

# Examiners' Report January 2007

GCE

## GCE English Language (8178/9178)

Edexcel is one of the leading examining and awarding bodies in the UK and throughout the world. We provide a wide range of qualifications including academic, vocational, occupational and specific programmes for employers.

Through a network of UK and overseas offices, Edexcel's centres receive the support they need to help them deliver their education and training programmes to learners.

For further information please call our Customer Services on 0870 240 9800, or visit our website at [www.edexcel.org.uk](http://www.edexcel.org.uk).

January 2007

Publications Code US018697

All the material in this publication is copyright

© Edexcel Ltd 2007

## Contents

Unit 1: Textual Commentary (6371)	1
Statistics	4

## 6371 Textual Commentary

### General Comments

For this examination there was a preference for Question 2. One reason for this could have been the lack of graphological features contained within Text B of Question 1, which seemed to inhibit responses from less able candidates. Similarly, it was noted that there could have been a gender bias in this question, with the reviews of Allende's novel being seen as 'feminine'.

Overall, the spoken texts, A and C, provided the better responses. Candidates felt at ease and confident handling the scenarios presented in the transcripts and they were able to demonstrate their knowledge of features of spontaneous spoken language and interpret thoughtfully using a descriptive approach. Examiners felt that overall there was a reluctance to use grammatical terminology which meant that candidates found exploring the written texts more demanding.

Across the paper as a whole, less able candidates were able to recognize general differences between speech and writing. These types of responses tended to lack exemplification and terminology. More able candidates could interpret features in a thoughtful way, demonstrating knowledge of a wide range of linguistic terminology with consistent and effective exemplification.

It was pleasing to note that there were fewer centres whose candidates included general comments related to linguistic theories. In the main, when theory was included, it was applied to observations related to the specific linguistic context.

Another pleasing development was that more students are linking features to their specific functions and contexts. So, instead of assuming that all pauses are simply a feature of spontaneous spoken English, more candidates are now also indicating examples of where pauses may be used strategically to signal the end of a turn, or to perform an extra-linguistic task, for example.

Some centres seemed to encourage candidates to include an introduction to their response. At times, this could take up one or two pages in an answer booklet. Please note that, in future, candidates should be discouraged from reproducing general statements at the beginning of their answer and they should focus on demonstrating understanding by making comments describing and interpreting features found within the texts.

### Q1

Text A generated some pleasing responses. The context was familiar to candidates and there was some relevant and enthusiastic discussion about the roles of the participants and the tone of the exchange.

Better responses were able to relate observations on roles and tone to linguistic features. For instance, imperatives suggest a certain participant is instructing another, while minimal responses may suggest someone is actively listening. In some cases, however, lower band answers became side-tracked by issues of dominance and power.

Most candidates had no difficulty commenting on the wide range of subject-specific lexis and non-fluency features evident in the spontaneous exchange.

The sophisticated expression and the lack of graphological features meant that weaker candidates seemed to struggle with Text B. This sometimes led to imbalanced responses where the majority of credit was given to the candidate's response to Text A.

More able candidates produced some very pleasing responses to Text B, however. Candidates whose work fell in the middle bands were including features such as subject-specific, lexis, rhetorical questions and lists. In addition to this, higher band answers were including comments on figurative language, modal verbs and superlatives, for example.

## Q2

Many students found the situation in Text C familiar and accessible. Again, there tended to be some discussion of the roles of the interlocutors with weaker candidates often digressing into a discussion of dominance and power.

Most candidates recognized that the two participants were friends and the context was largely informal. Higher band answers explored the roles in a more confident way, noting how dominance and formality can fluctuate throughout a conversation and are not necessarily clear-cut.

There were some very pleasing responses to Text B. Stronger candidates were able to comment on the complex audience of the text (children, their parents and other adults) and relate this to the variety of features used. Widely discussed features included imperatives, subject-specific lexis, lists and a variety of graphological and layout features.

## Summary and Hints

- Ensure that observations are supported by illustrations when discussing dominance or formality. Similarly, all research studies mentioned in answers should be accompanied by relevant practical examples from the text.
- Exemplification should be given (in the form of a quote, not a line reference) when identifying all features.
- Accuracy of writing should be checked with particular regard to the spelling of linguistic terminology.
- There was still confusion noted with regards some linguistic terminology. Examiners noted misunderstandings with elision and ellipsis as well as with interrogatives, imperatives and declaratives.
- Avoid introductions which state general facts about speech and writing. Take an investigative approach, linking observations to the context of the texts.



# Statistics

## Unit 1: Textual Commentary (6371)

Grade	Max. Mark	A	B	C	D	E
Raw boundary mark	50	32	28	25	22	19
Uniform boundary mark	90	72	63	54	45	36

### Notes

**Maximum Mark (Raw):** the mark corresponding to the sum total of the marks shown on the mark scheme.

**Boundary mark:** the minimum mark required by a candidate to qualify for a given grade.

Further copies of this publication are available from  
Edexcel Publications, Adamsway, Mansfield, Notts, NG18 4FN

Telephone 01623 467467  
Fax 01623 450481

Email [publications@linneydirect.com](mailto:publications@linneydirect.com)

Order Code US018697 January 2007

For more information on Edexcel qualifications, please visit [www.edexcel.org.uk/qualifications](http://www.edexcel.org.uk/qualifications)  
Alternatively, you can contact Customer Services at [www.edexcel.org.uk/ask](http://www.edexcel.org.uk/ask) or on 0870 240 9800

Edexcel Limited. Registered in England and Wales no.4496750  
Registered Office: One90 High Holborn, London, WC1V 7BH