

Candidate Style Answers

OCR GCSE English Language J355

A653 Information and Ideas – Examined Units

This Support Material booklet is designed to accompany the OCR GCSE English Language specification for teaching from September 2010.

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Introduction

OCR has produced these candidate style answers to support teachers in interpreting the assessment criteria for the new GCSE specifications and to bridge the gap between new specification release and availability of exemplar candidate work.

This content has been produced by subject experts, with the input of Chairs of Examiners, to illustrate how the sample assessment questions might be answered and provide some commentary on what factors contribute to an overall grading. The candidate style answers are not written in a way that is intended to replicate student work but to demonstrate what a “good” or “excellent” response might include, supported by examiner commentary and conclusions.

As these responses have not been through full moderation and do not replicate student work, they have not been graded and are instead, banded “middle” or “high” to give an indication of the level of each response.

Please note that this resource is provided for advice and guidance only and does not in any way constitute an indication of grade boundaries or endorsed answers.

Unit A693 Information and Ideas

Examination Foundation

Candidate A

Section A – SAM on abandoned vehicles / litter

- 1(c)** The campaign's aim was to help people dispose of their vehicle free of charge. It also wanted to raise awareness of the effect on communities when vehicles were abandoned eg anti-social behaviour.

One of the main things the campaign did was collect cars free of charge for two weeks and promise that no-one would get into trouble. This would have been a good way to get people to come forward. Councils also had free posters to display in garages in order to let people know about the scheme.

The campaign had a lot of media coverage from radio stations and newspapers. Hopefully this would help the problem. Over 10,000 cars were collected during the two week scheme and over 80% of councils thought there was a significant increase on usual figures.

- 2(a)** The first thing you see is the headline all in capitals – 'LITTER BRITAIN'. This is clever as it makes the reader think of Little Britain the TV show. The use of pictures is also very good; especially the rubbish bag which appears to be in the shape of the Britain. This shows that rubbish is everywhere! Pictures showing the city and the country full of litter also back this up and make it feel depressing. This makes the reader want to read on and find out more.

- 2(b)** Bill Bryson's strong opinions come across because he uses strong language to describe Britain and how he feels about it. First of all he says how beautiful he thinks Britain is and how it has strict laws to make it the tidiest place. But then he uses language to show how upset he is that these laws aren't keeping Britain tidy anymore. 'trashed', shows the reader how serious the problem is.

He gives examples of councils and how many fines they issued in the last year. Some of the councils didn't give out any and some gave out as many as 3,000. He does this to show how there isn't a proper approach to the problem, which is what he thinks is needed to sort it out. Bill Bryson uses capital letters when he really feels that something is bad and to show his anger. He does this when talking about the '500 PER CENT increase in the amount of litter on the streets over that past 25 or so years.

Section B – SAM on abandoned vehicles / litter

3(a)

Dear Sir / Madam

I am writing about your invitation for young people in the area to get in contact with you and bring forward their suggestions about improving the local area.

I really think that there just isn't enough for young people to do after school in the evenings and even on weekends. Older people that I know keep complaining about the groups of young people messing around on street corners. As a young person I understand that some people may feel scared by this, but what are young people supposed to do – stay home locked in their bedrooms?!

The _____ school used to run extra clubs after school like football, but now they take less people because so many people wanted to join in. I really think there should be some clubs set up by the community centre so that there are enough clubs to go around and not just the favourites get in. At the moment the community centre runs clubs for the adults, like slimming and bingo. I really think there should be some activities for the teenagers as well. What about an extreme sports club? We could go mountain-biking, climbing and canoeing and all sorts! Our parents would be happy to pay for us to do these things and get us off their hands for a day! It would also mean less gangs of teenagers on the streets so everyone's happy.

Another thing I've thought about is how the shops in our local high street aren't as good anymore. We used to have shops like Woolworths selling CDs and sweets, but now it's closed down. Empty shops make the place look depressing. I really think that people in charge should be trying their best to attract better shops to the area. It would be good to get a sports shop and maybe even a cinema.

Thanks for reading what I have said. I hope to hear back from you.

Davies

Commentary

The reading for information responses and the writing one are generally more secure than the reading for appreciation (2b). The candidate describes what the writer does but doesn't explain the effects e.g. there is mention of 'strong language', and appropriate quotation, 'trashed' but no attempt to explain why this is 'strong' vocabulary or how it helps the writer's purpose: the main distinction between Bands 4 and 5 at both tiers is whether there is an attempt to analyse or explain. A good middle response.

Unit A693 Information and Ideas

Examination Higher

Candidate B

Section A – SAM on earthquakes

- 1 The earthquake of 1906 had a massive effect on the city of San Francisco. The description from Jerome B. Clark makes it sound as though the quake had a devastating effect on the city in terms of its architecture and beauty. From the descriptions it sounds as if the whole city was aflame and in ruins. Streets were sinking and bulging in different places as a result of the quake and this was affecting the walls of the buildings.

The water supply was also cut off so fire-fighters had to bomb the buildings just to get to water. It sounds like it was almost impossible for the fire-fighters to put out the fires as they were going in all directions over the city. They would have also had to deal with masses of people crowding the streets and lumpy roads.

From GA Raymond's description it sounds as though the devastation was far from limited to the buildings. The loss of life he describes is enormous – 'People around me were crushed to death on all sides'. He saw people being killed right in front of him and a mass panic gripping the city. The way he describes the pavements opening and swallowing things up is terrifying. He saw hundreds of men, women and children trying to flee the city on a ferry. They were all fighting each other to get aboard and it sounds like it was a traumatic experience.

- 2(a) The horror of the experience is conveyed in several ways in the website article. The images alone demonstrate how destructive the fire huddling together like scared sheep.

The use of the direct quote in bold which refers to the experience as 'bedlam, pandemonium and hell rolled into one' also demonstrates how horrific and terrifying it was for those who were there, as do the sub-headings 'Destruction in the city' and 'A narrow escape'.

GA Raymond awoke to the experience by being thrown from his bed, only to find that he was lucky to still be alive as 'the air was filled with falling stones' and 'streams of fire'. The way he describes it really does make it sound like hell on Earth – 'I thought the end of the world had come'. His description of being surrounded by crushed dead bodies would explain why he felt the world was about to end. He also describes how a priest was fleeing, which also adds to the horror of this idea because even a man of God is afraid for his life. His vivid descriptions of the people fighting for their lives, 'crying, praying and calling for help'; even the strongest sound like they were losing their minds, 'one big, strong man beat his head against one of the iron pillars...'. The full power of the quake comes across when a drove of cattle is described as being swallowed up by the ground, '...seeming to drop out into the Earth'. Again this shows how horrific and terrifying the earthquake must have been for those who were there. The combination of the chaos, fire, dead bodies, ground opening up and priests fleeing would make it seem like Armageddon.

2(b) Esther Addley's attitude towards the earthquake in Lincolnshire is quite dismissive. Her article begins with dramatic quotes describing the 1906 quake in San Francisco. For the next two paragraphs she then describes the experience of those in Market Rasen. Her direct comparison – 'They know just how he felt in Market Rasen...' has a slightly mocking tone, as do the details about China Choice on Queen St. However, Addley does admit that it was 'the largest to shake Britain in a quarter of a century.' This would have the reader believe that Addley is about to tell them about the devastating consequences of the quake, but instead she does the opposite – she makes fun of the lack of disaster: 'several bricks were slightly dislodged' and 'Bridget Pitman did have some birdseed fall off the shelves'. So Addley makes the reader think she is going to take the quake seriously, only to mock it instead.

She uses direct quotes from the people to add power to her view, as most of them are quite dismissive of the quake too, 'it's not really a tsunami is it?'

Her tone is quite sarcastic when she says, 'as it will doubtless never come to be known'. It is clear that she thinks there is more of a story about how Brits react to the idea of an earthquake in their town than the earthquake itself as it is such a non-event. She seems quite scornful of the 'hundreds across Britain' who called their local police force and more in favour of the majority who 'grunted and went back to sleep'. There is a comical effect when she describes the hamster as being upside down in its cage, which someone initially thought was an explosion.

Her use of language is convincing, for example when she says 'British tremors have always been more of a shiver than a shake', which makes her sound correct and knowledgeable on the matter because of the way she expresses her opinion as fact and in a creative way – through the repetition of 'sh'.

Section B – SAM on 'When things went wrong' (Local newspaper article)

My best friend Stacey couldn't believe it when she got the lead in the school play – the anticipation of all those eyes fixed on her was too great to contemplate. And the part – it had been made for her! She rushed home to give her family the brilliant news (after she had dutifully informed all of her friends of course...).

Her parents were ecstatic and set about organising her costume, arranging for relatives to watch her performance etc. Stacey spent hours every evening locked in her bedroom practising her lines and preparing herself for the big performance. During rehearsals the play's director was always full of praise for her and she really felt as though it was 'her play'.

When the night of the opening performance arrived, Stacey was brimming with confidence and felt this was her moment to shine. The news that journalists from the local newspaper were in the audience buoyed her up even further; we all knew she was going to give them a night to remember.

When the curtain rose I held my breath for my dear friend and hoped (for all of our sakes!) that things would go smoothly. To be honest, I'd seen the play many times during rehearsals I knew it line for line; if something was amiss I'd know about it straight away.

So imagine the torturous silence when 'bold as brass' Stacey was struck down with the worst case of stage fright in the history of amateur dramatic performances! She hadn't even uttered one line

and seemed transfixed to her stage spot like a petrified shop manikin. When Stacey recounted the experience whilst being consoled by family and friends a few hours later she likened the feeling to an out of body experience, where one was floating above one's own body and was completely helpless to act.

Needless to say, that was the end of Stacey's flirtation with the art of acting and for that we were all grateful.

Commentary

The responses to the reading questions are deserving of the top bands with satisfactory explanation of the effects of the vocabulary/descriptions. The section B exemplar response is in keeping with the intention that the task is meant to be based on a personal account, rather than a fictional piece and its content would be worthy of Band 2, with impressive vocabulary/narrative control. A good higher response.