful and effective responses. There were many different approaches noted by examiners in response to this task.

Some students created more than one voice with two different presenters taking turns to present various aspects of the cemetery. Others used one speaker and indicated their understanding of the genre and mode by employing pauses, indicating intonational emphasis, or using references to background music or sounds. Some students created an authoritative and knowledgeable voice clearly aimed at a mature and cultured adult audience while others used humour appropriately and created a less formal tone aiming to entertain a wide audience of tourists. 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 to create an effective recast
- adopted a convincing voice and appropriate register for its adult audience and achieved the purpose to both inform and guide tourists around the cemetery
- utilised details from the base text in appropriate and often imaginative ways rather than repeating part of its content
- used genre conventions associated with audio guidebooks confidently
- demonstrated a clear awareness of the wider anthology and were familiar enough with audio guidebooks to use those as style models
- demonstrated flair through their chosen register and sustained this throughout their writing.

Less successful responses:

- used lifted words or phrases from the base text most notably; ‘the most visited cemetery in the world’, ‘fashionable address for the afterlife’, ‘Napoleon converted what was originally a slum neighbourhood’, ‘winding avenues and tree-lined boulevards’. ‘larger than life muscular bronze angels and austere black granite obelisks’, etc showing little signs of manipulation or originality
- lacked genre conventions associated with audio guidebooks
- wrote in an inappropriate style and register to sound more like a promotional advertisement encouraging the audience to visit the cemetery rather than recognising the audience are already at the cemetery and require information and guidance
- did not address all the bullet points in the question most notably the second bullet point and therefore did not meet the text’s purpose of guiding tourists around the cemetery.

### **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.

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.

Timing this series was an issue for some students leading to commentaries that were very brief or clearly rushed and the majority of students were able to select some examples of language features with some discussion of interpretative effects demonstrating understanding of why they had been selected. Some students, however, made generalised comments. For example, some students chose to write about pronouns or exclamatory sentences but made broad statements about the purpose being to 'engage the audience' or 'grab their attention' and therefore lacked a sense of development or proper explanation and understanding of language use limiting the mark awarded to level 2.

It was pleasing to note that there were far fewer instances this series of students referring to a language feature in the text without offering an example. However, as full credit can only be given in AO2 where a language feature has been correctly identified, some students lost marks for applying linguistic terminology inaccurately. The most effective responses focused carefully on different levels of language that also enabled them to explore AO3 in meaningful ways. They also paid careful attention to the bulletpoints and the guidance to consider the contextual factors of purpose, audience, mode and genre. However, many students lost AO2 marks as well as AO3 marks by focusing on only one or two contextual factors and so could not be placed in level 4 or higher as they had not shown careful selection of language features. As for previous series, students most commonly discussed purpose and audience but there was less consideration of genre and mode. Although the commentary is marked independently of the recast in question 2, it was clear that students who produced competent and effective recasts with a strong sense of genre conventions being applied appropriately were generally more able to write a commentary that showed a secure understanding of language features and their effects.

The accuracy and structure of students writing is assessed on this question through AO5 and the vast majority of students were able to successfully organise their ideas into clear paragraphs. More students used some form of signposting to clearly identify the feature being discussed from the outset with clear topic sentences or by using sub-headings. Examiners were instructed to accept either approach as perfectly acceptable ways for students to structure their writing. Technical accuracy has also improved this year with far fewer cases of students making spelling errors of commonplace vocabulary eg sentence/sentance, audience/audiance, writer/writter. The vast majority of students also used punctuation correctly throughout although when there were issues, this appeared to be the result of time pressures encountered near the end of the paper. Students would do well to manage their time effectively, leaving time to carefully proof read their commentaries so that they can achieve well on AO5.

More successful responses:

- identified language features with precision
- 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 the four 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 audio guidebooks and could explore its effects on their choice of language features
- discussed the mode 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 a very brief response as a result of poor time management
- incorrectly labelled language features
- overlooked some of the contexts listed for discussion especially genre and mode
- made broad or generalised comments about effects eg 'grab the audience's attention', 'engage the audience', 'make it more interesting' etc
- demonstrated errors in expression, punctuation and spelling.

### **Mark Ranges and Award of Grades**

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

### **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.