

## GCSE English Language Unit 2

### Frequently asked questions

#### 1. General questions about the unit

How long should students spend on each question?

*The paper is 1 hour 45 minutes with two sections: Reading and Writing. Students all work at a different pace, but you may wish to advise them to spend 50-60 minutes on the Reading section and 45-55 minutes on the Writing section as this relates to the number of marks available.*

How much should candidates be writing for each section of the examination?

*There is no definitive answer here as some candidates can write very succinctly and others write a lot more. The examination paper is structured so there is ample room for students to answer each question fully and the exemplars on our website should also be a useful guide.*

Should students worry about filling out the booklet correctly and can they use extra sheets of paper?

*It is important that your students are happy and familiar with the layout and the rubric of the papers before the examination. Please encourage them to make all notes in the answer booklet and avoid attaching extra pages. All of our answer booklets have been made longer so there is more than enough room for students to write their responses.*

*It is also useful for the examiners if students write in the correct sections and number their answers clearly and correctly.*

*All the answer booklets are online at [www.english10.co.uk](http://www.english10.co.uk).*

I know that fixed grade boundaries cannot be given for each paper, but do you have any idea of what percentage is needed to achieve a grade C?

*See the table below for the grade boundaries for each unit. These are the raw mark boundaries and are correct for June 2011 ONLY and should NOT be used as a guide to inform future series. Grade boundaries do alter from series to series.*

Unit Code	Unit Name	Max mark	Grade Boundary Mark								
			A*	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	U
5EH01	English/English Language 1	40	36	33	28	23	18	13	9	5	0
5EH2F	English 2	96				65	50	35	20	5	0
5EH2H	English 2	96	82	69	51	33	21	15			0
5EH03	English 3	96	79	71	63	55	42	29	16	3	0
5EN2F	English Language 2	64				41	31	21	11	5	0
5EN2H	English Language 2	64	54	44	32	21	16	13			0
5EN03	English Language 3	96	87	79	68	58	47	36	25	14	0
5ET1F	English Literature 1	80				53	39	25	12	6	0
5ET1H	English Literature 1	80	70	60	47	34	26	22			0
5ET2F	English Literature 2	50				40	30	21	12	3	0
5ET 2H	English Literature 2	50	38	31	24	18	12	9			0
5ET03	English Literature 3	50	45	41	34	27	20	14	8	2	0

## 2. Section A: Reading

The sample assessment materials indicated that students would have a specific section of the answer booklet in which to write their answers for Section A, part (a)(i) on the Foundation paper, but this was not available in the June examination. Will it be there for the January examination papers?

*Yes. This section will be included in the January paper and all subsequent series.*

I have looked at the exemplar work on the website and it seems that students do not need to use language features. Do students need to refer to 'metaphor', etc to access the top bands?

*The Foundation tier question part (a)(i) is the ONLY place where students are asked to 'feature spot' and be able to identify a language feature such as a metaphor, adjective or simile. The two questions based on the extract and on one other part of the novel ask students to address the question and use examples of the writer's language to support their answer. Therefore, it is much more important that they make their point about the character or theme and use a short embedded quotation to support their answer rather than naming a language feature without then explaining why it is effective or important.*

*A good example of this can be found in the exemplars for English Language Unit 2. The student who wrote the response for script H3 identifies a lot of language features but does not address the question and therefore does not gain as many marks as the student in script H5B who does not name the features but does explain how certain key images and descriptions are important.*

How detailed should the language analysis be? Should we encourage students to concentrate on individual words?

*The language analysis does not have to be just at word level. Students should be encouraged to undertake detailed analysis of phrases and words, but to also look at the broader picture of what the writer is trying to achieve in their use of language.*

The examiner's report comments on students confusing adverbs and adjectives, etc. If it is not necessary for students to 'feature spot', are they penalised if they confuse technical terms?

*We always mark positively and students are not 'penalised' in any way for any responses they make. If they are unsure if a word is an adjective or an adverb, for example, they might want to comment instead on the meaning of the word and how it is important in understanding what the writer is trying to say rather than worrying about terminology. The emphasis of this examination should be on the effect of language and how it is used to enhance the reader's views of a character or an aspect of the novel.*

The Assessment Objective AO3iii specifies 'linguistic, grammatical, structural and presentation', but the mark scheme only asks for 'techniques'. Are students marked down if they only refer to literary techniques and word classes and not punctuation marks, sentence structure, etc?

*Students are rewarded for all responses referring to the writer's use of language and for their analysis of the language. We have used the word 'techniques' in the mark scheme to cover all aspects of language and to ensure that students are rewarded for all of their responses. If the extract, or the other part of the novel the student has chosen, has a number of punctuation features which address the question, then students will be rewarded for recognising their importance. As we cannot be certain that any specific extract contains all of the aspects covered in the assessment objective above, we have used a more generic term in the mark scheme.*

What is the difference between a language response and a literature response?

*There should be no difference in the responses commenting on the writer's use of language in the English Language and English Literature questions. There are, of course, different*

*questions requiring different responses in the examinations for the two subjects, but where language analysis is required, the approaches are essentially the same.*

**For question part (b), students choose 'one other' part of the novel to write about. How long should this 'other part' be?**

*Students who have tackled this question well in the past have chosen extracts of varying lengths. However, it is important that the extract focuses on just ONE part of the novel, addresses the question and allows the student to provide good examples of language.*

### **3. Section B: Writing**

**What types of writing are students asked to complete?**

*The piece of writing is a standard format such as a letter, article or the text for a speech. The stylistics of the format, such as addresses and dates for a letter, do not need to be addressed as it is the text of the written work that is assessed. Students do not need to 'format' their work to look like a newspaper or a magazine, so columns, headings and subheadings are not required. It is the text of the piece which is assessed, not the layout features.*

**What has happened to the 'triplets'? How do we know what the students need to write?**

*The 'triplets' were not included in the new criteria for 2010 - the writing is now all about addressing audience, purpose and form. However, these tasks are always transactional writing tasks so any resources you have been using for the 'triplets' will still be useful here. Students can use whatever argument they feel is appropriate to the task. For example, from the instruction 'give your views', they could interpret that as 'advise', 'argue a case' or 'review the options'.*

**If the audience is 'teenagers' or 'young people', should students use colloquialisms and text speech? How does that work with the requirement for QWC?**

*There should be a sense of audience and it is worth checking the mark scheme to see what is needed for each band. For higher bands, choice and range of vocabulary and good spelling, punctuation and grammar are assessed. So, to write for a teenage audience does not mean that the whole piece should be 'dumbed down'. There should be elements or a 'sprinkling' of language features typical of teenage speech, but the student should bear in mind that this is a piece of WRITING assessment, so structure, form and SPaG are important. In order to achieve the higher bands, students must also remember that the criteria require them to use 'extensive vocabulary' and 'fully developed ideas'.*

**We encourage our students to use witnesses and statistics in their work, especially when writing speeches or newspaper and magazine articles. What do examiners think about this, especially as they will be made up?**

*The use of fictitious witnesses and statistics is fine in exam conditions as long as it addresses the audience and purpose and fits with the question. Students should remember that this is not a creative writing piece and therefore should not spend too much time inventing witness statements and statistics. This is a transactional writing piece, so students must remember to address the question from this perspective. Creative writing is not the appropriate style here. A good example of the use of statistics and statements is in the exemplar material on the web (script H9C).*