

GCE

Edexcel GCE

English Language (8178)

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Examiners' Report

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## Unit 6371: Textual Commentary

January 2006

### General Comments

There was no preference shown regarding question choice. Both questions enabled candidates to demonstrate their knowledge of spoken and written language. Less able candidates could relate to the scenarios provided by Texts A and were able to distinguish between Text A and Text B. Responses did tend to be observational, describing in a general way and lacking in exemplification. More able candidates entered into a discussion of the more subtle points in both texts and demonstrated knowledge of a wide range of linguistic terminology with consistent and effective explanation and exemplification.

## Question 1

Candidates appeared to feel comfortable with the context. There was some digression about teenager-parent relationships. Most candidates however had no difficulty commenting on lexis with some reflection on the reason for this. Identification of the imperative structures escaped few candidates. More able candidates were able to exploit the wide range of features and to trace the change from firm argument to conciliation, indeed there were some excellent responses discussing the use of colloquialisms and idiolect.

Text B elicited some thoughtful observations but, as we have seen in previous years, the attempt to label it simply as 'formal' or 'informal' weakened many responses. This was a text that had a range of interesting features but only the more able candidates were able to exploit the more interesting ones such as: the conversational quality of the language, metaphor and analogy. Most candidates identified that this was an informative text, but many failed to value it as an entertaining piece of writing. Middle band candidates were able to investigate sentence mood (interrogative, imperative) and say a little about figurative language. Higher band candidates understood the context and could discuss features relating their use to audience and purpose. There were many detailed and impressive answers that used a wide range of linguistic terminology accurately.

## Question 2

Many students found Text A accessible and easy to explore. There tended to be some discussion of the roles of the speakers with weaker candidates often digressing into a discussion of gender and/or class in their quest to label a speaker 'dominant'. There was also confusion over the level of formality of Text A. The frequent overlapping and latching on was often linked to a quickening of pace in the conversation. Similarly, as in Q1, the interpretation of suprasegmental features was often vague or incorrect. Most candidates recognised the positive back channelling and all were comfortable with identifying subject specific lexis. Higher band answers explored the roles in a more confident way, noting how dominance can fluctuate throughout a conversation and interpreting the accompanying spoken features accurately.

Text B elicited an enthusiastic response. Unfortunately lack of attention to the information in the question meant that some candidates failed to identify the dual audience. Most candidates were able to comment on the lexis in this text and relate it to the teenage audience. Middle band candidates confidently identified question type i.e. rhetorical question, the use of elision to imitate the spoken voice and also the use of first person. The more able candidates looked at a range of features and attempted to discuss the use of sentence structure relating it to audience and purpose. These candidates were able to identify, explain and identify seamlessly, using fluent and accurate writing.

## Summary

- Seek to supply appropriate supporting evidence to avoid making inaccurate assumptions, particularly with regard to formality.
- Exemplification should be given (in the form of a quote, not a line reference) when identifying all features.
- Refer back to audience and purpose to relate features to context.
- Accuracy of writing should be checked with particular regard to the spelling of linguistic terminology.
- Be more specific when identifying features e.g. repetition - is it intentional or unintentional, what purpose does it fulfil in the context.

GCE English Language Statistics - Winter 2006:

Unit 1: 6371/01 Textual Commentary

Grade	Max. Mark	<u>A</u>	<u>B</u>	<u>C</u>	<u>D</u>	<u>E</u>
Raw Boundary Mark:	50	34	29	24	19	15
Uniform Boundary Mark:	90	72	63	54	45	36

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