

ELC

English

Entry Level Certificate **R392**

OCR Report to Centres June 2015

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This report on the examination provides information on the performance of candidates which it is hoped will be useful to teachers in their preparation of candidates for future examinations. It is intended to be constructive and informative and to promote better understanding of the specification content, of the operation of the scheme of assessment and of the application of assessment criteria.

Reports should be read in conjunction with the published question papers and mark schemes for the examination.

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General Comments:

Centres entered candidates with a wide range of ability for this specification, ranging from those who were clearly above the scope of the Examination to those who found communication difficult at Band 1. Many candidates gave evidence of enthusiasm for the written and spoken tasks and the level of effort was high.

Assessment by teachers was generally accurate and some care was taken over adjusting marks where assistance had legitimately been given. It was only rarely that Moderators saw work placed in the wrong mark band.

Administration was mostly satisfactory, although some Centres did not submit the Moderator's copy of the mark sheet. Some Centres submitted multiple copies of the authentication form and are reminded that only one is required for the whole specification.

Moderators were grateful to receive so many well-completed Individual Candidate Forms. These were extremely useful as they specified the tasks set by Centres, gave specific accounts of performances in Speaking and Listening, and listed any help given to candidates at Levels 1 and 2. Where assistance had been given it was important that there should also be a note of how the marks had been adjusted, so that the Moderator could check its appropriateness. For this session it was noted that the forms had been completed in more detail than previously.

Except where candidates are unable to give evidence of their handwriting, Centres are asked to supply an example. This does not need to be a complete piece of writing, although many teachers chose to include it as a first draft before it was word-processed. This rarely affected the final marks in any way since high-scoring candidates tended to write more confidently than those who found composition difficult.

While Moderators were pleased to see one draft of an assignment, it was not necessary to include all the preparatory work. Where this was included it caused some confusion and it did not help to see the process since at this level the use of writing frames, for example, is perfectly in order.

A few Centres still did not supply a recording of their speaking and listening. However, since Speaking and Listening accounts for 40% of the total marks, it is important to be sure that the marking is correct, so the written evidence from the Individual Candidate Form is used by the Moderator to supplement the main evidence of the recording.

Nearly all Centres opted for postal moderation, listed as Component 2.

Comments on Individual parts of the Specification:

Reading

The same reading tests were used as in previous years. Centres were more confident in using all six of the texts and often spread them around their candidates instead of using the same one for everybody. In theory this allowed candidates to be tested on the text that interested them the most.

Centres are reminded that the range of questions includes explicit items and questions that require inference. There is a simple summary question and also items about the language used

in the passage. The language questions were often the ones that gave candidates most problems and frequently differentiated between those in Band 3 and those in Band 2.

The marking was generally accurate, although occasionally teachers gave marks that were not allowed on the mark scheme. While these may have appeared to be correct, others were definitely not so and in any case it was important that all teachers followed the same mark scheme for the sake of fairness. There was only one of the texts where there were questions that invited a range of possible and plausible answers, and that was clearly stated.

Writing

Candidates were expected to write two assignments, one informative /argumentative and the other expressive, usually a narrative.

The first of these was usually well-chosen and was most frequently either a personal account or a letter. The personal account needed to be written in a structured form and in sentences. While notes were appropriate, they did not meet the descriptions of performance for Band 3 or even Band 2. This was also true of the Centre that set a recipe for the first assignment. This did not allow candidates to develop their ideas and there was little or no differentiation.

Some of the letters were good because they were structured and reasonably long. Letters of complaint worked quite well and also invitations to important events like big birthdays or other celebrations. Candidates were often encouraged to include several ideas and to present them in a fluent order.

Other pieces included accounts of work experience which were well done for the variety of content. They could be set out as a diary and were clearly not stories.

Many of the stories were horror stories, and unfortunately they were rarely convincing. The zombies were hardly credible, and candidates would have done better to write from their own experience. Some simply wrote about going on holiday and although some needed editing to excise unimportant detail, they worked better than a genre that the candidates found quite difficult. There were a number of pieces of writing based on *The Woman in Black*. This text is not easy and many of the stories did not work well because the candidates found the stimulus difficult.

Centres are advised to investigate the range of possible stories that could be used as ideas, and to choose something nearer their candidates' understanding and experience.

When choosing assignments, Centres should remember that they have complete freedom provided they follow the simple requirements of the specification.

Assessment was satisfactory, although there was some confusion about awarding on the boundary of Band 2 and Band 3. It may be helpful to remember that indications of Band 3 are the ability to write in sentences and to use a range of vocabulary. Some knowledge of when to use full stops should also be apparent.

Speaking and Listening

Again, teachers have complete freedom to choose whatever is best suited to their candidates, provided that there is a role play and a discussion.

The problem was that traditionally the role play has been a telephone conversation and the commonest choice has become ordering a pizza. Unfortunately this was not a good choice because there was little choice to do more than to name a pizza, extras, and drinks, give an address, ask how much it would cost and how long before it was delivered. At best, the roles could be reversed so that the candidate became the manager, but even then it was difficult to see how there could be enough content to access Band 3.

Centres are advised to think of a possible range of telephone calls, such as ringing up an aunt who has not been well and arranging to go to see her to make her happier. Arranging an interview or a first day for work experience could include what to wear, when to arrive and what you would be doing – even better to reverse the roles.

However, it did not need to be a phone call. Candidates could play the part of a teacher or of someone meeting a relative from abroad for the first time. A conversation between a manager and a player chosen for a first match might go well. Ideas such as these would spring from the teacher's knowledge of the candidates and would ensure that they had something to talk about.

Some of the conversations were good, particularly when they were planning an event or even talking about quite a challenging topic. Again, preparatory to this, it is likely that some of the work in speaking and listening will routinely have consisted of discussions on a wide range of topics, and the teacher has only to decide which of these might be best suited to the candidates.

Assessment was generally good. However, candidates who spoke with a degree of fluency and could develop ideas for a sentence or two at a time should have been placed in Band 3. Candidates who spoke in single sentences and found it difficult to add anything supplementary to an idea should have been placed in Band 2. Candidates placed in Band 3 spoke mostly in single words or very short sentences that conveyed little. There was occasional difficulty in recognising a Band 3 candidate and conversely in realising that the contribution was too simple for that Band.

The quality of the recordings was good and DVDs were of particular help to the Moderator. One Centre gave a very clear indication of who was sitting where and several candidates identified themselves by voice at the beginning of the recordings. This should be done as a matter of course, and should be clear and quite slow.

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