

AS LEVEL

Examiners' report

ENGLISH LANGUAGE

H070

For first teaching in 2015

H070/01 Summer 2024 series

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Introduction

Our examiners' reports are produced to offer constructive feedback on candidates' performance in the examinations. They provide useful guidance for future candidates.

The reports will include a general commentary on candidates' performance, identify technical aspects examined in the questions and highlight good performance and where performance could be improved. A selection of candidate answers is also provided. The reports will also explain aspects which caused difficulty and why the difficulties arose, whether through a lack of knowledge, poor examination technique, or any other identifiable and explainable reason.

Where overall performance on a question/question part was considered good, with no particular areas to highlight, these questions have not been included in the report.

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Paper 1 series overview

H070/01 is one of two examination units for the AS Level examination for GCE English Language. This unit requires candidates to apply their knowledge of linguistic terms, context and theory to unseen texts firstly as a single text analysis, and then a comparison. To do well on this paper, candidates need to be comfortable applying their knowledge and understanding to unseen texts.

The paper was accessible and appropriate for the range of candidates' abilities and the majority of candidates were able to access the texts without any significant difficulties. Scripts were submitted from the bottom of Level 2 right up to the top of Level 6.

Candidates appeared to use their time effectively on this paper; there was little evidence of candidates running out of time. Many responses provided evidence of effective time management suggesting that candidates are spending more time analysing the texts and planning their response rather than writing, which generally leads to more analytical responses

The questions were data-driven, and the questions were clear and specific. Question 1 was focused on analysing a single text and Question 2 was focused on comparing two different texts. Most candidates focused on what the question specified.

Candidates generally used linguistic terminology accurately across the various language levels, although there was some confusion between types of adjective, types of adverb and types of verb. Some candidates attempted to analyse 'patterns' in order to get into the higher bands but not all candidates did this effectively with many not explaining why the pattern was used or analysing the impact.

Candidates who did well on this paper generally:	Candidates who did less well on this paper generally:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> gave equal weighting to both texts in Question 2 used terminology accurately analysed patterns within texts made perceptive links to context. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> labelled features incorrectly offered over-generalised conclusions about audience and purpose offered simplistic judgements about context made general points not explicitly linked to linguistic evidence did not support responses with examples from the text were narrow in their consideration of features.

Question 1

- 1 Giving careful consideration to the context of the text, identify and analyse features taken from different language levels. **[24]**

All candidates understood the purpose and audience of the text which seemed to be accessible to candidates at all achievement levels.

Many candidates understood the purpose of the text, its intended audience and how it aimed to formulate a synthetic relationship with the audience. In considering the construction of this relationship, centres are reminded to encourage candidates to insert their conceptual knowledge with a light touch – less successful responses often overstated learned knowledge such as Grice's maxims, which were irrelevant, and Fairclough's theories at the expense of retaining precise focus on data analysis.

Candidates wrote at length about the conventions of the genre, with high level candidates understanding the nuances of the genre and lower level candidates tending to apply a formulaic approach or a check list approach to what constitutes an effective opinion article, which was not relevant or effectively linked to the data.

In terms of how candidates approached the text, many used an effective structure focusing on each language level in turn. More successful responses were able to link language levels and explain how one feature had been reinforced by another, for example, as opposed to simply considering each language method in isolation.

Fewer students are using GASP [Genre, Audience, Subject, Purpose] introductions, which is a positive development as they are redundant, as context should be embedded into the main answer as opposed to be analysed or identified in isolation.

In terms of lexis, high level candidates successfully identified patterns and semantic fields while linking such features effectively to context. Successful candidates linked the persuasive techniques employed in the text to types of power. Successful candidates also ensured they analysed word classes in detail such as types of adverb, verb, noun and adjective. Most students confidently analysed adjectives, nouns, pronouns, and register, and linked them to context, while weaker students tended to describe basic features such as monosyllabic/polysyllabic lexis, colloquialisms and hyperbole without linking them to context. Less successful candidates described a 'semantic field of websites' or a 'semantic field of negative lexis' with little or no exemplification or link to context. Some students over relied on 'high frequency' and 'low frequency' lexis which little analysis of how this affected the text. Less successful candidates identified linguistic features but provided no exemplification.

In terms of syntax analysis this was not as strong as last year. Higher level students effectively analysed the impact of syntactical variation in terms of sentence types, clause type and clause order with some analysing sentence function in terms of form and function, e.g. indirect imperatives. While many students successfully analysed conditionals, other students tended to describe sentences with no links to context. Some students got overwhelmed with trying to identify parts of clauses.

It has been said before in examiner reports for this component that the best responses to this task always seek to work from the text outwards, rather than fitting the text to pre-learned knowledge or frameworks. It was impressive to see the range which some students covered, when they only had around 30 minutes to write their response. Many responses considered a number of language levels and found valid and often interesting comments to make.

Exemplar 1

1	A.	<p>Throughout text A the producer uses a range of modality: epistemic and deontic in order to sound assured in their knowledge to appear a credible source. The use of an epistemic modality: 'they can't get it wrong' 'stem subjects are prioritised' 'there are endless possibilities' presents the producer as confident. This could be intended by the reader to producer as they want to sound knowledgeable therefore people view them as a reliable source. This may be due to the producer being a teacher for several years, so therefore they have experience and has witnessed this issue. The combination of epistemic modality and declarative sentences and the producers 2 depth of knowledge and experience work together to portray the producer encourage the receiver to acknowledge the issue they are discussing. This is likely how the receiver viewed the text. The confident language used likely reassured the receiver that the producer understood the issue. Furthermore, the receiver, likely parent of young students, may have found this confident approach as as a warning that they must take action and help their children be more creative. They may have received the declarative sentences as a must something they must listen to and acknowledge. Furthermore, the text is an ^{opinion} article and therefore is intended to inform to an extent, so however because it is an opinion article people may not.</p>
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		receive it as factual rather than seriously so therefore the epidemic modality helps reframe the text as more informative and even factual than opinion.
		Throughout text A there are elements of the structure of sentences that mirror creative writing. There is a pattern of listing throughout, this is a device encouraged to be used in creative writing and therefore mirrors this creativity the producers encouraging and demonstrates how it can be used all throughout life. Therefore portraying creativity as a useful skill. The asyndetic listing throughout: 'school, parents, society, each other' 'an astronaut, a dancer, a football player' 'observation, curiosity, flexibility...' could be used by the producer to reflect the techniques being used in creative writing or it could ^{also} be to represent how students should think outside the box and stray from the norm, as this is not the generic listing techniques used in everyday life (asyndetic). However, this is not necessarily how it was received. Parents, like students now, were also taught methodological ways of learning and creativity was largely ignored, so they may not have acknowledged this subtle nod to creative writing. Alternatively it may have been received as an endless list, an emphasis. For example 'an astronaut, a dancer, a football player' having no 'and' could reflect how when children were younger there were

		endless possibilities and they were not restricted or interrupted. This could be a warning to the receiver that change needs to happen or children will no longer feel free to be ambitious. Furthermore, this listing technique could be used by the producer to appear educated, as the text implied producer is the Guardian (a news source) targeted at people of a higher education level. The producer would likely want to fit with this theme to target a similar audience. Also if they receivers for the Guardian are 'educated' people then the producer may assume they are more likely to listen and understand the importance of creativity and learning a wide range of skills in school. The intended purpose being to reflect creative writing could also be seen in the use of alliteration 'free of fear and fight for creative freedom' which makes the title appear more engaging and therefore likely makes creative writing and using a range learning a range of language techniques seem more interesting. It also further reinforces how creativity can be used all throughout life and encourages parents to acknowledge this and facilitate their own children's creativity.
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This is a good response at the lower end of Level 6. The candidate does not waste time with a GASP introduction and begins the analysis immediately.

The answer is effective because it is well structured and provides a systematic analysis of language features across the language levels, rather than a basic line by line approach which would be a lower-level response.

The answer identifies and acknowledges the typical discourse structure of this text type and links it effectively to adjacency pairs, which is a typical speech feature but highlights that the candidate is aware of the mixed mode genre of the text. The candidate exemplifies points and embeds quotes with skill and precision. The candidate consistently and effectively links language to context as evidenced at the end of the paragraphs.

The candidate begins the response with an analysis of modality (word classes in detail) which is linked to the sentence mood of declaratives. The answer goes well beyond feature spotting and effectively links language to context with an analysis of how modality is used to sound assured which is further linked to the text's purpose to sound knowledgeable and confident, which is further linked to the text's audience.

The candidate explores patterns through the feature of listing. The candidate links the feature to context with a strong analysis of purpose, impact on audience and the creative writing genre.

The answer is well structured, effectively communicated and covers a range of language points in a systematic manner. Labelling of terminology is accurate.

This response achieved marks in Level 6 for both AO1 and AO3.

Question 2

2 Using appropriate linguistic concepts and methods, analyse the ways in which language is used in these two texts. In your answer you should:

- explore connections and variations between the texts
- consider how contextual factors contribute to the construction of meaning.

[36]

Both texts addressed the issue of food. Text B is a transcript from Farming Today and Text C is an article from a website. Most candidates understood the differences between the two, obviously in terms of genre, but also regarding audience, purpose and point of view.

Successful candidates provided a balance between similarities and differences and went beyond the literal, in that they compared context and language by providing examples from the text. Successful candidates were able to compare and contrast how the issue was represented and provided no personal opinions, approaching each text objectively.

Successful candidates were able to compare the obvious speech versus writing difference between the texts by focusing on aspects of speech and conversation in Text B then comparing such features to the conventional written features of C. However, more successful candidates were able to link such factors to audience, purpose and elements of planning, rather than comparing context individually.

Successful candidates based their comparison on the language levels of pragmatics, lexis/semantics, grammar/syntax, and least successfully of all, phonology. Many candidates wrote about patterns with the most successful able to exemplify across the text and analyse the intended purpose and impact of such patterns, whereas less successful candidates would simply describe a pattern and provide little or no analysis or exemplification.

Successful candidates analysed the concepts of power without overdoing it. Successful candidates wrote well about the conventions of speech within the context of Text A, with some analysis of politeness principles in some detail.

Successful candidates went beyond the spoken versus written, audience and purpose contexts with a detailed analysis of mode and genre and other subtle contexts such as representations of farming and stereotypes, which differentiated higher performing candidates.

Some candidates analysed persuasion in relation to the research of Fairclough with mixed success as some candidates simply described what he found and presented the research as an add-on to the end of the paragraph, whereas stronger candidates were able to embed his theories and link directly to language.

Less successful candidates focused too much on gender differences within the transcript with a detailed analysis of gender theories and models, with limited success as this tended to distract the candidates from the language.

Some candidates provided basic literal comparisons with few exemplifications or links to context. The less successful candidates tended to describe more than analyse the language features and offered a formulaic, basic comparison.

Many candidates wrote about the Gricean Maxims and most of the time this did not illuminate the text as it was basic, descriptive and formulaic. Candidates attempting to apply gender theory did so with mixed success with more successful candidates using the theory to illuminate and analyse the data rather than the simply adding it as a token comment at the end.

Previous examiners' reports have highlighted the most successful approaches to this challenging comparative task. Candidates who track discourse, comparing beginning, middle and end, often achieve balanced coverage of both texts. The formulaic listing of language levels is as unhelpful for Question 2 as it is for Question 1, particularly as this generates an approach that merely identifies what one text has which the other lacks. Insightful comparisons are often generated by highlighting a shared contextual factor, such as the audience's engagement with the news, for example, and then considering how the specific linguistic features in the text manipulate, construct or impact, that engagement.

Exemplar 2

2	17.	Text B is a spoken transcript from BBC radio 4 so therefore the language likely has elements of both spontaneous and planned speech and this impacts the formality and fluency throughout. Whereas text C is an article therefore the language is planned and edited meaning it is specifically crafted to convey a particular message. Text B is a spoken text so therefore the speech is spontaneous and therefore throughout text B there are non fluency features. Alternatively, text C is a written text and therefore the language used is specifically to target the receiver and create an intended meaning, therefore the text uses a mixed register. Text C has elements of both formality and informality this is to appear informative whilst also engaging the receiver. Throughout text C uses humour/puns and more informal lexical choices. For example 'spelling outspelt for you' this colloquial language is used in the opening to entice the receiver, it almost humanises the producer and makes them seem represents them as an engaging writer. The receiver is likely someone interested in nuts and healthy snacks or someone interested in buying these products so would likely find this humorous. Perhaps this humour helps and the second person pronoun 'you' helps to create a synthetic personalisation and makes the receiver feel more connected to the producer. Although they are only buying flour, the relationship built will make the receiver more likely to want to buy from the company as they
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		<p> seem like an interesting or funny brand. This alternatively could be negatively received and some receivers may deem the humour unprofessional and therefore not buy from the company. Throughout there is also more informal, colloquial language used such as 'play with' 'crumbly' 'go-to' these lexical choices all work together to create a more informal register. This also helps make the receiver feel more connected to the company as their language the to produced language is likely not much different from their own. This informality is likely used by the producer because they want to at ensure the receiver does not feel inferior. Whereas in text B there are non fluency features throughout; however these are not intentional. Similarly in text B there are non fluency features throughout: fillers, false starts which make also make the register appear more informal and more relatable for the receiver. However unlike it text C, in text B this mean is unintentional. Furthermore the non fluency features: 'um I think' 'um they've all' 'and then b.f. he's' are not present, this is because the text is from BBC Radio 4 so is intended to be as clear and informative as possible. However, the fact there are these non fluency features represents how some of this speech is spontaneous unlike in text C. The fillers 'ohm' are typically used when Roger Saul is thinking, </p>
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		for example 'um I think', he had to explain his reasoning and therefore may have been taken back and therefore had to think about how to reply.
		Also throughout there are many micropauses, these are very frequency in the beginning when the presenter is speaking introducing the Roger Saul and this could be because the presenter is reading off a script and therefore want to make the speech sound as clear and coherent as possible, the pauses mean the speed of their speech is understandable. Text B has non fluency features because of its spontaneous and spoken mode whereas text is C uses colloquial language to perhaps reflect spoken language and conversations in order to appear more engaging and interesting.
		Text B is a transcript from BBC radio 4 and therefore has an existing audience of educated people, the radio show has no music and it typically feature/

This is from a good Level 6 response. The candidate does not waste time with a GASP introduction and goes straight into the analysis.

The answer is effective because it is well structured and provides a systematic analysis, rather than a basic line by line approach which would be a lower level response. The answer identifies and acknowledges the typical discourse structure of this text type and links it effectively to context. The candidate exemplifies points and embeds quotes with skill and precision. The candidate consistently and effectively links language to context as evidenced at the end of the paragraphs.

All points are exemplified and linked to context. The candidate compares a range of relevant contexts such as elements of planning, audience, purpose, genre and relationships.

In terms of language features, the candidate first analyses the mixed register of the texts and notes that there are mixed registers within the texts, which is a high level skill. The candidate then moves on to humour, colloquialisms and non-fluency features. Relevant concepts such as synthetic personalisation are integrated and analysed effectively.

The answer is well structured, effectively communicated and covers a range of language points in a systematic manner. Labelling of terminology is accurate.

This response achieved full marks in Level 6 for both AO1 and AO3.

Exemplar 3

2	<p>Text B highlights the differences between the einkorn and ordinary wheat. HS (Heather) describes the grain as a 'quite curious-looking' and emphatically stresses 'is' in 'what is this', showing her confusion and how different this grain already is from first glance. HS also uses repetition, 'einkorn (...) what is einkorn', again highlighting the unfamiliarity of this grain. RS (the farmer, Roger) acknowledges these differences and explains how they are beneficial. He uses descriptive lexis such as 'amazing grain', 'huge health benefits', 'great slow-release' and 'huge opportunity'. These word choices paint these uncommon grains as very helpful, proving the episode is fully for these these alternative crops.</p>
	<p>Text C is also fully for 'alternative grains, specifically spelt'. The title itself uses the modal 'is' (followed by 'worth a try') which makes the article producer seem very sure on the benefits of spelt. The article is quite casual, using word play for humour purposes, and having a fairly conversational tone. 'Spelling out spelt' is a pun used to bring down the formality of the article a little. 'what is spelt?' creates a conversational tone due to the use of a question and answer structure. However, the article uses jargon such as 'glume', 'dehulling' and 'dehusking'.</p>

		This jargon makes the article sound more intellectual and makes the information it gives the receiver more credible, therefore making the reader more likely to trust it.
		Text B includes a similar effect. RS tends to break the quantity maxim, perhaps in order to make himself sound more like an expert so that his information is more credible. However, he also flouts other maxims which ^{slightly} discredits what he's saying. For example, he mentions his sister had cancer, despite its lack of relevance, and it sounds almost as if he's just trying to fill up the gaps in his speech with unnecessary statements. Despite RS normally breaking the quantity maxim, towards the end of the transcript, there is a line of speech in which he uses incomplete sentences. 'grain coming down in' and 'stone moving round' both include ellipsis regarding the missing words at the beginning of each of the clauses. This was most likely to simplify the concept of a mill, as it is a widely known piece of machinery, so RS may have simply been saving time as he was aware most of of the viewers / listeners already knew what he was telling them.

This response achieved marks in Level 4 for AO1, AO4 and AO3. The level of comparison lacks detail and is not developed, particularly in relation to language features.

Compared with Exemplar 2, the response did not address the key contexts of the texts and is essentially pointing out what is obvious.

The first comparison is centred around the basic speech and writing differences between the texts with some focus on stress and repetition. The next comparisons are around 'descriptive lexis' with a lack of precise terminology used standing out as a weakness here. Also, linguistic labelling is not always accurate with the auxiliary 'is' being incorrectly labelled as a modal verb.

The candidate then focused on puns, tone, jargon, and the question-and-answer structure with some exemplification and links to basic context, before writing a paragraph on Grice, which was not entirely convincing.

The comparisons are somewhat limited in that they only essentially focus on speech versus writing. The candidate does compare some contexts, albeit in an inconsistent and not fully developed way.

The candidate shows awareness of concepts and linguistic labelling is accurate. It is the narrowness and lack of development which keep this mid band.

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