

Principal Examiner Feedback

January 2009

GCSE

GCSE English Pilot

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Contents

1.	5731A Examiner Report	1
2.	5731B Examiner Report	3
3.	5732A Examiner Report	7
4.	5732B Examiner Report	15
5.	5733 Examiner Report	17
6.	5734 Examiner Report	21
7.	5735 Examiner Report	25
8.	5736 Examiner Report	27
9.	5737 Examiner Report	31

English Pilot 5731A

The performance of candidates in this unit was very much in line with the mainstream examination.

Centres are experienced in what is required for the assessment of GCSE English Speaking and Listening, across all specifications and all Boards, and the Pilot follows the same pattern. The great majority of centres assess their candidates accurately and realistically, and thus few adjustments to centres' marks have been necessary.

The range of assignments is impressive, and centres tailor activities to the needs of their own candidates skilfully. The 'drama focused' assignment has caused a few difficulties, but many centres interpret this as a role-play activity, perhaps even linked to literature work, and this is acceptable.

The Board's procedures for moderating Speaking and Listening are becoming more widely understood. In brief, Advisory visits, which involve the visiting moderator and the centre arriving at an agreed mark, take place at the end of the autumn term or early in the spring term; and Moderation visits, where the visiting moderator has a role similar to that of a moderator for written work, are conducted towards the end of the academic year.

In the great majority of cases, it is agreed between the moderator and the centre, in advance of the visit, that the moderator will provide a task, thereby saving the centre the burden of preparing a special activity. Also, the visiting moderator can carry out the function of standardising assessment more effectively and objectively with a consistent task; and the element of 'rehearsal' is removed. The visit requires the centre to provide 12 candidates, who should represent some range of ability; and a suitable venue. The centre's nominated teacher-examiner must be present, and it is often possible to accommodate other colleagues, which helps with both professional development and internal standardisation.

The Principal Moderator can report that although some centres were apprehensive on being told that such a visit was due, in the great majority of cases they found it to be a reassuring and positive experience.

English Pilot 5731A Grade Boundaries

Paper No	Max Mark	*	A	B	C	D	E	F
01	40	36	31	26	21	16	11	6

Note: Grade boundaries may vary from year to year and from subject to subject, depending on the demands of the question paper.

English Pilot 5731B

Important information

- Centres should be aware that the examination paper for the assessment window in March and April will have a **named text**.
- There were some examples of what appeared to be obvious malpractice in this series. The examination period is four hours and there is only so much work candidates can realistically type in this time. Please be aware that all incidences of suspected malpractice will be followed up.

Administration

Administration was much better this series, as moderators reported a significant reduction in the number of telephone calls to centres. The main reminders to centres remain:

- to submit samples to moderators no later than 2 days after the mark submission date
- to include the highest and lowest candidates in your sample
- to provide a breakdown of marks, including a breakdown of the writing marks
- to annotate scripts
- to provide only electronic copies of candidates' work.

Thank you for the efforts centres have made in this area and I look forward to even greater adherence to the administration of samples in the future.

Reading

Candidates who used the bullet points as topics for paragraphs performed much better in Task 1. Students who tended to write about each website separately often forgot to compare or comparisons were shallow. Language was seen as an important discriminator for Band 4 and 5 candidates. Ability to select and comment on features of language in depth will always be a sign of a high performing student. Moderators felt that this task was well taught and students were obviously well prepared to complete the activity.

Task 3 was not attempted so well. Many candidates could do little more than recount the contents of the articles. It is important that centres realise the focus of this task is on the position and bias of the writer and how this influences the language they select and therefore the argument they construct. Candidates' attempts to follow an argument should not be kept separate from their analysis of language - the two are integrally linked.

Overall advice to centres is:

- Select specific examples on which to comment
- Use the question to help structure a response in Task 1
- Remember the important link between writer, language and argument in Task 3.

Writing

There were some excellent responses in this series and moderators noted their delight at some of the crafting and control they saw. However, they also noted their dismay at centres reluctance to reward these candidates with the top marks that they deserve.

Candidates engaged with both tasks. However, there were some notable issues. Firstly, in Task 1 students were over using the reading materials. The reading materials can influence the candidate's response but *distinctive voice* is a criteria highly valued in this unit and therefore it is important that students allow us to hear them and not the writers of the articles they have read.

Secondly, it was clear, particularly in Task 4, that candidates had been prepared on a task that the centre had anticipated would appear on the paper. Even when this was an accurate prediction it was an issue as it led to almost identical responses from candidates in these centres. However, where the prediction was inaccurate candidates proceeded to use this response anyway - usually at a detriment to audience and purpose. It is advisable for centres to teach fairly generic writing skills that will allow students to respond to any eventuality in the examination.

Finally, candidates tended to stop early in the final response. This is a shame as some of the more effective work was done in Task 4. Centres may want to consider all the possible models for completing the final assessment.

Overall advice to centres is:

- prepare candidates with generic skills that will allow that to respond to any task
- distinctive voice is an important criteria in this unit.

Grade boundaries

The awarding process to set grade boundaries is always carried out by experienced senior examiners. Their aim is to ensure parity of standards for this year's and previous year's candidates as well as with the mainstream GCSE and other Awarding Bodies. In order to ensure that the standard is in line, the boundaries on 5731B have been changed this series.

As the tasks in this component change from year to year, the expectation should be that grade boundaries change according to the accessibility of the task. Whilst every effort is made to ensure that tasks are accessible, we cannot always predict the way in which candidates will respond.

It is important to note that although there has been an increase in grade boundaries there has still been a rise in the numbers of candidates achieving each grade.

English Pilot 5731B Grade Boundaries

Paper No	Max Mark	*	A	B	C	D	E	F
1B	80	77	67	57	47	36	25	14

Note: Grade boundaries may vary from year to year and from subject to subject, depending on the demands of the task.

English Pilot 5732A

Introduction

The vast majority of candidates responded successfully to the reading and writing tasks in the January 2009 examination.

Again *Romeo and Juliet* was the overwhelmingly popular choice, with over 94% of candidates. Of the other two plays, *The Merchant of Venice* was far more popular than *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, which had few responses.

The Writing task produced a wide range of interesting responses.

General points

The advice given under the following 6 Key Issues will help teachers prepare their candidates.

1. Time management

The examination is divided into two sections, with 40 marks for each; the four parts of the Section A question are each worth 10 marks.

Examiners expressed concern about candidates' time management; some candidates wrote at great length answering part a of Section A leaving little time to answer the other questions; other candidates wrote at length in answering all parts of Section A, so leaving little time for the writing task in Section B. Candidates should spend equal time on both Section A and Section B.

2. Reading the questions and identifying answers

Candidates might benefit by underlining or highlighting the key words in each question. For Section A this will help them identify the correct:

- section of the play for part a
- character/s for part b
- aspects for part c
- links with the rest of the play for part d.

In Section A candidates should clearly identify the four parts to their answers (a, b, c and d). Although most candidates answer the questions in the order they appear, some candidates answer in a different order and/or conflate parts of their answers, making it difficult for the examiner to separate the parts of the response and so award the appropriate marks. Candidates should be advised to use not only the correct letter, but to separate each answer by leaving a line or two, or by starting each answer on a new page.

3. Writing answers in the correct pages of the Answer Booklet

A significant minority of candidates incorrectly answered the part b of Section A in the Section B Writing Task (pages 11-16). Other candidates answered Section A in the Section B pages; some candidates even crossed out the Section headings and then reversed them - this causes major problems with the 'open' system of marking the scripts. It would be helpful if candidates were familiar with the layout of the Question Paper/Answer Booklet and Extracts insert.

4. Lack of familiarity with the requirements of the four part Section A questions

The areas of weakness that examiners noted in responses in the Shakespeare play may be because some candidates either lacked familiarity with the question style, or did not fully understand the explicit requirements of the four part question.

Marks are awarded to answers that match the specific requirements of the question. There is no transference of marks between, for example a candidate's part b answer on character and part c answers on aspects of staging or language.

Candidates need to understand clearly the demands of each section and answer appropriately. They should not offer the same material to answer two parts. Detailed specific advice on answering the four part questions is given below.

Examiners commented that perhaps the number of candidates wrongly answering the part a question on **Romeo and Juliet** indicates that these candidates either did not fully understand the instructions - *Give a brief outline of the key events that lead up to this extract from when Romeo sees Juliet on her balcony (Act 2 Scene 2)* or did not read the questions carefully enough.

5. Presentation of work

- writing must not go outside the marked area into the margins
- handwriting should be legible; the candidate's communication is impaired if the response is difficult to read. In the writing task this may also lower the AO3 iii marks for spelling and punctuation
- Blue or black ink should be used - pencils or coloured pens should not.
- Section B essays should be paragraphed, but large gaps of several lines, or even pages, should not be left between sections of writing.

6. A Glossary of key words used in the examination.

Candidates will be helped if they understand the key words they might find in the questions. Helpful definitions given below are in the context of this examination.

- **affect**: to produce an effect or have an emotional impact on a character
- **aspect**: a particular component or feature in staging, performance or use of language
- **attitude**: a settled feeling or opinion held about someone or something
- **effective**: successful in producing a strong or favourable response (on the audience)
- **influences**: the power that someone or something has over other people's thinking or actions; the effect of something on a person
- **relationship**: connection, or emotional association, between two or more characters
- **significance**: importance; (in addition) having a meaning which may be concealed, unstated, or not realised at the time (of an event or a speech)
- **theme**: an abstract idea that emerges from the play's treatment of its subject matter.

Section A: Shakespeare

Part a General points

This question asked candidates to give a brief outline of a designated section of the play **leading up to** or **following on from** the printed extract, with the key directives given in bold print. Candidates are, where appropriate, given a helpful signpost of a key event to help them identify the correct section of the play, e.g. - *Give a brief outline of the key events that follow on from this extract up to when Romeo sees Juliet on her balcony.* To reduce any possible confusion future questions may have only the signposted information, without the Act and Scene reference.

Candidates who misread or ignored the key directive (and signpost) penalised themselves by giving material that could not be credited; examiners awarded marks to candidates, (and many achieved maximum marks), for the '*brief outline*' of the main events of the part of the play indicated in the question.

The key words are **brief outline**, therefore a detailed account of events is not asked for, nor expected, nor are commentaries required for this answer. Some candidate, spanning the whole ability range, penalised themselves by devoting time to unnecessary discussion of the significance of the key events; there are other parts of the question that ask for that discussion. For part a, maximum marks are awarded to candidates who give an accurate synopsis of the main events of the section asked for - nothing more is required.

A small number of candidates gave an account of the extract itself and so were unable to achieve marks for this part. Some candidates gave narrative accounts of film adaptations, and although there are many benefits from using alternative interpretations of the text, the play text should be the central part of the candidates' examination preparation.

A Midsummer Night's Dream

There were few responses to this play. Most candidates identified the majority of the key events of Act 1 and the first scene of Act 2.

Romeo and Juliet

The question asked for key events from when Romeo sees Juliet on her balcony in Act 2 up to the extract (from Act 2 Scene 5). The vast majority of candidates clearly knew the plot of *Romeo and Juliet* and many gave excellent accounts earning full marks; however a significant minority of candidates misread or misunderstood the question and answered on the events from the start of the play up to Act 2.

The Merchant of Venice

Most candidates showed excellent knowledge of the play; a few gave an account of **all** the events leading up to the extract from Act 3 Scene 2 rather than the events in Belmont as asked for in the question; obviously there is no penalty for giving additional material nor is there any extra credit: the only penalty is the loss of time.

Part b General points

The question asked candidates what they learn of the selected character or relationship between characters. The key to this question is in the opening directive '**From the extract**'. Candidates need to keep their comments on what is learned about the character (or relationships) from the extract and not drift into a general character assessment as seen in the whole of the play. Candidates may validly refer briefly to details outside the extract in order to underline a point being made about the character as seen in the extract, but there is a danger in this especially for less able candidates who look outside the extract, either to other parts of the play or to film versions, to find material for their answer. Many excellent answers showed analysis and evaluation; however in many cases too much material from the extract was copied out, supported only by brief, superficial comments or paraphrase. Quotations, where used, should be brief and apposite in support of a perceptive commentary. Some answers gave a narrative account or a paraphrase of the events of the extract without analysis of the relevant details that revealed the character.

A Midsummer Night's Dream

There were few responses to this play. Most candidates were able to make something of the relationship between Oberon and Titania.

Romeo and Juliet

The question was on the character of the Nurse. Almost all candidates were able to make some valid points about the Nurse as seen in the extract. The better answers commented on the mixture of characteristics shown by the Nurse's words and actions. Many commented validly on the Nurse clearly enjoying her temporary position of power, despite her love for Juliet. Some weaker candidates tried to make the case that the Nurse did not approve of Romeo; others that the Nurse wanted Romeo for herself!

The Merchant of Venice

There were some outstanding answers on the character of Portia. The majority showed insight into the complexities of her character as seen in her speech. Examiners reported that the responses to this question were consistently good.

Part c General points

This offered an opportunity for candidates to explore the wide range of performance or language aspects to be found in their play's extract.

A small number of candidates went outside the extract and offered ineligible material.

Some candidates did not clearly identify the aspect they were responding to, and of those that did, many failed to make the most of **how** and **why** each aspect was effective when performed.

A lot of unnecessary quotation was used to identify the aspect in the extract; a brief line of quotation or line reference is sufficient. It was pleasing to see so many candidates referring to performance features in their answers and it is encouraging that many candidates, it seems, have performed scenes from the play as part of their examination preparation.

The question asked clearly *how and why each aspect is effective when performed*. Candidates' comments should be focused on what the effect is in performance i.e. the effect on the audience. More is needed than simply saying that an aspect would 'show Portia's feelings', or 'be interesting' without explaining **how** or **why**. For marks in the higher range it is important that candidates write about not only **how** the aspects may be played, but also **why** this playing may be effective when performed. The words '*when performed*' in the question implies an audience, but unfortunately some candidates seemed unaware of the dimension of an audience. Too often comments referred to 'the reader', which may be an indication that performance aspects have not been considered. A significant number of candidates relied heavily on cinema adaptations for their ideas about performance, especially Baz Luhrmann's *Romeo + Juliet*.

Other low scoring answers gave narrative accounts of parts of (or all of) the extract, or gave a director's guide to what each actor would do and say for the entire extract. To earn high marks candidates must clearly respond to the request: '*Briefly explain how and why each aspect is effective.*'

Candidates should balance their answers fairly equally between the two chosen aspects. Whatever aspects are chosen, credit is given to what the candidate makes of the effectiveness of each of the aspects individually. High marks are not awarded to answers that are only statements of detail, such as what lights are used, or what costumes are worn, or where the actors are positioned. High marks were awarded to answers that gave an analysis of the effectiveness of two identified aspects.

A Midsummer Night's Dream

There were few responses to this play. Most candidates made something of the entry of the two characters from different side of the stage.

Romeo and Juliet

The contrast between an eager and impatient Juliet and the slow and unhelpful Nurse gave many opportunities to candidates to explore how this humorous encounter might be performed.

The Merchant of Venice

Portia's speech and Bassanio's response offered a variety of language and performance features for candidates; high marks were scored by candidates who commented on Portia's use of various rhetorical devices, including repetition and exaggeration, and Bassanio's dramatic vow.

Part d General points

This question will always take the candidate outside the extract by asking them to consider other features of the play such as themes, events or character/s, which may be linked with the extract. This question relates the extract to other features of the play and any recycling of material already offered in respect of the three previous answers would earn few marks. Candidates should look beyond the extract in order to achieve marks.

A Midsummer Night's Dream

There were few responses to this play. Most candidates made something of the importance of the relationship between Oberon and Titania, but few examined the key word in the question: 'changing'.

Romeo and Juliet

Candidates were asked about the importance of the Nurse. The weakest answers recycled the material already offered in answer to 2b. The majority of candidates made something of her roles as a messenger and confidante for Juliet, but were limited on her character per se. The best answers dealt perceptively with both her importance in the plot and as a character in her own right.

The Merchant of Venice

Although most candidates made a good attempt at the question about the importance of the sub-plot of the ring, there were few outstanding answers. Most dealt competently with what happened to Bassanio's vow about the ring given to him by Portia, but only a few candidates managed to use their knowledge of the play to associate the events of the sub-plot of the rings as part of the play's happy conclusion as a comedy and as a contrast with the darker events left behind in Venice.

Section B: Writing to Analyse, Review, Comment

The writing task covers the triplet **Analyse, Review, Comment** and the word **analyse** was used in the question. The task this series was to write an article for an information guide for teenagers analysing the appeal of a place of interest in this country. The task enabled candidates of all abilities to produce a valid response and it also elicited a wide range of responses both in style and recommendations. The best responses were from candidates who kept the word **analyse** clearly in mind, along with the purpose, audience and form. The highest marks were awarded to candidates who analysed clearly the features of the venue they were recommending to teenagers in a style appropriate for a magazine article for teenagers. The best articles were clearly organised, with an introduction, logical development and conclusion; these used a range of cohesive devices between and within paragraphs and were written in the style of a magazine article with a clear awareness of

their teenage audience. Lower marks were awarded to candidates who gave a brief catalogue of places both inside the UK or abroad, or who wrote advertising material for the venues they were recommending.

Candidates should be reminded that this writing triplet is **Analyse, Review, Comment** and the key writing skill will be clearly indicated in the question, so before starting to write a response they should identify clearly for themselves the **form, audience and purpose** of the task. Candidates need to be aware that the form of the response will be, typically, an article in a magazine, journal or newspaper, letter, formal report, web log or contribution to a media programme. The target audience will be given, where appropriate.

Because there is no tiering in this English Pilot GCSE, bullets are given in this **Analyse, Review, Comment** task. This is to help candidates, especially the less able ones, to structure their writing and suggest some ideas for their content. The use of bullets has both advantages and disadvantages: although bullets give less able candidates a structure on which to hang their material, some candidates think they must follow the bullets slavishly and only the bulleted topics can be used. Remind candidates that bullets are always given, but they are only suggestions or starting points for their responses.

The marking grid for Organisation (AOi & ii) gives '*broadly appropriate paragraphing*' as a characteristic of Band Two writing. Some essays, often well expressed in continuous prose, had few or no paragraphs to indicate their structure. Some candidates inserted * or // as paragraph markers.

English Pilot 5732A Grade Boundaries

Paper No	Max Mark	*	A	B	C	D	E	F
2A	80	59	53	47	41	33	25	17

Note: Grade boundaries may vary from year to year and from subject to subject, depending on the demands of the question paper.

English Pilot 5732B

There was a small decrease in entry from the previous January 2008 examination series.

The majority of centres chose assignments which were both stimulating and worthwhile for the candidates. There was a pleasing variety in the assignments chosen for piece 1, although short stories still tend to be the most popular. 'Of Mice and Men' was again widely chosen for the second piece (as is also the case in 1203 and 1204, the 'mainstream' specification to which this unit closely corresponds.) All centres complied with the syllabus requirements in terms of appropriate content.

There was little change to the standard of student performance compared with previous years. The Centre assessment of candidates' work was generally satisfactory, although there was still some generosity in the awarding of marks at the top end of the ability range, in just a very few cases. It seemed that internal standardisation had been carried out effectively by the centres.

The submission of the coursework sample was improved from the summer 2008 series. It is regrettable that some centres had difficulty meeting, or did not meet, the deadline for the submission of their samples: the fixed dates for each Examination Series have been published on the Board's website, and in the Newsletter. However, the selection process for the sample now seems to be more widely understood, though centres are reminded that they must submit the top and bottom marked work, and to replace any requested folders where candidates have withdrawn.

It was pleasing to note that the authentication sheets had been completed correctly, in almost all cases. A sizeable proportion of the work is submitted to the moderators in disc format, which is acceptable.

Further guidance to centres will be provided during the Autumn following the Summer 2009 examination series. Centres should ensure that they attend these events to receive valuable feedback and standardisation.

English Pilot 5732B Grade Boundaries

Paper No	Max Mark	*	A	B	C	D	E	F
2B	40	36	31	26	21	16	11	7

Note: Grade boundaries may vary from year to year and from subject to subject, depending on the demands of the question paper.

English Pilot 5733

As always, the January entry for this unit was small, with 6 centres submitting work. The standard of marking was generally accurate. Overall, the administration for this unit was very much improved, but centres are reminded again of the importance of submitting work by the due date.

Task 1

A wide range of work was submitted for this unit, with a clear indication that centres who had attended training were making excellent use of available sources, with spontaneous spoken language from for example TV, radio and You Tube being explored and analysed. Where candidates had used these sources, rather than stilted and slightly artificial recordings made especially for the unit, the level of analysis was noticeable higher.

There was also evidence that candidates are starting to recognise spontaneous spoken language as a means of communication that employs a wide range of resources to carry its meaning. At training, the importance of candidates being in a position to observe the context in which the language was produced was emphasised, and there was evidence that this advice had been followed, to good effect.

The candidates seemed more able to recognise and discuss the features of spontaneous spoken language and draw on their own knowledge of this form. There were far fewer references to spontaneous spoken language being 'wrong' or 'incorrect' and far more reference to this form as a main and versatile means of communication.

There is still a tendency for candidates to use a rigid feature/meaning structure, where all pauses and hesitations, for example, are seen as 'thinking what to say'. It would be useful if candidates could draw even more on their own experience and consider the more subtle information that can be carried in the features of spontaneous spoken language. For example, one candidate recorded a conversation between her mother and a friend and noted, in reference to this exchange towards the end of the transcript

J: So are you coming across to mine later?

L: (1) Yeah (.) I'd like to (.) but I've got a lot on tomorrow

'L pauses before she answers and pauses twice while she says she can't come. This is because she knows J will be disappointed and is speaking very carefully.' Other reasons for pausing can be to indicate unspoken disagreement or disapproval, or a reluctance to say something that the other participant(s) may not want to hear.

Centres are reminded that for assessment purposes, candidates must use examples of spontaneous spoken language that have been transcribed from a recording, ideally one they have collected themselves so they have been able to observe the context in which the spontaneous spoken language was produced. Where a recording is provided by the teacher, candidates need as much information about the recording as possible, and they must listen to it. Transcripts alone provide inadequate information for candidates to be able to understand the significance or even the meaning of what is being said, and this affects their ability to analyse it.

Candidates must not reconstruct from memory or fabricate an example based on spontaneous spoken language they have heard.

Task 2

Candidates produced a wide range of scripts including soap operas, TV dramas, speeches and radio advertisements. These were often well achieved.

It is important that candidates are very clear about what they are trying to achieve. Before they start writing, they need to have decided what format they plan to use, where they would expect this script to appear, who they are writing for and what effects they hope to achieve. There are still some scripts that appear in isolation in which two people have a scripted conversation with no indication if this is a complete text or part of a text, if it has been written as a narrative text, or a text to advise or persuade, where the script is intended to be used, what audience it is targeting, and where it will appear. In other cases, candidates have clearly been well advised and supported, and produce scripts that have been written with a clear purpose that is then explained in the commentary.

Centres need to be aware that scripts for advertisements must contain a minimum of 30 seconds of spoken language. This does not include sound effects, music etc. Some scripts were produced that contained no more than 15 seconds of scripting for the spoken voice, and these very short tasks often pulled down the overall mark of folders that achieved well in Task 1 and in the commentary.

In almost all cases, novel and short story adaptations were accompanied by photocopies of the relevant extracts, and were genuine adaptations. Centres are reminded again that such adaptations, which can produce excellent scripts, must not be too close to the original. They need to be an adaptation. Problems can be avoided if candidates select an extract with little or no dialogue and show that they can transform narrative text into a convincing script for the spoken voice.

Commentaries

Some excellent commentaries were produced. Candidates are starting to develop the ability to analyse their own writing and discuss their intentions and the way they have achieved this with close reference to language choices. This is a skill that will be very useful to them if they decide to follow English at A-Level, but is also useful in making them more critical readers of their own work and that of others.

Training

Centres are reminded of the need to attend training and feedback meetings. These offer advice, material and data for class use, the opportunity to share good practice, and exemplar material for discussion. Centres who attended training showed a marked improvement in the work that was submitted for assessment.

English Pilot 5733 Grade Boundaries

Paper No	Max Mark	*	A	B	C	D	E	F
01	40	36	31	26	21	16	11	6

Note: Grade boundaries may vary from year to year and from subject to subject, depending on the demands of the question paper.

Part A. Report on application of standards by Centres

The entry for Unit 4 has gradually increased and this round a third of all Pilot centres submitted candidates for assessment. Although there is still a skew in the entry towards the lower grade ranges, there has been an increase in the number of candidates achieving at the highest level in both AO4 and AO5.

The majority of Centres had entered candidates in previous rounds and are thus more confident in their application of standards. It was not necessary to make many adjustments to centre marks as teachers effectively matched the work of their candidates against the relevant criteria on the marking grids.

The responses to AO4, the analytical comparison, showed a range of attainment and teachers were generally able to identify the positive features of their students' work and mark it accordingly. Almost all candidates were aware that this is a comparative piece and attempted to adhere to this rubric requirement, even at the lower reaches of the mark bands. In a very few centres, there was significant over-marking and this was often because of a misunderstanding of the criteria relating to the use of specialist terminology. As has been noted in this report in previous rounds:

"To be achieving in the Band 4 and 5 area, "skilful and effective" use of terminology needs to go beyond simply spotting and accurately labelling aspects of the "grammar" of moving image language; the requirement is that candidates analyse the ways in which the various techniques used contribute to the meaning of the text - in other words not just "what" they have spotted, but "why" that technique has been deployed."

There is a slightly less confident application of standards to AO5, although as noted above, the submitted marks were generally within tolerance (i.e. plus or minus three marks across the aggregated total of 40 marks AO4 and AO5). the Practical Production.

The single most pressing difficulty for centres and moderators is the production of group responses to AO5. The need to allow candidates to work in groups - often cited as a practical necessity for many centres with a large entry - must be balanced against the ability to securely award marks to individuals for their contributions. Guidance in the Specification offers no indication as to what individual candidates are expected to produce as a minimum and how their contributions should be identified. Various additional guidance has been issued at training events, and additions and amendments made to the pro-forma presented by Centres to moderators to document who has done what. However there are still Centres who are awarding marks on very minimal evidence of actual work produced by individuals. Centres are reminded that AO5 is the equivalent of 25% of an entire GCSE award in English, or half of a short course award. Taking responsibility for as little as two shots and adding some titles at the edit is not a robust enough evidence base to achieve anything other than marks in the lowest band, yet in some cases such work was gaining marks in Band 2 or even Band 3.

It remains the case that candidates should produce a Brief for themselves to ensure they have a clear idea of what it is they are trying to achieve. This Brief is not marked, but it is sometimes helpful to moderators if it is provided as a context for the work. But it remains the case that the finished production must stand on its own for purposes of assessment.

The requirement to make a moving image production has clear antecedents in Media Studies qualifications. However, it is important to see the distinction between assessment issues as they have been addressed in Media Studies and the way they are approached in the English Pilot. In Media Studies candidates are required to write an analytical accompaniment to their production to indicate what it has taught them about the key concepts of the subject. In Unit 4 of the Pilot, the equivalence is more closely aligned with the writing component of English. If AO4 tests candidates' ability to read and understand moving image texts; AO5 tests their ability to "write" with video technology. There is no requirement that candidates' write about what they have produced since this would be similar to asking them to produce a piece of Original Writing - and then write about why they wrote it in the way they did. This is an important principle and a distinction which needs to be defended

Part B. Report about coursework assignments

Almost all candidates submitted an appropriate comparison of two sequences from Action Thriller films. There were some very thorough, detailed analyses of sequences taken from a range of different movies. The ablest candidates showed an easy facility in applying their skills of analysis and comparison to produce fully conceptualised responses which showed significant insight into the genre. While some weaker candidates tended to use the prompt questions on the paper as a scaffold, this generally provided them with a helpful structure. Where the scaffolding was extended by centres to include the opening few words of sentences - or in some cases notes which gave complete responses which were used verbatim - this constrained candidates' ability to respond personally to the sequences they were analysing.

The standard of production, though still variable, shows signs of improvement in each successive round. The best work was of a very high standard, with candidates showing creative use of digital technology. Production work continues to challenge conventional notions of "ability", with those who struggle with print literacy showing considerable ability to use digital video very effectively indeed.

As noted in previous Reports, where production work was less successful, this was often because candidates appeared to be unaware of the basic "grammar" of the moving image, i.e. that a series of shots are edited together into sequences. Centres are referred to *The Video Making Toolkit: a guide to effective video production* which was issued at the first round of training for this Unit and which gives details of the pre-production, production and post-production stages which students need to work through.

Part C. Administration

Most centres provided the correct paperwork to enable the process of moderation to proceed smoothly. Both Form D(ii), indicating the mark breakdown for the two components, and Form E, on which candidates declare the exact nature of their contribution to the practical production, were usually provided.

The completion of Form E remains an area in need of improvement. On occasions up to four candidates are claiming that they had all been responsible for all of the shots and all of the editing. As identified in Section A, it is untenable to award what is effectively a quarter of a GCSE in English without being clear of the evidence base for the award. The Awarding Body will be undertaking a review of these forms to help assist centres and ensure that appropriate and accurate information is submitted.

Most Centres are now providing work in a form which it is possible to access. In a few cases, work arrives with nothing other than the first name of the candidate on a disk - making it time-consuming at best and impossible at worst to decipher which candidate the work has been completed by. Centres are reminded that the convention is to identify each file by naming it with the centre number followed by the candidate number. Further guidance on saving work to CD can be found on the GCSE English Pilot micro-site.

English Pilot 5734 Grade Boundaries

Paper No	Max Mark	*	A	B	C	D	E	F
01	40	39	33	27	22	18	14	10

Note: Grade boundaries may vary from year to year and from subject to subject, depending on the demands of the question paper.

English Pilot 5735

Administration was much better this series, as moderators reported a significant reduction in the number of telephone calls to centres. The main reminders to centres remain:

- to submit samples to moderators no later than 2 days after the mark submission date
- to include the highest and lowest candidates in your sample
- to provide a breakdown of marks
- to provide only electronic copies of candidates' work
- to annotate students' work showing justification of the mark awarded.

Thank you for the efforts centres have made in this area and I look forward to even greater adherence to the administration of samples in the future.

Analysis

The biggest issue continues to be the writing of generic commentaries on digital texts. The point is to focus on a specific website or blog or digital video. A theoretical essay about all websites or blogs, etc cannot move students beyond Band 2, as they lack any focused analysis on language or multi-modal features of the texts.

It is good to see an increasing confidence with the texts chosen and the comparisons made in most centres.

Production

All candidates responded to the issue of misunderstandings of teenagers, this clearly hit a nerve and there was some powerful work produced. Candidates showed much more confidence in the use of sources in most cases this series. However some centres continue to produce what is essentially a piece of original writing.

It was good to see some centres branching out and producing podcasts. The use of alternative media must be seen as this unit's most attractive feature to students and I look forward to a time when teachers overcome their reticence with technology and allow students to show some flair with their choice of medium.

English Pilot 5735 Grade Boundaries

Paper No	Max Mark	*	A	B	C	D	E	F
01	40	38	32	26	21	17	13	9

Note: Grade boundaries may vary from year to year and from subject to subject, depending on the demands of the question paper.

English Pilot 5736

Introduction

The January 2009 examination successfully enabled a wide range of candidates to show their knowledge, understanding and appreciation of the Drama and Prose texts they had studied.

The candidate was expected to make two responses, one on a Drama text and one on a Prose text in one and a half hours. The candidate can elect whether to respond to a 'four part' style question or an essay question.

The entry this winter was around 1350 candidates, a similar entry to last January's. There were no changes in the layout and wording of the examination, although mark schemes constantly change with each series and set of new questions, the examination is constantly under review.

Candidates rarely missed out on marks because they did not read the questions carefully. Most centres are familiar with the expectations from this examination and have aired their confidence in this paper during training events.

Approximately 600 candidate papers had to be reviewed in May 2008 because candidates had answered the two responses in the one section, Section A. During this series, examiners marked whole papers and so this problem has now been resolved.

Attendance to the **feedback, training and standardisation** events is both crucial and compulsory; it is a rare opportunity for teachers and myself to meet and it is a support mechanism necessary for centres entering their candidates and aiming to make the most from this examination.

Examiners reported that the centres that had attended training had made the most noticeable of improvements, especially in parts 'b' and 'c'. This year's training focused on achieving the attainable marks for parts 'b' and 'c' which have in the past appeared unattainable for lower ability candidates, often because the centre had not attended training or accessed PE report.

The dates for next autumn's training will shortly be published both on the Edexcel site and in the English Circular, which is sent to centres twice yearly.

Candidate choices - Texts

Unsurprisingly, candidates opted for the familiar texts of '*An Inspector Calls*' and '*Of Mice and Men*'. Some centres chose alternative texts but there were few differences from the last January series. Pre-1914 remained the least favourable; the Prose texts '*The Awakening*' and '*Spies*' remained the least popular novels.

Candidate choices - Question Choices

Most candidates chose the four part question. The Shakespeare question in Unit 5732A is also in the style of a four part question; this may be a factor in the popularity of this question.

As expected, most candidates fitted the trend where the higher marks were achieved in parts 'a' and 'b'. This expected trend is part of the graded nature of the questions as parts 'c' and 'd' require some analytical skill.

More candidates opted for the essay type question than before. The most successful responses were those that clearly focused on the key points of the question and used apposite evidence from the text to support the commentary and analysis.

Less successful candidates often gave narrative accounts and relied on the aid of bullet points to answer the question. These bullet points are intended to structure and support the less able candidates and act as starting points for the more able.

It is my belief that many candidates lacked focus in comparison to the four part question and that all too often candidates recalled the story and rarely 'stretched' or truly engaged themselves in their responses; this was noticeable in the essay question for '*An Inspector Calls*' where candidates needed to focus on the Inspector and whether he had been successful in his investigation. A surprising amount of candidates chronologically worked through what each character confessed to the Inspector.

Good Practice

It was again encouraging to see that there was a clear indication that good practice at KS3 and within the classroom was transferred into many candidates' responses, (PEE).

For sections 'b', 'c' and 'd' many candidates paragraphed each separate point then followed it by using a quotation to evidence their statement; this would then be followed by some explanation, often focused and in higher ability candidates with insight and detailed analysis.

Advice for Centres

1. Time management

The examination is divided into two sections, with 40 marks for both; candidates should spend about 45 minutes on Sections A and B.

Each part of the 'four part' question is worth 10 marks; candidates should spend ten minutes on each section; focused responses score highly.

2. The 'four part' examination

As in all examinations, candidates should take care when reading each question. Candidates might benefit by highlighting the key words in each question to avoid any misunderstanding. In the 'four' part question;

- section of the play for part 'a' (i.e. *leading up to or following on from*)
- character for part 'b' (i.e. *Lennie*)
- **TWO** aspects for part 'c'
- links with the rest of the text for part 'd' (i.e. *How Lennie shows to be frightened* in one other part of the text)

It is very helpful for examiners if candidates clearly identify the four parts by separating each answer and ideally starting each part on a new page.

Part 'a'

This question asks candidates to give a brief outline of a section of the text *leading up to* or *following on from* the printed extract. It is acceptable to bullet point **only** in this part. Fewer candidates gave accounts of the text that were not asked for.

However, a growing number of candidates penalise themselves by writing a detailed response to part a when all that is required is a **brief** outline; candidates that did this had disadvantaged themselves in terms of time.

Part 'b'

This question asks candidates what they learn of a character from the extract. The best answers support perceptive commentary with brief and appropriate evidence taken from the extract. These candidates offer insightful and detailed material to the character and are therefore credited with higher marks.

There was a small and unusual response to part 'b' were candidates had compared texts across the paper, for example, when discussing what they had learned about Eddie's character in '*A View from a Bridge*' they had then began to compare him with the character of Lennie from '*Of Mice and Men*'.

Part 'c'

This question offers candidates the opportunity to select two aspects from the wide range of performance or language aspects in the Drama extracts and language aspects for the Prose extracts.

The question requires the candidate to focus on the 'what', 'how' and 'why' each aspect was effective.

On the whole candidates' responses demonstrated a greater preparation to the question. Not many candidates went outside the extract. Most candidates clearly identified the aspect they were responding to. Many candidates still failed to make the most out of 'why' the aspect identified was effective for the audience or reader and 'how' (covered in training this autumn) the aspect could be performed effectively or seen to be effective.

Part 'd'

This question always takes the candidate outside the extract by asking them to consider other features of the text such as themes, events or character(s) that may be linked with the extract.

Fewer candidates tended to remain within the extract and recycle material already offered in previous answers of the three other parts to the question. Candidates looking beyond the extract achieved marks in the higher ranges although few responses gain full marks, I will focus some of my training on part 'd' this autumn.

3. A Glossary of key words used in the examination.

- **Affect:** to produce an effect or have an emotional impact on a character
- **Aspect:** a particular component or feature in staging, performance or use of language
- **Attitude:** a settled feeling or opinion held about someone or something
- **Effective:** successful in producing a strong or favourable response (on the audience)

- **Relationship:** connection, or emotional association, between two or more characters
- **Significance:** importance; (in addition) having a meaning which may be concealed, unstated, or not realised at the time (of an event or a speech)
- **Theme:** an abstract idea that emerges from the play's treatment of its subject matter.

English Pilot 5736 Grade Boundaries

Paper No	Max Mark	*	A	B	C	D	E	F
01	80	72	64	56	48	38	28	19

Note: Grade boundaries may vary from year to year and from subject to subject, depending on the demands of the question paper.

English Pilot 5737

The entry for this unit was consistent with the previous January 2008 series.

The majority of centres chose texts and assignments which were both stimulating and worthwhile for the candidates. Many centres showed originality in the choice of assignments, fitting the task very appropriately to the aptitudes of the candidates. If a criticism can be offered, it is that some Units seem to have been 'class taught', so that there is little to choose between the final outcome across the work of many candidates. At its worst, this even leads to particular ideas, details of content, even individual phrases being repeated over and over again... in an area of work where individual response is sought.

A few centres submitted Oral responses, and these seemed to meet the needs of candidates effectively. All centres complied with the syllabus requirements in terms of appropriate content. In some cases the contextual information, on the oral response, was very thin.

The Centre assessment of candidates' work was generally satisfactory. It seemed that internal standardisation had been carried out effectively by the centres, in the few cases where more than 1 teacher had been involved. In a very few cases there was still some slight generosity at the top end.

The submission of the coursework sample still caused some problems. It is regrettable that some centres had difficulty meeting, or did not meet, the deadline for the submission of their samples: the fixed dates for each Examination Series have been published on the Board's website, and in the Newsletter. The selection process for the sample now seems to be more widely understood, though centres are reminded of the need to submit both the highest and lowest achieving candidates in addition to those already selected.

It was pleasing to note that the authentication sheets had been completed correctly, in almost all cases. A sizeable proportion of the work is submitted to the moderators in disc format, which is acceptable.

Further guidance to centres will be provided during the Autumn following the Summer 2009 examination series. Centres should ensure that they attend these events to receive valuable feedback and standardisation.

English Pilot 5737 Grade Boundaries

Paper No	Max Mark	*	A	B	C	D	E	F
01	40	36	31	26	21	16	11	7

Note: Grade boundaries may vary from year to year and from subject to subject, depending on the demands of the question paper.

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