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# **GCSE EXAMINERS' REPORTS**

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**GCSE  
ENGLISH LANGUAGE**

**SUMMER 2022**

Grade boundary information for this subject is available on the WJEC public website at:  
<https://www.wjecservices.co.uk/MarkToUMS/default.aspx?l=en>

### **Online Results Analysis**

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### **Annual Statistical Report**

The annual Statistical Report (issued in the second half of the Autumn Term) gives overall outcomes of all examinations administered by WJEC.

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# ENGLISH LANGUAGE

## GCSE

### Summer 2022

#### UNIT 1

#### General Comments

Moderators for this series were pleased to find that many centres had returned to this unit of assessment with a keen focus on capturing performances with efficiency and accuracy. The benefit of entering candidates for a single task, the Individual Researched Presentation, allowed for comments on Record Sheets to be tailored and for the submission of notes to become an integral part of many submissions.

WJEC Record Sheets were used by more engaged centres to provide a clear sense of a candidate's performance in the light of the band descriptors. Beyond that, they were also refined in focus in order to reflect the individuality of each performance. Such a level of engagement from teachers was appreciated by moderators, as it provided a clear sense of why marks had been awarded. The inclusion of notes/cue cards gave an extra layer of accountability and left no doubt about the degree to which a candidate had learned and rehearsed their material, prior to it being delivered to an audience.

The mark of a centre's true confidence in the process often saw these features being complemented by audio-visual recordings. It was a pleasure to see candidates deliver their ideas, often with enthusiasm and care. Even in cases where they may have lacked confidence, these recordings offered an extra dimension to the assessment, one which is hard to quantify but should not be overlooked by centres. It is a fact of the process that a moderator is the last audience member that a candidate is invited to engage with. This is achieved with much greater effect if the candidate is visible. All centres who acknowledged this were offered due praise by moderators in their reports. Embracing audio-visual recordings was also a wise move when it is considered that the Group Discussion will again feature in submissions from Autumn 2022 onwards. Without such recordings in that scenario, it can be very difficult to give due praise to all candidates. If centres have yet to use audio-visual as standard procedure, the next series would be a very good place to start.

Sometimes centres explained why audio-only recording formats have been adopted for certain classes or individuals. Such contextual correspondence is very valuable for moderators, as is any communication shared either via the Subject Officer or by adding a document to the Surpass upload. Transparency with regards to the absence of notes was also appreciated. A significant minority of centres continued to avoid sending notes and prompts, even though they were clearly in use. Future examination series will see centres automatically referred to WJEC for further investigation unless adequate reasons are given regarding the absence of notes. Candidates are very unlikely to operate without them, so it will be assumed that they have, quite rightly, been an integral part of the performance. It will save all parties significant inconvenience if they are submitted as standard practice at the same time as recordings and Record Sheets are uploaded. Of course, these notes are quite specifically not scripts. They should not be composed in full prose. Instead, they should contain key words/phrases/facts that should act as triggers towards the development of ideas. This is a skill worth engaging with ahead of the IRPs, rather than the assessment being the first time such refining of ideas is considered. Indeed, the most successful candidates were those from centres where oracy skills had clearly been an integral part of their English work since Key Stage 3.

There was some sympathy for candidates at some centres for whom the task was a bolt-on, hastily tagged to an end of term or afforded limited preparation time.

Thankfully, these cases were less common. Instead, there was a rise in cases whereby departments had co-ordinated dedicated days to capture the performances and had also internally moderated assessments. This could not have been achieved without the support of senior staff, who had permitted candidates to come off timetable and liaised with other departments in centres. Similar support would also be welcome for colleagues in English departments who must upload samples and input data in addition to their teaching responsibilities. Hours spent doing this administrative task for large entries would have been far better spent in the classroom or reflecting on assessments.

### **Comments on individual questions/sections**

Moderators were very pleased to encounter a range of interesting topics. Centres were far less inclined to invite candidates to just broadly engage with the themes put forward by WJEC for the task, such as 'Wales' or 'Leisure'. Instead, particular points of focus were found, such as 'Why should we welcome immigrants to Wales?' or 'Why should more be done to encourage young people to take up swimming?' Indeed, the use of questions to propel ideas was more apparent than ever, and there were impressive efforts to shape and structure ideas. It was particularly encouraging to find that candidates had been given licence to pursue ideas of personal interest and this often involved them engaging with challenging topics that must have increased their appreciation of the relevance of the assessment. The gender pay gap, modern materialism, the pursuit of happiness, the effects of long Covid and the impact of home working were amongst the topics that gave the assessment a real sense of tapping into current concerns. Many were rewarded for their efforts in the form of questions from the assessor or audience. This demonstration of verbal reasoning skills, beyond prepared materials, should become second nature for those centres who have yet to embrace it. Without questions, presentations can often be too short. When asked questions that have picked up on content, candidates can often enhance their ideas and speak in a manner that can be both considered and natural in its delivery.

Despite the overwhelmingly positive sense of good work being undertaken at many centres, a third of centres demonstrated erroneous assessment within the sample. This was rarely due to a wholesale failure to apply standards across a cohort. Rather, there was often an absence of consistency within departments, something which can only be addressed by internal moderation. Standardising procedures by WJEC at the end of the assessment process saw many hours of mark scrutiny take place in order to ensure fairness to all candidates. This process must start at the centre, so that candidates in all teaching group are marked by teachers who are confident in their application of marks. Successful centres were those who often marked in pairs and sampled recordings as a department, prior to submission to WJEC. They had also clearly paid heed to advice given in the CPD sessions of Winter 2022 and had read the advice offered in the last Principal Moderator report. Moderators were always particularly pleased to note the professionalism of those centres who responded to advice in their previous centre reports. In pulling together trends and issues from across a diverse range of recording, these reports are often painstakingly composed by moderators. The reports offer centres a clear sense of what they are doing well and what needs to be refined in their approach. They continue to be the primary source of training for this unit of assessment.

## Summary of key points

The report for November 2021 ended with three headlines, two of which were addressed by many centres (the importance of questions and the need for ample preparation time). The remaining headline remains as the first point below and should be seen as a priority as we move towards the return of the Group Discussion.

- As with any other centre-based assessment, internal standardisation must take place to ensure consistency across all teaching groups. This process would also reveal the difficulties and doubts encountered when moderators were presented with audio-only recordings in the Summer 2022 submissions. It would have required a conscious choice to disable cameras. Should this choice be made in the future, centres should offer a rationale for this decision. For instances where notes are not offered, an adequate explanation must be offered by centres.
- The experience and judgment of moderators remains the arbiter in cases where there are suspicions that candidates have been reading from heavily scripted materials. Candidates should not be awarded marks beyond mid-Band 3 when it is deemed that reading has occurred. In this assessment, reading is not assessed, and it is an obstacle to the effective communication of information and ideas. It would certainly not carry a performance into Band 4, as over-reliance on prompts is not a hallmark of the confident conveying of information and ideas. Some centres addressed this issue via tailored commentaries on Record Sheets and the appropriate adjustments of marks. They were duly praised by moderators for maintaining the integrity of this unit of the course.
- As we move back towards two tasks, centres will do their candidates a great service if they can allow them to be seen, not just heard, in a group context, as well as when presenting individually. Moderators seek to support and corroborate the good work of candidates and their teachers. Audio-visual recordings are an invaluable aid in this process, and they immediately create a positive context for the final stage of assessment, that being the external moderation of a centre's work. Naturally, assessors at centres expect to see candidates during the activities; similarly, WJEC's team of moderators is surprised when this opportunity has been denied them. Every effort should be made to offer equal access to performances, so that the outcomes can be observed and enjoyed by all involved in the process of assessing candidates.

Thank you to all involved in the process of delivering the Unit 1 assessment and allowing candidates to develop their skills in a non-examination context.

## ENGLISH LANGUAGE

### GCSE

Summer 2022

#### UNIT 2: DESCRIPTION, NARRATION AND EXPOSITION

##### General Comments

A question-by-question breakdown of the Unit 2 examination is provided below. This was based on the theme of 'Lifeboats'. Candidates were provided with five reading texts which provided a balance between continuous and non-continuous writing. Reading question types were varied across the paper to assess the expected range of skills. Writing skills were assessed by a proof-reading task followed by a choice of either Description or Exposition extended writing.

The topic of the question paper was well-received with the theme appearing to engage the vast majority of candidates. Most seemed to be interested in the topic and many were able to use the reading texts, in addition to their own knowledge and experiences, as a starting point for the development of ideas in the writing section. The gratitude felt towards the emergency services, in particular the volunteer-led sector, was widespread. Obviously, given the theme of the examination, the RNLI was the organisation to receive most admiration and respect for the work they do to save lives, but they were by no means the only organisations held in high esteem. The Air Ambulance and Mountain Rescue services, as well as all elements of the emergency services, were clearly highly regarded by a great number of candidates.

Overall, there was evidence of detailed and enthusiastic responses to this exam. Most candidates worked diligently, and both the set texts and questions appeared accessible. Time management did not appear to be problematic, and most candidates were able to provide full and detailed answers to all questions. As ever a few candidates were unable, or unwilling, to engage with all of the materials on offer, but this appeared to be a very small minority of the candidature. Examiners reported that most candidates were keen to engage and give of their best.

##### Comments on individual questions/sections

This section will focus on candidate performance across each individual question.

##### SECTION A (Reading): 40 marks

###### Text A

This text was adapted from a factsheet written by the RNLI to provide information for their staff and volunteers. The text provided information on what the organisation is all about. It gave details about their vision and values, as well as more specific information on what they have achieved, their income and charitable spending. This was a non-continuous text which provided information through both diagrams and subheading-led, non-continuous written information.

###### A1 What is the vision of the RNLI?

[1]

*This question tested the ability to use deduction skills to retrieve information.*

The first question of the exam is designed to offer a straightforward introduction to the first text and the selected theme. This was a straightforward location question and the answer was easily located below the subheading 'Vision' close to the beginning of the text. The majority of candidates were successful in response to this question. Incorrect answers generally came from those who copied down an incorrect section of text or who did not include sufficient information in their answer. Very occasionally candidates tried to put the information into their own words and moved away from the necessary meaning.

**A2. Which one of the following statements is not true? Tick (✓) that box: [1]**  
*This question tested the ability to use verbal reasoning and deduction skills to analyse information.*

This question presented candidates with five multiple-choice options and required them to isolate the statement that was incorrect. All of the statements were based on information from the text although the fifth statement suggested that the RNLI 'is a part of the Coastguard'. This was the correct answer as this statement was not true. The text clearly states in the opening paragraph that the RNLI is 'separate from the Coastguard'.

It was essential that candidates read both the question and text carefully and were sure of what they were looking for. This task proved straightforward for most and success rates were high with over 90% making the correct choice.

**A3. What did the RNLI dedicate 53% of its charitable spending to in 2018? [1]**  
*This question tested the ability to use deduction skills to retrieve information.*

This proved to be one of the most straightforward questions on the examination paper. Candidates were required to locate the necessary information in the 'Charitable spend' diagram. Very few proved unable to isolate the correct answer which was 'lifeboats, property and equipment' and there were high levels of success.

**A4. What does this text say which shows that the RNLI still has important work to do? [3]**  
*This question tested the ability to interpret meaning, ideas and information and to refer to evidence within texts.*

This question required candidates to engage carefully with what was being asked. Candidates who made most progress were those who were fully aware that they were looking for details relating to the fact that the RNLI **still** has 'important work to do'. The question looked for clear awareness that there is still significant loss of life in both the UK and Irish waters and across the world. Examiners were instructed that candidates may access those ideas through specified evidence from the text and many made clear progress in relation to those points. Those who used this particular evidence but did not progress most often were too slight in their coverage. For example, stating that '150 people still lose their lives' was insufficient information to show engagement with the question.

Some candidates also made progress through explanations which considered that prevention work is ongoing or by offering an exploration of the RNLI's vision, which is clearly not yet complete. These points did need some unpicking and credit was not given to answers which just copied this aspect of the text. It was also possible to access marks through explaining that the text demonstrates that the RNLI's spending exceeds income or that there is more to be done to raise funds. These points were far less frequently seen though.

At times the candidates' use of tenses made their lack of engagement with the question clear. Using evidence relating to events in the past, such as the people who have been saved or the donations that have been received, did not demonstrate engagement with the fact that there is 'still' work to do.

### **Text B**

This text reproduced a poster which had been produced to advertise an open day at Tenby lifeboat station. The text provided details about the open day – including what would be happening and providing specific times. This was a bright and colourful non-continuous text which provided information linked to specific time slots.

**A5. What does the text mean when it refers to a 'rare chance to get aboard Tenby's lifeboat'?** [1]

*This question tested the ability to interpret meaning.*

This question was intended to provide moderate challenge to candidates. They were required to engage with the meaning of the phrase. Understanding tended to be dependent on whether they could offer clear engagement with the word 'rare' and, to some extent, the word 'chance'. Successful answers demonstrated clear understanding that this is an occasion or opportunity that doesn't happen very often.

Less successful answers tended to be vague in their explanations or reused the key words from the question. In some cases, candidates offered answers that were too extreme – such as it being a 'once in a lifetime' opportunity, which was also incorrect.

Candidates ought to be reminded of the following:

- to find and read the selected phrase in the context it was written
- to engage as precisely as possible with the meaning of the phrase
- to use their own words when answering

**A6. List two things it is possible to do at the open day between 10.00am and 4.30pm.** [2]

*This question tested the ability to use deduction skills to retrieve information.*

This was a straightforward question which most were able to answer with some accuracy. Candidates were required to select two activities that it was possible to do from the correct time slot. Less successful answers took two main directions here. Firstly, some candidates gave extremely brief information which did not demonstrate what it was possible to do – for example, just listing 'souvenirs' or 'lifeboat's technology'. To be eligible for credit, these needed the accompanying verb such as 'buy souvenirs' or 'learn about the lifeboat's technology'. Secondly, some candidates selected activities from the '5.00 PM' section of the text, which clearly did not answer the set question.

Overall, this question had high success rates and candidates used the bullet point layout provided in the answer booklet to their best advantage.

**A7. What is meant by the phrase 'vantage point' in this text? Tick (✓) the correct box.** [1]

*This question tested the ability to use verbal reasoning skills, inference and deduction skills.*

This question presented candidates with four multiple-choice options and required them to isolate the statement that was correct. The question proved reasonably straightforward, although there were credible distractors included, so it was essential that candidates read all elements of the text and question carefully and made sensible use of the context of the phrase.

The second answer 'A position that gives a good view' was the correct answer. All distractors were selected by the candidates, although the last one proved the most popular of the alternatives. The vast majority – over eighty-eight percent of the candidature – were able to identify the correct answer.

### **TEXT C**

This text was adapted from an article in an online magazine. It was a relatively brief piece of continuous writing which discussed the criticism faced by the RNLI for their overseas work.

**A8. Write down one way in which members of the public have reacted to criticism of the RNLI. [1]**

*This question tested the ability to use deduction skills to retrieve information.*

This was a straightforward question which asked candidates to write down one way in which members of the public have reacted to criticism of the RNLI. There were only two possible answers and candidates could achieve a mark for either stating that the public cancelled donations or that they pledged to increase support. Some candidates elected to make doubly sure that they were correct and wrote down both ways – these were, of course, marked as correct.

There appeared to be relatively few candidates who did not make progress here. Those who did not perhaps struggled to engage with the question or text. A few copied inappropriate information from the text or applied the question to the wrong text.

**A9. Explain why some MPs were concerned about the RNLI's international work. [2]**

*This question tested the ability to interpret meaning, ideas and information in more challenging writing and to refer to evidence within texts.*

This question required candidates to engage with evidence and explain the concern of the MPs. There were two areas that could be considered. The first was that the MPs did not think the public would be 'aware' that they were donating to projects abroad and this was often accessed by an explanation to suggest that they were concerned that the British public was being misled. The other area that could be explained was in relation to Andrew Bridgen's concern that projects like the RNLI's international work should be supported by the 'government's international aid budget' rather than by RNLI donations.

Many candidates were able to make some progress but there were fewer who accessed both available marks. There were some obvious barriers to success here. Although candidates could progress with an evidence-led answer, those who only used evidence did not attempt to explain and therefore were not eligible for credit. Some candidates struggled by being quite vague and unclear. For example, there were numerous candidates who seemed confused about whether they were writing about MPs or the public or were ambiguous in explanation through misapplied generic terms like 'charity'.

### **TEXT D**

This text was a longer piece of continuous writing which was adapted from an article in a national newspaper. The article addresses the criticism faced by the RNLI in the media and reports on some of the context to its international work.

**A10. What does the text mean when it describes the charity’s website as having ‘a month’s worth of traffic in a few days’? [1]**

*This question tested the ability to interpret meaning.*

This question was intended to provide challenge. Candidates were required to engage with the meaning of the phrase and needed to show a sense that they understood the ‘traffic’ part of the phrase referred to those visiting the website. It was also necessary to show engagement with the sense that the site was busier than usual, or that there was an increase or surge in the number of people visiting. Examiners were instructed that there were likely to be valid alternatives and to consider whether those candidates using synonyms for any of the ideas presented above had understood the meaning of the phrase. For example, credit would certainly have been given to those who expressed that there was a spike in the number of people accessing the website.

There were multiple ways in which candidates struggled with this question. Less successful answers tended to be vague in their explanations or, like in question A5, tended to be over reliant on key words from the question. Some candidates also demonstrated limited awareness by referring to the people visiting the website as ‘customers’. In some cases, candidates offered answers that read too much into the phrase – for example they focused solely on donations or suggested that the website had been ‘overwhelmed’.

**A11. Synthesise what is said in Text C and Text D about RNLI’s international work. [10]**

*This question tested the ability to synthesise information effectively from more than one text, interpret meaning and ideas in a text and to use inference and deduction skills to retrieve and analyse details.*

This was one of the more challenging questions on the examination and required candidates to range across two texts and provide specific information about RNLI’s international work. Attempt rates were pleasing, and it was clear that, for most candidates, there was no shortage of effort in trying to find a range of points and put together sustained information. As with Summer 2019’s Unit 2 examination, this was not the final reading question on the paper and candidates were asked to focus on Text C and Text D. There will always be a few candidates who do not respond to this question using the correct texts, but happily instances of this appeared to be few and far between.

There was a wealth of information across both texts about RNLI’s international work and most candidates managed to include a range of details. Text C perhaps provided the most straightforward information, but Text D gave candidates real opportunities to push on and make accurate and perceptive comments in relation to evidence.

This question did raise some significant points of concern about approach. Increasing numbers of candidates elected to organise their answer to this question using bullet points. For some, this was little more than a presentational device and these candidates still wrote their answers in clear and detailed sentences, which will have had little impact on their potential mark. However, this is not true for a significant number of candidates who will not have achieved their potential in this question as a result of using bullet points. Brief bullet-pointed lists that decontextualise the necessary information, often omitting key details are not a desirable way to take shortcuts with this question. Examiners reported significant numbers of answers that were framed using bullet points coming through the system at similar times. This may indicate that this is an approach being deliberately taught by some centres and we would strongly suggest that this is inadvisable. CPD feedback has always been clear about the use of bullet points. They should only be deliberately used on the summary question or where they have been suggested in the answer booklet. In any other questions this format may disadvantage candidates.

Some candidates resorted to unselectively copying significant ‘chunks’ of information for the respective texts and will have failed to progress through the marking bands as a result. This is a message that applies to all questions but an over-reliance on copying did seem to be more of an issue in the higher tariff questions such as this one.

Candidates ought to be reminded of the following:

- bullet points are **not** an appropriate way to set out an answer to this question
- avoid using a table or listing approach
- always read the question carefully and use it to guide the focus of an answer
- try to include information from both texts
- try to include a range of different points

### **TEXT E**

This was a longer narrative text, adapted from a novel about a rescue which takes place at sea. The text begins with a description of a lifeboat heading out to sea in stormy conditions. This scene is watched by a reporter and her camera crew who then go into the lifeboat house to question the remaining staff. The subsequent conversation provides detailed information about the lifeboat crew and rescues at sea. The structure of the text was driven, to a large degree, by the use of dialogue. Candidates will have benefited from tracking this text very carefully.

**A12. What does the writer imply with the phrase ‘crested a huge breaking wave’ in the first paragraph?**

**Tick (✓) the correct box.**

**[1]**

*This question tested the ability to use verbal reasoning skills, inference and deduction skills.*

This question presented candidates with four multiple-choice options and required them to isolate the statement that was correct. This question was intended to provide challenge and test understanding and that proved to be the case. It was essential that candidates made sensible use of the context of the phrase to stand the best chance of accessing the right answer.

The first option, ‘The boat is moving at the top of a huge wave’ was the correct answer. It was also the most popular answer with a selection rate of over forty-four percent of candidates. All distractors were selected by the candidates, although the second one proved the most popular of the alternatives with over twenty-eight percent of candidates selecting it. Some candidates elected to choose more than one answer which was also incorrect.

**A13. What impressions does the writer create of the lifeboat crew?**

**[10]**

*This question tested the ability to refer to evidence within texts and use inference and deduction skills to retrieve and analyse information.*

This was the final higher tariff reading question on the examination paper and there was no shortage of effort from candidates. There were many who proved able to answer this question in a clear and focused way. As ever with this question, the ability to combine a clear and detailed range of evidence with skills of inference and analysis was crucial to success. Many candidates appeared engaged by the reading material and were successful in isolating crucial details about the lifeboat crew.

There was real challenge for the highest achieving candidates as some skill was required to isolate precise impressions and make perceptive comments about a wide range of details, but most candidates were able to make some progress. Many candidates were able to engage with the sense that the lifeboat crew were dedicated and heroic, and they did this in different but equally effective ways.

This question did prove problematic for some candidates. The question clearly asked for impressions of the lifeboat crew, but some elected to write about their impressions of the camera crew. This was not what was demanded by the question and unfortunately no credit could be given to points made about the camera crew as opposed to the lifeboat crew. Some candidates did prove able to rescue themselves a little from this predicament and they may have been aided by sensible and chronological tracking of the text. As a result, although some wrote initially about the camera crew, by working through the text they eventually reached the point where there was more focus on details connected with the lifeboat crew. This suggests that realisation took place and some were able to realign the direction of their answer.

There were quite a number of candidates who elected to use additional pages to complete their work on this question. In the vast majority of cases, this caused no issue whatsoever. Carefully labelled work on additional pages is effectively collated through the scanning process. Those candidates who did not indicate which question they were writing about, or as happened in some cases, misnumbered their responses, made matters more difficult.

### Editing

**A14. Read the paragraph below and then answer the questions that follow: [2]**

**Mark looked .....(1)..... the horizon with growing unease. The storm was definitely getting closer .....(2)..... he knew that her boat had not yet returned.**  
*This question tested the ability to understand texts at word level.*

This question tested a candidate's ability to work out the appropriate word choices in the context of the presented sentences. Four possible answers were provided for each space and candidates were required to choose the correct words. There were high levels of success for this question which suggested that the majority were able to complete this task. Candidates appear well drilled on the necessity to make their choices clear so even where they changed their mind on selections, most were able to make that clear to the examiner, and it will not have hindered opportunities to gain marks.

**A15. Tick the pair of words that best fit the meaning of the sentence below: [1]**

**The wave took them by surprise but they ..... it off and decided to head back to shore, just as another wave ..... toward them.**  
*This question tested the ability to understand texts at sentence level.*

This question was presented as multiple choice and candidates needed to tick the pair of words that best fit into the sentence given to them. As with A14, high success rates suggested that most were well equipped to answer this question. As ever, a few candidates chose not to follow the instructions and tried to make their own word combinations by selecting words individually and ticking more than one box or writing them into the spaces. This will not have given them positive outcomes.

**A16. Read the text below and show your understanding by answering the questions that follow:**

1. She was able to confirm that she had got into difficulties after her boat capsized.
2. Speaking from her hospital bed, Jenny Weston said she was grateful to be alive.
3. Later her family issued a statement offering their sincere gratitude to the Coastguard and RNLI volunteers for their outstanding efforts in finding Jenny.
4. A yachtswoman has been rescued after spending 24 hours in the ocean.
5. The 32-year-old woman was picked up by a coastguard helicopter, 17 miles off the Atlantic coast.

(a) Which sentence should come **first** in the text? Write the number of the sentence below. [1]

(b) Which sentence should come **fifth** in the text? Write the number of the sentence below. [1]

*This question tested the ability to understand texts at text level.*

Candidates seemed to be on familiar territory with this question. They needed to work out the order for all of the sentences in order to see which sentence fit best into the required location. There was some challenge here but the majority of candidates were able to determine at least one of these answers.

The correct sequence was as follows:

1. A yachtswoman has been rescued after spending 24 hours in the ocean.
2. The 32-year-old woman was picked up by a coastguard helicopter, 17 miles off the Atlantic coast.
3. Speaking from her hospital bed, Jenny Weston said she was grateful to be alive.
4. She was able to confirm that she had got into difficulties after her boat capsized.
5. Later her family issued a statement offering their sincere gratitude to the Coastguard and RNLI volunteers for their outstanding efforts in finding Jenny.

There was one barrier to success which seemed to be more problematic than in previous Unit 2 examinations. Multiple examiners reported of seeing issues with regard to handwriting and accurate number formation. For example, the correct answer for A16 (a) was sentence 4. There were numerous instances where examiners could not determine what number the candidate was aiming for. Clearly further investigation took place, we took pains to investigate number formation elsewhere on the exam paper and looked carefully at any working out the candidate had done. Where none of this was helpful though, a candidate may have lost marks due to not presenting their work with sufficient clarity.

## SECTION B

### Proofreading

- B1. In this question, candidates were asked to read a short text, circle the given errors and write the corrections in the spaces provided for them. [5]**

*This task tested a candidate's ability to write accurately.*

The majority of candidates were able to make some progress with this question. The text was presented as an announcement about the RNLI making redundancies. Unsurprisingly, the two errors most often identified and accurately corrected were 'Nacional' and 'lawnched'. The other three errors were perhaps less often identified and corrected. Many candidates were able to pick out 'neccessary' as an error but unfortunately not all were able to convert this into an accurate correction. Examiners reported seeing a great number of lists of alternative spellings for this word as candidates clearly tried out their various options.

As ever, credit can only be given to corrections which do not make further errors. These corrections must appear exactly as they would appear in the text being corrected. For example, the 'National' correction needed to begin with a capital letter and 'lawnched' had to start with a lower-case letter. Further to this, candidates would be well advised to follow the instructions to circle the errors to be corrected. When marking the 'have'/'has' correction, for example, it would not have been clear to an examiner whether the 'has' correction was accurate unless 'have' was identified as an error on the text – this word could easily have been connected to other appearances of 'has' within the text.

### SECTION B (Writing): 40 marks

- B2. For this task the specification states that 'one writing task' is to be chosen 'from a choice of two that could be either description, narration or exposition'. On this occasion, candidates were able to choose between:**

- (a) **Describe an occasion when you, or someone you know, showed courage.**
- (b) **Emergency and rescue services, such as the RNLI and Air Ambulance do amazing work to save lives. Write an essay on the importance of emergency and rescue services, giving clear reasons and examples. [35]**

Both writing questions proved to be accessible to candidates, many of whom wrote with enthusiasm and engagement.

Task A was a description writing task which encouraged candidates to draw upon their own experiences. Better writing tended to describe a fairly contained experience or 'occasion' which features relatively few characters. This gave the opportunity to develop pleasing detail in relation to character and situation.

Some candidates elected to describe more than one occasion where courage had been shown or seemed to write from a more fictitious perspective. They were not penalised for doing so although, as with the previous years, it is possible that in taking this approach, they limited their opportunities for writing in developed and meaningful detail and thus may have been self-punitive. There was no right or wrong way to approach this task, as ever markers were keen to see well-written, engaging and coherent writing that was task aware.

The content of these accounts was varied and there were many instances where examiners felt thoroughly engaged by and in awe of the courage shown by candidates. It would be remiss not to mention how the experiences of the last few years may have influenced the work of candidates in this section, and there were many accounts of courage in relation to the effects of Covid 19 and/or its legacies. For some, the act of returning to school or day-to-day life, coping with stressful situations, and coping with the numerous changes that have taken place as a result of Covid 19 were all ways of demonstrating courage.

Descriptive responses were pleasingly varied. Examiners also reported being entertained by daring rescue attempts at sea or on mountain tops and courageous attempts to tackle big challenges like sky diving, cliff jumping or tasks of physical endurance. Equally as pleasing were those who spent their time wisely depicting in detail the monumental levels of courage required to banish a spider from their room or to board an aeroplane! In careful hands, many relatively minor displays of courage were developed in pleasing and entertaining detail.

Task B was an exposition task and also produced many very detailed responses. Whilst it is impossible to give an accurate indication of the number of candidates who elected to complete this task, most examiners seemed to think this may have been the more popular choice. Candidates were at liberty to write about any element of the emergency services, but it is not surprising given the theme of the reading section that many elected to write, at least to some degree, about the RNLI. This was clearly a subject that many felt passionately about and there appeared to be overwhelming support amongst candidates for the work of the RNLI. This often led on to discussion about voluntary emergency services such as Mountain Rescue and Air Ambulance and there was clearly much admiration and affection for these services. Again, the events of the last few years appeared at the forefront of candidates' thinking and the ambulance service and NHS in general were also written about with great esteem.

The reading materials from Section A were often used effectively as a 'springboard' into discussion about the RNLI. Specific facts and information taken from the texts were used to support and exemplify the points made by candidates. This was sensible and enabled candidates to write in convincing detail. Unfortunately, there were also candidates who copied significant chunks; or even, in some cases, large sections from the reading resources. As mentioned in the Principal Examiner's report after the November series, much care needs to be taken when guiding students to what is acceptable.

Overall, with both tasks, there was plenty of evidence of engagement and effort. Timing did not appear to be an issue with many candidates writing extensively in Section B as well as in the reading section. There was also plenty of evidence of sensible planning which was really pleasing given the number of CPD minutes that have been devoted to this subject over the last few years.

With one notable addition, areas of concern are generally quite similar to those that have occurred in the past:

As ever, there were candidates who wrote with little sense of either of the set tasks, perhaps writing in response to a question they had previously practised. This work struggled to make much progress.

Errors in written accuracy continue to impede the progress of many candidates. Struggles with tense and agreement or an inability to punctuate are detrimental to the coherence of a piece and will limit how far a candidate can progress.

Planning checklists appear to be coming more common and these do not always provide the help which candidates seem to imagine. The forced use of punctuation and vocabulary rarely adds the impressive and ambitious element to a piece of writing that is intended. Examiners will have lost count of the number of times words such as ‘myriad’ and ‘plethora’ appeared in written work this year. Sometimes this vocabulary may be used appropriately, but often this is not the case and the result can detrimentally affect fluency and coherence. Some candidates are able to seamlessly use a wide range of ambitious vocabulary and punctuation as the occasion demands, but a checklist approach is less than helpful for the majority. This often results in reduced coherence.

Finally, and of increasing concern, is the deterioration in candidates’ handwriting. This report has already touched on this in reference to number formation for question A16, but it is an issue that has affected every part of some candidates’ exam responses this year. We are not sure whether reduced opportunities to handwrite during the last few years have detrimentally affected handwriting, or indeed whether this has merely added speed to an issue that was somewhat inevitable given society’s increased reliance on technology. However, it is of paramount importance that this report conveys the extent to which unreadable handwriting is starting to affect candidates’ access to marks. Examiners have reported more illegible work than ever before during this series – both in reading and writing answers. The examining team do our absolute best to read what every student has written, but if we cannot identify what a word (or a sentence, or a paragraph) means then we cannot give credit for it. As a bare minimum, please encourage candidates to form letters clearly, write at a size that is legible and leave adequate space between words.

### **Summary of key points**

- Candidates should read all questions extremely carefully.
- Please encourage candidates to take some time to think through what a question is asking of them before they begin to answer.
- Candidates should avoid using bullet points to answer the higher tariff reading questions (such as A11 and A13) on this Unit.
- Candidates should not copy from the reading resources in their writing answers. Resources can be used as a ‘springboard’ or in support of a candidate’s points, but the work must be their own.
- Candidates must take care to write legibly and clearly in all aspects of their exam. Unreadable work will deprive them of valuable marks

## ENGLISH LANGUAGE

Summer 2022

UNIT 3: 3700U30-1

### General Comments

A question-by-question breakdown of the Unit 3 examination is provided below. The theme for this Summer's GCSE Unit 3 examination was camping.

For this examination, candidates were provided with five different texts based on the theme of camping. A range of questions (differing in challenge and mark tariffs) sought to test a wide range of reading skills. As this was an adapted series, candidates were given the choice of completing one of the two writing tasks. This meant that the total mark for the paper was reduced from 80 to 60, and the total duration was reduced from two hours to one hour 30 minutes.

With a range of text and task types (both continuous and non-continuous), this was a typical GCSE English language examination. Prior knowledge of the topic made no difference to the skills being tested or the positive achievement of outcomes. The texts provided readers with a wealth of details about camping (both positive and negative) and candidates appeared to be genuinely engaged. The summers of 2020 and 2021 saw an unprecedented surge in U.K based camping (Office for National Statistic) and many candidates shared their own experiences of camping during the Writing section of the paper. When the paper was written at the start of 2020, it would have been impossible to imagine just how many candidates would embrace camping as a topic and their enthusiasm throughout has been notable.

During the process, it was possible to assess the full range of abilities with many candidates scoring well on the higher tariff questions where they worked with diligence and commitment. The majority carefully considered the most effective use of their time and produced some thoughtful and engaging responses.

### Comments on individual questions/sections

### Comments on individual questions/sections

This section will focus on candidate performance across each individual question.

### SECTION A (Reading): 40 marks

#### Text A

This text was adapted from a survey conducted by 'Go Outdoors'. Campers were asked to consider a range of questions about their camping habits and the text highlights some of the key findings. This is a non-continuous text providing a combination of illustrations and information to engage a reader. Most of the information provides statistical information based on the opinions of 2831 campers. The statistics are overwhelmingly positive as all those surveyed are/have been involved in camping in some capacity.

**A1. How many campers did ‘Go Outdoors’ include in their camping survey? [1]**

*This question tests the ability to use deduction skills to retrieve information and to refer to evidence within texts.*

This question provided a straightforward introduction to the topic. While there is no pattern regarding the question types that candidates face, we endeavour to ensure that most can access the first text and task. Candidates could locate the information to answer this question in the top left-hand corner of the text, but some pre-reading was required to confirm that the information had been aptly provided by ‘Go Outdoors’. The only correct answer to this question was 2,831. While many were successful in locating this piece of information, a minority chose other numbers from across the article. Those who read the task carefully would be able to spot that the language used in the question deliberately mirrored that of the text.

**A2. What percentage of the campers have been camping within the last month? [1]**

*This question tests the ability to use deduction skills to retrieve information and to refer to evidence within texts.*

The second question also required a numerical answer. This time candidates were required to write down a percentage to show their understanding of how many campers had been camping in the last month. The correct answer was 37% but there are several points to note about numerical answers.

- Candidates can write their answers in either numbers or words.
- If the percentage is signalled in the question (as with this question), it is implied that the answer provided will be a percentage. This means that a % is not required in order to receive credit for the answer.
- A significant number of examiners commented on the poor number formation shown by many candidates. It was often difficult to determine whether a number was a 1, 4, or 7. It becomes difficult to credit an answer if it is unclear. There is certainly work to be done with many candidates in this area.

**A3. The writer refers to ‘camping veterans’. What does this mean? [1]**

*This question tests the ability to demonstrate verbal reasoning skills in context.*

This was the first multiple choice question of the paper. Candidates were given four possible definitions from which to choose a correct answer. Credible distractors were included but the majority of candidates were able to recognise that a camping veteran is a ‘person who is an experienced camper’. A small minority chose to tick multiple boxes, perhaps in an attempt to select the correct answer. Please note that this approach is not to be advised as multiple ticks are automatically awarded a mark of 0.

**A4. Give two reasons why more young people are getting into camping. [1]**

*This question tests the ability to use deduction skills to retrieve information and to refer to evidence within texts.*

Question 4 was the final reading task based on Text A. To answer this question, candidates were asked to consider **two** reasons why more young people are getting into camping. Two answers were required in order to gain 1 mark. This question type has been used in previous exam series and aims to ensure that questions and mark tariffs are not predictable. In order to score 1 mark for this question, candidates had to include two of the three possible answers from the mark scheme. Success rates were positive for this question and very few candidates only included one piece of information in their answer. It is worth reinforcing the need to check information is copied down correctly from source materials as some rendered their answers incorrect through inaccurate copying (for example 'exhibitions' rather than 'expeditions').

### **Text B**

A sequencing question is a pre-requisite on a Unit 3 examination paper and Text B gave a series of non-sequenced details which candidates were then required to put into the most appropriate order. The image in the centre of the page gave the overall focus of the text 'Choose the perfect pitch' and the information surrounding this gave a series of steps which could be taken in order to successfully choose the perfect camping pitch.

#### **A5. What is a camping pitch?**

**[1]**

*This question tests the ability to demonstrate verbal reasoning skills in context.*

Question 5 was the second multiple-choice question of the paper. This time there were five possible answers to choose from and four credible distractors were included. Text D contained the word 'pitch' in the centre of the article and although the text mentioned 'choosing a pitch' and 'selecting a pitch' there was no definition. Reading the article would help candidates to deduce that a camping pitch is, 'the area of the campsite where you set up your tent.' Most were successful when answering this. Again, a minority chose to tick several boxes and the most common incorrect answer was option one, 'A campsite with an abundance of facilities'.

#### **A6. Text B shows how to choose the perfect camping pitch. Put these stages into the order which best shows the steps to take when choosing a camping pitch. Number the steps below.**

**[3]**

*This question tests the ability to demonstrate verbal reasoning skills in synthesising information.*

The sequencing question required candidates to organise three (out of four) pieces of information into the most logical order. The third option was given to candidates (and this was done deliberately as the 'When selecting your pitch...' could potentially have guided them to choose this as the first option. On the whole, candidates selected option four as the final option and were correct in doing so. A significant number correctly chose the second answer as the first correct sentence in the sequence.

The main stumbling blocks to success were:

- incorrect sequence (perhaps through not carefully reading the entire sentence)
- incorrect numbering of the stages
- duplication of numbers
- failing to recognise that step 3 had been given as an answer and then adding an additional step 3
- excessive scribbling out and changing of answers
- illegible number formation

Those using a word processor are best to complete this type of question (where possible) in the original booklet. Those who retyped each sentence in their response spent considerable time doing so. This approach is to be avoided.

Those working from modified papers are required to sequence their information using letters rather than numbers. The same advice applies equally to these candidates.

### **Text C**

Text C began with a question, 'Why go camping?' and the rest of the article gave a wealth of positive reasons to encourage a reader to consider camping as a viable option. The headings helpfully broke the text into manageable chunks and many candidates commented on the accessibility of the text during their responses to A8. The text constantly sought to engage the reader via a range of persuasive techniques and the constant use of 'you.' The text managed to provide a number of reasons as to why readers ought to camp but also worked to dispel some of the myths and preconceived opinions about camping that some people might have.

#### **A7. What evidence is there in Text C to suggest that camping is inexpensive? [2]**

*This question tests the ability to interpret meaning and ideas in writing and understand and recognise the reliability of texts.*

Two pieces of information were required in order to answer this question and each piece of information was credited separately. Two possible marks were available for two correct answers. Those who read the question carefully were able to determine that the selected evidence needed to focus on the fact that camping is an inexpensive hobby. Understanding synonyms for 'inexpensive' such as 'cheap' and 'budget' were helpful. A range of approaches were adopted in response to the task. Some candidates chose to carefully select relevant evidence to highlight the fact that camping is inexpensive while others selected evidence from the text with an accompanying explanation. The main barriers to success were imprecise uses of the text and the selection of information that did not appertain to cost. Candidates who quoted information but then omitted the details relating to cost, found themselves struggling to gain credit. For example, some simply commented on 'all you need is...a tent' (possibly the most expensive camping cost) and omitted the key details about the shortcuts that can be made to save money.

#### **A8. How does the writer persuade us to give camping 'a chance'? [8]**

*This question tests the ability to use inference and deduction skills to retrieve and analyse information from written texts and reflect on the ways in which texts may be interpreted.*

This type of question is one of the more challenging reading questions and requires candidates to demonstrate close reading and analytical skills. With a wealth of persuasive details and an upbeat and a positive tone, Text C was the natural choice for this type of question, giving candidates the opportunity to select a range of details and to consider the impact of the text and the writer's methods. This question was worth 8 marks.

This type of question requires a considered focus so that candidates can see exactly what is required in an answer. Spending a few moments to consider the task is essential so its focus can be scrutinised, and candidates can then present an answer which is both relevant and on task. Being able to access the full range of marks hinges on this close reading. While many lose focus when tackling this type of question, it was reassuring to note that a significant number worked hard to remain on task. Those who were less successful often answered a generic question without the specific focus required and others focused more on the writer's methods than what was said. Brief answers were not uncommon.

A range of appropriate details are essential to those who wish to accumulate marks for this type of question.

The key messages regarding this type of question remain the same across all exam series. 'How' can be answered in different ways but focus on the question is essential. This task does not intend to encourage a relentless hunt for every technical device (or for candidates to be guided by techniques rather than being guided by the question). Instead, the question aims to encourage candidates to read and understand the writer's arguments and how these are conveyed to the reader. Many who make decent progress concentrate on the content of the passage with closer analysis being required in order to progress to the higher bands. Top Band answers always go beyond the spotting of factual content and are not only selective in their choice of material but include concise explanations and comments about the effect of the information. The very best respond to language and consider the ways in which the writer's argument develops.

The key element of this question was to consider how the writer persuades the reader to 'give camping a chance'. The heading of the text 'Why go camping' was a natural starting point for many candidates who felt that the article would answer the question given the clear focus suggested in the title. The subheadings also helped to pinpoint specific areas that could exemplify why readers ought to 'give camping a chance'. A wealth of details ranging from enjoyment to education and expense' were highlighted by the writer alongside some subtle authorial techniques. The upbeat tone and positivity meant that most candidates were able to give some reasons as to why camping ought to be given 'a chance.'

Candidates ought to be reminded of the following:

- always focus on answering the question
- use evidence to support answers
- try not to include overly long explanations
- try to range across the text
- try not to repeat the same points

#### **Text D**

This text was taken from a longer newspaper article about the 'joy of camping in the wild'. The article was overwhelmingly positive and gave a delightful account of the writer's wild camping adventure. Language choices were more challenging, but the sequential nature of the text made it easier to digest. Candidates responded positively to the text and a number chose to base their writing on wild camping adventures.

#### **A9. What impressions do you get of wild camping from Text D? [6]**

*This question tests the ability to refer to evidence within texts and use inference and deduction skills to retrieve and analyse information.*

Candidates are familiar with impressions questions as these frequently appear on Unit 2. Text D, in which the writer was emotionally invested in camping and able to write so expressively and figuratively, meant that an impressions question was an effective way of testing how well candidates had engaged with the resource. The question asked them to consider the impression they get of wild camping from the text. As with all longer reading questions, the temptation to copy unselectively proved too much for some candidates and a minority simply copied sections of the text. This approach is to be avoided at all costs.

The best candidates worked through the text chronologically selecting a range of details that gave a number of different impressions of wild camping. In their answers, they cited examples from the text and included a range of impressions to support their ideas.

Many candidates began by focusing on the title and the 'joy' which they used to express that the impression of camping is of overwhelming satisfaction and elation. Many candidates focused on the 'animals' mentioned in the text and focused on the impression that camping brings you closer to nature and wildlife. The fourth bullet point 'contented' was popular and many explored the notion that camping can be relatively comfortable and that those camping will feel at peace with themselves.

Candidates who performed less well were erratic in their approach. Some simply copied down a series of textual details while others presented a series of impressions without supporting textual evidence. A minority chose to present their answers via a series of bullet points. Please note that this approach is not advisable as most lose focus on the task and answers often lose a sense of cohesion.

**A10. Select the quotation from the list below that best describes the sunrise. [1]**

*This question tests the ability to use deduction skills to retrieve information and to refer to evidence within texts.*

In order to answer this question, candidates had to read text D carefully and to deduce which of the four quotations best described a sunrise. This was a test of close reading and interpretation skills. Three other positive quotations were selected as credible distractors. The third option appeared to be the second most popular choice 'a palette of warm browns and yellows. This quotation was used to describe the 'moorland' rather than the sunset, but a number of candidates were clearly attracted to it through the use of 'warm and 'yellow'. The correct answer, 'Orange light beams began to permeate the clouds' was the most popular choice but required some close reading in order to correctly select it. Overall, this question appeared to be a robust test of close reading skills.

**A11. The writer tells us that the 'clouds began to disperse'? What does the word 'disperse' mean in this context? [1]**

*This question tests the ability to demonstrate verbal reasoning skills in context.*

Word meaning questions require candidates to either engage with a phrase or a single word. This question asked candidates to consider the meaning of 'disperse. The context to the word was also important as it required them to consider the fact that the clouds 'began to disperse.' Again, close reading was required in order to successfully answer this one-mark question.

Candidates may have come across the term 'disperse' in science lesson as it is commonly used in relation to seed dispersal and several candidates made this link during their explanation. The word disappear was commonly used and caused a few issues. In isolation, the word 'disappear' does not describe the process of clouds dispersing. However, those who were able to temper such an instantaneous action with a preamble such as 'started to' were closer to the dispersal movement. Tense was also important when considering 'disappearing' as 'disappeared' suggests a more instantaneous process of vanishing whereas disappearing (coupled with a supporting explanation) could be considered for credit.

Some examples of descriptors that would be credited are contained within the mark scheme, but this list is by no means exhaustive.

To break up/separate/move away/drift/thin out  
To spread across to a different area/in a different direction

Those who were uncertain often tried to include several different explanations, some of which were contradictory. For example, 'vanished, faded and moved' and other such incongruous choices are more difficult to award.

On the whole, a pleasing number of candidates were able to deduce the meaning of the word and included some thoughtful explanations.

### **Text E**

The final text in the examination, Text E, was another article that provided candidates with a particularly negative account of one woman's camping trip. The text was subtle in its use of humour and effective in its criticism. With a strong tone and opinionated writing, candidates had to work hard to ensure that they read the information closely. For example, the writer makes it clear that she is an experienced camper who is writing about one bad experience. However, some candidates misread the sarcasm and tried to argue that the writer hated camping and would never try it again. The text was rich in content and provided some thought-provoking comparisons to Text D.

#### **A12. For how long did the writer once live in a 'small tent?' [1]**

*This question tests the ability to use deduction skills to retrieve information and to refer to evidence within texts.*

For four months

This question provided a straightforward introduction to Text E. The correct answer could be found in the second paragraph and most answered this question successfully. As the number was written in words in the text, this question did not present the same difficulties regarding the interpretation of number formation as could be seen in A1 and A12 (most wrote out the word 'four'). A small minority chose to present their answer as a number and, if correct, were credited. It is worth reinforcing with candidates that care must be taken even when copying down key information (such as in this question). A number of candidates wrote 'for months' and this was not credited as it was too imprecise. The word 'months' was required in successful answers.

#### **A13. Summarise what the writer's 'new neighbours' did to make her camping trip miserable. [5]**

*This question tests the ability to summarise information.*

This summer's summary question required candidates to read Text E and to firstly determine the actions taken by the writer's neighbours that made her miserable and then to condense these reasons into a summary.

A number of approaches were taken by candidates when answering this question.

- Bullet points – a sensible approach that usually encourages a brief response
- PEE – not appropriate for a summary question
- Explanatory – not appropriate for a summary question. Key details may be included but the answer becomes too long
- A brief summative passage - a sensible approach that usually encourages a brief response
- Copying – not advised, especially when unselective

It is obvious that a significant amount of work has been done in schools to develop summary skills since the beginning of this specification. During this series, we saw many students working through Text E chronologically and presenting salient points or a summarised overview. Far fewer candidates (than in previous series) tried to quote the information and although there was still an issue with copying, this was less common. Please note that there is no preferred approach for candidates when completing this task (they can write their answer in bullet points or a brief paragraph) but the examining team broadly felt that those who adopted the bullet point approach performed best and were actually able to produce and the most focused answers.

Brevity and close reading are the key to success when working on a summary question.

Seven possible areas were included in the mark scheme for students to comment on. Bullets 1, 2, 4 and 7 were the most popular but all seven were frequently used. It is imperative that candidates keep referring back to the question when completing a summary question. For example, the essence of bullet 3 was the fact that the conversations were so boring that they irritated the writer. Some candidates wrote 'they talked about cheese' and without some form of explanation, this type of response became out of context.

**A14. Look at Texts D and E. Compare the feelings of the two writers towards camping. [8]**

*This question tests the ability to interpret themes, meaning, ideas and information in a range of texts and comparing and evaluating the usefulness, relevance and presentation of content.*

The comparison question is a familiar one. Featuring on either Unit 2 or Unit 3, this question tests the ability of candidates to compare two or more texts. In this examination, candidates were asked to specifically focus on the 'feelings' that the two campers have towards camping. Text D was relatively straightforward in the sense that they shared their passion and enjoyment for camping with the reader. Even the reference to the 'noise' and their 'heart beating' was done in a fairly mild way and the writer did not suggest for one moment that the encounter with a 'cow' would put her off wild camping. Indeed, the writer was fully aware of the possibility of 'big cats' before commencing on their journey. Text E presented more of a challenge and this was predominantly via the sometimes sarcastic tone. Text E's writer made it abundantly clear that she enjoys camping and is something of an experienced camper. However, the experience she encountered with the 'family from hell' was a cause for concern. Those who focus solely on this 'hellish' aspect of camping did not manage to appreciate the writer's feelings. Some went as far to suggest that the camping trip had damaged her to the point that she would never camp again. It is worth reminding students to try and range widely in the details and comments that they give.

A wide range of approaches were used when answering this question and some are to be avoided:

- bullet points are unhelpful when comparing as they tend to isolate key details rather than comparing the texts
- grid/table approaches are unhelpful as candidates often try to line up points (rather than comparing them) and some of the details become forced or lacking focus
- unselective copying is unhelpful and difficult to reward as it is usually not focused on the task
- answers that cite evidence with no sense of comparison are also unhelpful and difficult to credit

An integrated comparison is definitely the most sensible option for the majority of candidates. This approach allows individuals to find points of similarity or difference and to make brief comments about them. While there can be some mileage in dealing with texts separately, candidates must be reminded that this is a comparison question and that when dealing with the second text, they must clearly compare the points being made. Some candidates choose to complete a three-part response when answering a comparison question. While this can work for some, it is time consuming and often repetitive.

Please refer to the OER materials for further examples.

## **SECTION B (Writing): 20 marks**

Answer *either* B1 or B2

Summer 2022 was an adapted series. Rather than completing both B1 and B2, candidates were given the choice of completing only **one** of the two writing tasks. Candidates are used to choosing writing (this is something that they are familiar with on Unit 2), and few appeared to struggle to make a choice between the two tasks. I am not aware of any candidates who completed both tasks or struggled to make a selection. The two tasks were both transactional in nature with B1 being more argumentative in scope and B2 requiring a more persuasive element. As with all writing tasks, there was no preference between the two tasks and each individual was marked according to the quality of their work.

Overall, writing was interesting and engaging. There were a couple of barriers to success, some of which will be covered in more detail in the course of this report:

- timing – not allowing sufficient time to write in detail
- unselective copying of resources/an over reliance on the resources
- technical accuracy issues
- lack of audience awareness
- misreading of the task type and format

B1. Camping can be so much fun.'

You have been asked to write a talk to your classmates giving your views on camping.

### **Write your talk.**

B1 appeared to be slightly more popular than B2. On the whole, there was a good deal of enthusiasm for camping and the outdoors, and many candidates sought to share their positive experiences and enjoyment of camping. Most had been on at least one camping trip while others were seasoned campers. A small minority chose to write negative talks about the disadvantages presented by camping and, when supported with anecdotes and interesting details, these proved to be most enjoyable. On the whole, there was a good deal of light-hearted and engaging writing, which was packed with personal opinions and observations.

The audience was key when writing this 'talk' and most recognised that while writing for their classmates, ultimately, they were writing in an exam context. Some made the decision to engage with their classmates in a much less formal way, for example, writing about drug taking and drinking excessively while camping. This approach is to be avoided as candidates often become distracted by what they are writing about.

Handwriting is a major issue for some candidates. Examiners will work diligently to try and read everything they face but sometimes writing is illegible and difficult to credit. It is worth considering the use of a scribe or a word processor for those whose writing is hard to decipher but it is equally imperative to train those who have such access in how to present their ideas.

Technical accuracy remains a major concern when it comes to writing. Comma splicing was rife in many talks and a significant number produced entire paragraphs with only one full stop at the end. A number of candidates did not use paragraphs to organise their writing, and this caused lapses in fluency. Spelling, as ever, also remains a concern. It is understandable that students make errors, but when these are copied errors using vocabulary from the texts, it does not impress. For example, a number of candidates were unable to correctly spell 'equipment' despite being given it in the exam. Please encourage candidates to use exam texts to eradicate some of these errors.

When approaching the writing task, it is essential that candidates establish the audience and the content of their writing. For many, the planning stage is vital, allowing them to pause and reflect on the topic and then to amass some ideas. A good deal of work has been done at CPD and in Webinar sessions over the last two years and this was evident in the planning. Where planning was sporadic at the beginning of the specification, it is now commonplace and usually used effectively to form the basis of a piece. Acronyms are still popular, but these should only be used as an aide memoire of points to include rather than the only planning completed. Planning should always begin with an idea of content rather than suggested techniques and vocabulary. Content driven plans tend to encourage coherent and chronological writing. Those who do not plan would benefit from noting down a few ideas before writing and to give some consideration to the sequence of these.

Wholesale copying is to be avoided at all costs. Some candidates actually introduced new errors into the copied work, which was unhelpful. Please remind candidates that examiners are very familiar with the source materials and do recognise them when they are copied. A significant number choose to copy significant chunks of text during every exam series and their marks were limited because of this.

Overall, the writing was engaging, demonstrating the full range of ability, where examiners commented that the tasks were enjoyable and interesting to mark.

B2. Write a lively article for a travel magazine persuading people to take a holiday in Wales.

### **Write your article.**

B2 asked candidates to produce a lively article giving their views about Wales being one of the best holiday destinations in the world. Although the task was perhaps slightly less popular than B1, candidates were effusive in their praise for Wales. The best performing candidates included a wealth of specific details about places and activities and were particularly knowledgeable in their geographical understanding of the country. There was a particularly patriotic feel to much of the writing and candidates were, on the whole, proud to call Wales their homeland. Those who struggled with this task often produced writing that was either brief or lacking in detail and development. For example, many candidates operating in the lower Bands tended to make comments such as, 'We have plenty of beaches and restaurants' rather than giving specific details appertaining to specific locations. Some candidates made excellent use of the Resource Materials. Quotes were included in some answers and were used skilfully to support an argument or to substantiate a point, which was a sensible approach.

However, resources should be used sparingly as examiners are best able to make performance judgements based on a candidate's own work. A number of candidates chose to copy down information from the texts often linking copied information together in a way that was not conducive to fluency.

Most were aware of the format for this task and produced writing that appeared to be both audience aware and carefully structured.

As with the reading tasks, please refer to the OER exam resources which will provide several sample tasks which have been assessed and annotated.

### **Summary of key points**

Read all reading questions carefully. Refer to the question while answering to ensure answers remain focused and on task.

Take care with number formation and the transfer of evidence/key details.

If helpful, use bullet points for the summary question. This is not a requirement, but many candidates find themselves producing more pertinent and brief summaries (when using bullet points).

Bullet points should only be used for a summary response or where an answer space includes bullet points. Bullet points should not be used in any longer/higher tariff answers.

Extensive copying in any reading or writing task should be avoided. Where possible, use clear but quoted details/evidence.



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