

GCE English Language 8178/ 9178

Frequently Asked Questions from Coursework Advice Meetings

The Chief Examiner for the specification has supplied the following responses to frequently asked questions at Coursework Advice meetings. It is hoped that these responses will assist centres in their assessment of AS coursework for the specification.

- **What options are available for coursework?**

a. 1500 words 'analysing' media texts

or b. two pieces of 750 words each 'analysing' media texts. (These pieces may be linked but do not have to be.)

or c. two pieces of 750 words each with one 'analysing' media texts and the other containing a creative piece followed by the linguistic commentary within the 750 words.

- **What is the media?**

This is not an easy question to answer. It is safer initially to concentrate on what is listed in the specification, i.e. newspapers, magazines, radio, television or advertising. Individual titles can be discussed with coursework advisers.

- **Do candidates need to submit a tape with AS coursework if they are studying spoken English?**

The specification does not require centres to submit a tape. However, teachers should authenticate any transcriptions themselves before sending coursework to the moderator. It is expected that the data used in investigations will be submitted with the coursework so that moderators can verify comments made.

- **How should the coursework be organised?**

The specification leaves this open. A useful guide is A2 coursework which requires a rigorous report format in subsections. A reduced version of this approach would be helpful for AS coursework. The A2 specification may help with an outline that should probably include introductory paragraph(s) with some kind of description of the material, and aims or hypotheses for the investigation. Since the focus is the framework of language, the main body of the coursework may investigate each chosen language framework for the texts before passing on to the next aspect. A final conclusion should summarise findings. As with any answer, there are different and equally valid ways of organising coursework. The main point is that the coursework should be organised and it should focus on the language.

- **When is the deadline for AS coursework?**

The deadline for submission of coursework and receipt of marks is printed each year on the timetable.

- **How do I find out who my coursework adviser is?**

Coursework Advisers are allocated to centres according to their centre number and geographical region. Please consult the 'Coursework Advice meetings' document, available on the web site, for details..

- **Can the Teacher-Examiner annotate the coursework folder?**

Teacher-Examiners should annotate the coursework as much as possible as well as giving a mark and a comment at the end and on the front sheet. Marks and comments should be based on the overall achievement in terms of the AOs and the bands.

- **How much guidance should be given for coursework?**

It is important that teachers give guidance to enable students to choose appropriate areas for study and realistic achievable aims. It is also usual for centres to work through general approaches to the different sections of the coursework with student groups. Individual advice is then given to students on an ongoing basis. There is no requirement for centres to submit drafts with coursework.

- **Can answers be organised in sub-headings?**

The important issue is the content of the answer and that it is organised. Using sub-headings in Media answers can be a tool that aids comprehensiveness and coherence. Equally, it can act as a prompt for students producing lower band work. The main problem to be avoided is a checklist approach in which features are always discussed whether they are significant or not.

Do the AOs for Coursework restrict students' choice of task?

To some extent, as students must show knowledge of the frameworks of language. However, within this, there should be a sufficiently wide choice and students are given the opportunity to explore concepts and issues (AO4). The AOs provide a structure but it should be possible for centres to provide sufficient freedom within this framework.

- **Which textbooks would you recommend?**

There is a suggested reading list on pages 33-35 of the specification. New books for Unit 3a not on the reading list include:

'The Language of Newspapers' Danuta Reah (Routledge)

'The Language of Magazines' Linda McCloughlin (Routledge)

Other books in the series include humour, fiction and politics.