

Examiners' report

A LEVEL

ENGLISH LANGUAGE

**OCR Level 3 Advanced GCE in
English Language**

H470

For first teaching in 2015

H470/01 Summer 2025 series

Contents

Introduction	3
Paper 1 series overview	4
Section A overview	5
Question 1 (a)	5
Question 1 (b)	8
Section B overview	9
Question 2	9
Section C overview	13
Question 3	13

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 responses 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.

A full copy of the question paper and the mark scheme can be downloaded from [Teach Cambridge](#).

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Paper 1 series overview

H470/01 is one of the two exam papers for A Level English Language. This component, which is largely synoptic, assesses candidates' ability to apply linguistic terminology, theoretical knowledge, and contextual understanding to unseen texts. It also requires candidates to craft a piece of original writing in a specific form, often linked to a topical language issue. Success in this paper depends on the candidate's confidence in analysing unfamiliar texts and producing appropriate, well informed writing.

The source texts in this series were highly accessible, allowing most candidates to perform well due to the abundance of clear features to comment on.

The range of marks given extended from the lower end of Level 2 up to the top of Level 6. As in previous series, a common issue was imprecise AO1 labelling. Many candidates used vague terms like 'lexical fields' without specifying or exemplifying the individual lexical items or subcategories. While there was some improvement in exemplification (candidates were less likely to label one feature and cite another), this remains an area for development. Centres are encouraged to make sure candidates practise accurate and specific identification and exemplification of language features ahead of the next exam.

In Question 2, many responses struggled to remain focused on the theme of language death, often veering into related but off topic discussions on language change. Despite the relative accessibility of a newspaper article, a notable number of candidates wrote essay-style responses, not incorporating the expected features of the designated format. The use of glossing in Question 2 showed no significant improvement.

While a few candidates appeared to run out of time, the majority completed all questions, with fewer overly long or unstructured responses. The best responses were typically concise and well planned, indicating that time spent on analysis and planning pays off.

To reach the top levels, candidates should aim to develop conceptual overviews, considering how language features work together to create meaning. For instance, recognising how colloquial lexis and contractions together form an informal register shows perceptive insight into style and context. Candidates should avoid simply using terms like 'pattern' without explaining or exemplifying them.

Candidates who did well on this paper generally:	Candidates who did less well on this paper generally:
- planned carefully - used terminology precisely - considered the source material perceptively - answered the questions posed.	- wrote irrelevant introductions - used vague terminology - were imprecise in their exemplification - were narrow in their consideration of language levels.

Section A overview

Overall, Question 1 (a) was generally well understood, with most candidates demonstrating a sound grasp of linguistic terminology and applying it effectively to the source text. Stronger responses were analytical and structured, identifying patterns and linking features clearly to audience and purpose. However, some candidates struggled with precise labelling or provided overly general context. In contrast, 1 (b) was less successful. Many candidates did not focus on sentence-level analysis, often writing instead about unrelated language features. Where 1 (b) was done well, candidates identified sentence types, moods, and patterns and linked these to context, but greater emphasis on methodical teaching would improve consistency.

Question 1 (a)

1 Giving careful consideration to the context of the text:

(a) Identify and analyse patterns of lexical and semantic use.

[10]

Question 1 (a) was often the most confidently handled question on the paper. Many candidates appeared well prepared and found the Glastonbury text accessible, with responses generally demonstrating sound understanding of both the task and the material. Most candidates used appropriate linguistic terminology when analysing lexis, although, as in previous series, the accuracy of this varied.

The strongest responses engaged directly with linguistic features without unnecessary introductions, often using precise and accurate terminology. These candidates provided clear, systematic analysis with a range of exemplification. There was thoughtful discussion of possible effects, especially in relation to audience and purpose, with some demonstrating a nuanced approach to AO3 by exploring multiple audience types and text functions. The most successful responses were thorough and well organised, addressing a wide range of lexical features and achieving clear links to the communicative context. Many candidates made good use of concepts such as synthetic personalisation where relevant.

Common limiting factors included confusion around adjective types (understandable given their centrality to the text), but nonetheless an area where greater precision is required. Misunderstandings about basic terminology were also noted, including frequent confusion between high/low frequency lexis and high/low register, as well as incorrect labelling of pronouns, (e.g. referring to 'you' as first person plural).

Some responses relied on vague contextual comments such as 'aimed at young people' or 'meant to entertain' without exploring these ideas further or supporting them with textual evidence. Others included long unsupported introductions or copied large sections of the text unnecessarily. In a minority of cases, candidates introduced concepts not relevant to the text, such as gender theory, which distracted from the question focus. Except for rare, appropriate references such as synthetic personalisation, theoretical content is not required for this task and often detracted from the clarity and relevance of responses.

There was also inconsistency in the application of epistemic and deontic modality, which are often confused. Centres may wish to focus on securing more accurate identification and exemplification of these terms.

There remains a surprising number of candidates who conflate Questions 1 (a) and 1 (b) despite the clear separation in the paper. Centres should make sure that candidates address lexis and sentence functions independently.

Overall, Q1 (a) produced a range of responses, with many demonstrating confident application of linguistic frameworks. More consistent accuracy in terminology, improved understanding of audience and purpose, and greater clarity around AO1/3 distinctions would support even higher achievement in future series.

Exemplar 1

		in relation to lexis, text A has a mixed register. While its attempt is to inform, we see elements of entertainment throughout. We see low frequency lexis through words such as, 'Symbolism' 'mythology' 'mentable' when describing the religious traditions the festival brings. These are polysyllabic nouns suggest that the audience, may be young, but also educated and would have had to self-select this online article. We also see element high frequency lexis, which have a demotic tone such as 'It's like going to...' 'best aspects' 'bundle' 'gigs' which try to create a relationship between the producer and receiver as a way to keep the article interesting. ^{this is done} By downwordly converging to a younger audience; this makes sense to why this has been consciously done, as more younger people are interested in festivals as the newer generation, ^{these are becoming more popular}
		Furthermore, text A also uses premodifying adjectives to emphasise what there is to offer at Glastonbury. 'vibrant culture' 'glorious sight' 'busy whirl' which show to the reader that there is something for everyone to enjoy. This inclusivity brings the producer and receiver together to entertain and also inform the audience. Festivals that are repeated each year need to change it up or add something new and exciting as a way to keep people wanting to go. Therefore by

This is a strong response that demonstrates a clear understanding of lexis and its role in shaping meaning and audience engagement. The candidate identifies both low and high frequency lexis and accurately links these to tone and audience. Terminology is used confidently and correctly, with references to 'polysyllabic nouns' and 'personalising adjectives'. The analysis is consistently rooted in the context of the Glastonbury text, and there is thoughtful consideration of how language constructs relationships between producer and receiver. The candidate shows an ability to interpret language choices with nuance, particularly in recognising register shifts and purposeful audience convergence.

Question 1 (b)

(b) Identify and analyse the way sentences are constructed.

[10]

In comparison to Question 1 (a) responses to Question 1 (b) were often less secure and, in many cases, disappointing. A significant proportion of candidates appeared to either misinterpret the focus of the question or lack the necessary skills to analyse sentence functions effectively. Despite the question's clear wording, which asked for comment on *sentence* features, some candidates offered generalised or unrelated observations on lexical or semantic choices.

More successful responses demonstrated a methodical approach, with precise identification and exemplification of sentence types, moods, and levels of complexity. These candidates were able to identify patterns in sentence construction and connect these meaningfully to the text's varied audiences and purposes. A small number of responses incorporated thoughtful analysis of rhetorical structures, coordination, and variation in clause types, often linking these to tone or intended reader impact. Where present, this level of awareness allowed candidates to access the higher levels of the mark scheme, even within a comparatively short response.

A common misconception was the misapplication of terminology or the avoidance of sentence-level analysis altogether. Many candidates instead commented on metaphors, proper nouns, or vocabulary, indicating a lack of clarity about what constitutes sentence analysis. Some relied heavily on naming sentence moods without exploring their effect or frequency within the text. There was also notable confusion around compound versus complex structures, as well as an absence of discussion of sentence patterns.

Contextual comments were often superficial, with candidates repeating generalised remarks made in Question 1 (a), rather than offering insight into how sentence construction contributes to meaning or engages specific audiences. In some cases, candidates attempted to insert language theories, which added little to their analysis.

There is a clear need for structured teaching approaches to this question. Given its lower mark allocation, candidates often overlook its potential; however, with a systematic method, focusing on sentence moods, structures, and identified patterns, candidates could maximise marks more effectively. Centres are encouraged to embed this skill within teaching so that candidates develop greater confidence and precision when responding.

While a minority of candidates demonstrated skill in analysing sentence-level features and linking them appropriately to context, many responses lacked focus, clarity, and accurate terminology. A more disciplined, pattern-based approach to sentence analysis would substantially improve outcomes in this section.

Section B overview

Question 2 proved challenging for many candidates due to the unfamiliar topic of language death. Less successful responses lacked theoretical grounding and often confused language death with language change. Some misused terminology or included invented theorists. Stronger responses demonstrated secure understanding, referencing theorists such as Crystal and Aitchison, and explored the social and cultural implications of language loss. Most candidates adopted an appropriate form and tone, although some relied too heavily on extended metaphors. The best responses showed conceptual insight, precise exemplification, and an ability to adapt linguistic knowledge effectively to the task.

Question 2

2 'We should let languages die and enjoy those that are still alive and evolving.'

Write an article for a UK newspaper, critically responding to this statement.

'Language' can refer to any written or spoken communication which is widely available to the general public. You need to engage a reasonably well-educated, non-specialist audience.

Aim to write 500 words.

[24]

Question 2 presented a notable challenge for many candidates, largely due to the topic of language death, which appears to be less frequently encountered in their studies. As a result, a significant number of responses lacked the depth of knowledge and theoretical understanding required for a fully developed response. Some candidates resorted to vague assertions or anecdotal commentary, occasionally inventing theorists or quotations, which detracted from the academic rigour of their responses. A number of scripts conflated language death with language change or struggled to differentiate between descriptivist and prescriptivist perspectives. Engagement with the nuances of the question, particularly its ethical, social, and cultural implications—was limited in less successful responses.

More successful responses demonstrated secure understanding through precise use of terminology and effective integration of linguistic theory. Theorists such as David Crystal, Jean Aitchison, Bruce Moore, and Michael Halliday were frequently referenced with insight. The most successful responses explored the significance of linguistic diversity, cultural identity, and the epistemological implications of language loss. Some candidates contextualised their arguments with relevant case studies, such as North Sentinel Island, and a few integrated conceptual models such as Chen's S-curve or Hockett's theory of random change. These essays also reflected an appreciation of language as a social construct shaped by power, aligning well with broader course themes.

In terms of form, most responses adhered to the conventions of an opinion piece, demonstrating audience awareness through rhetorical questions, direct address, and glossing of technical terms. However, tone and appropriateness varied. A small number of candidates adopted an overly informal or confrontational style, with occasional use of inappropriate language, including mild expletives or censored profanity. Teachers should continue to emphasise appropriate tone for this task.

While some candidates showed flair and creativity through analogy and metaphor, others relied too heavily on extended comparisons—such as nature or cooking metaphors—which detracted from the clarity of their argument. Aitchison and Crystal were the most frequently cited theorists, although some incorrectly labelled Aitchison as prescriptivist. AO2 coverage was often narrow, with limited adaptation of knowledge to suit the task. References to Latin, MLE, technology, globalisation, and Sapir-Whorf were seen, and a few candidates applied gender theory effectively in relation to language and equality. Most candidates were able to engage with the evaluative element of the statement to some degree.

Overall, while many struggled with unfamiliar content, the best responses were conceptual, well structured, and reflective of thoughtful wider reading.

Exemplar 2

6

(NOT Dying)

Question Part

2		Title: Our dying language of death <u>THE Evolution of our Language!</u> Don't you think we should expand our knowledge and try to express ourselves in whatever way we can? I think - yes! Our language is becoming more spreading vastly across the world and what better way to communicate than through the new tiktok language that is becoming more and more popular. Even David Crystal would agree with me here! we should accept that certain rules and taboo (vulgar language that is politically incorrect) ^{are going} mean to be broken, ^{sooner} or later. As David crystal is a descriptivist, (agrees language is becoming more informal + expressive) he would agree that the new words on tiktok ^{are} helping stop a language barrier. We are grr communicating so quickly and easily now! Neologisms (new words) like 'slay' 'lanky' 'brat' 'anything-aholic' are being widely spread and globally as a way to understand youth terms. You've heard of these right? I understand that someone like Deborah Cameron (a prescriptivist - believes all rules and standardisation should remain the same) would disagree with me because some schools are still learning completely
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extinct languages; like Latin - yuck! How boring? ~~But~~ Why are they learning about a 'dead' language. See what I did there, dead has now broadened in meaning to ^{also mean} ~~be~~ funny now too! But I couldn't disagree with Cameron more.

I believe it is still ~~are~~ amazing that we can communicate through social media languages that are spoken but also written too. We have emerged ourselves into using acronyms and initialisms in written texts now too. We have saved so much time by writing 'LOL' and NOT laugh out loud. We can't deny it, we all do this.

Therefore, I believe we should let unused languages (especially Latin) ~~die~~ die and enjoy those around us that are becoming alive and ~~are~~ developing.



This is a well written and engaging article that demonstrates confident use of tone, structure, and audience awareness. The rhetorical style is sustained throughout, with clear attempts to persuade and entertain. There is strong integration of theorists like David Crystal and references to concepts such as prescriptivism and neologisms.

However, the focus on *language death* is limited. The candidate largely explores language change and evolution, rather than directly addressing the ethical, cultural, or linguistic implications of languages becoming extinct. References to "dead" or "boring" languages like Latin are superficial, and there is minimal engagement with the deeper issues surrounding linguistic diversity, loss of cultural identity, or endangered languages.

Section C overview

Question 3 was generally well handled, with the accessible topic and text types enabling candidates across the ability range to make meaningful comparisons. The absence of a spoken text was not detrimental; the hybrid forum text provided ample material for analysis. Stronger responses were structured, systematic, and evaluative, with confident use of linguistic frameworks and theories such as Goffman and Fairclough. Less successful responses tended to be descriptive, lacked exemplification, or spent too long on general contextual introductions. Greater emphasis on structure, clear comparison, and integration of context and theory would further support candidates in achieving higher-level responses.

Question 3

3 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]

Question 3 was generally well answered by candidates. The accessible and relevant theme of fast fashion provided a familiar context, and the two written texts were approachable and rich in features suitable for linguistic comparison. The absence of a spoken text in this series did not disadvantage candidates. Many used the hybrid multimodal nature of the forum post, containing elements of both speech and writing, to explore how features of spoken discourse were emulated within a written medium. This created opportunities for discussion around the blending of modes and enabled confident application of discourse theory.

In future, at least one spoken text will always be included in Section C of this paper.

Most candidates demonstrated an understanding of comparative analysis, with nearly all responses attempting to draw parallels between the texts using appropriate linguistic frameworks. Stronger responses were characterised by a clear structure: a brief contextual overview, followed by a series of well-developed comparative points supported by precise linguistic terminology. These candidates often integrated contextual evaluation seamlessly within their analysis, producing fluent and perceptive responses.

The most successful essays consistently moved beyond basic comparison to consider why language choices were made and how they shaped meaning for specific audiences. These candidates often drew on a range of relevant theories, including Goffman's face-threatening acts, Fairclough's synthetic personalisation, and Wareing's power categories. Some also showed confident grammatical knowledge, identifying the function and effect of complex sentence structures, particularly in the more formal written text (Text C). Pragmatics and tone were also handled effectively in higher-level responses, which made use of these concepts to explore power relationships and speaker intention.

However, some responses were limited by structural or conceptual weaknesses. Several candidates spent too long on introductory paragraphs about context without linking this to linguistic evidence from the texts. In several cases, this contextual commentary was repeated later in the analysis, leading to redundancy and time lost that could have been spent on further comparative development. There were also instances where candidates displayed sound linguistic knowledge but did not consistently support their points with detailed exemplification. These responses tended to remain generalised and lacked the close focus on the data needed to access the higher levels of the mark scheme.

Additionally, some candidates showed a tendency to write descriptively, offering lists of features without fully exploring their effects or significance within the context. This often stemmed from a lack of clear method or structure for approaching the comparative task. Centres may wish to support candidates in developing a systematic approach, perhaps by encouraging them to anchor each point around a specific linguistic feature, compare its use in both texts, and then evaluate its contextual significance.

In summary, Question 3 was accessible and engaging, allowing most candidates to showcase their comparative skills. Those who achieved the highest marks combined clear structure, accurate terminology, and sustained contextual analysis. Further emphasis on avoiding repetitive contextual commentary, exemplifying points thoroughly, and integrating theory in a meaningful way would help raise attainment across the cohort.

Exemplar 3

In both text B & C, we see a common theme of fast fashion being discussed. We can infer that the audience of both extracts is women or people of that readership that may have an interest or opinion on fast fashion in the world. However, the two topics differ when it comes to format and purpose. Text B are comments from a forum from the beauty style area that are having a discussion of opinions about ^{fast} fashion whereas text C is a blog article that aims to inform and educate the audience.

In relation to register, text B has high frequency lexis and a demotic register which makes sense considering the format. Users use more informal tones and lexis such as 'IMO' 'to me..' 'well that's my opinion' which we would infer to be everyday chatty language. Informalisation - ~~• Goffman~~ is proven here ~~because~~ alongside conversationalisation ~~language~~ (Goffman + Goodman) as it suggests that our language is becoming more demotic, less formal and like a conversation. This means ~~any~~ anyone who reads this chatbox will be able to

		understand what they are talking about and doesn't limit what who will read it. This discussion forum aims to create controversy of certain topics especially ones like fast fashion that are controversial and opens up debates with strong opinions. This is proven through the informal use of the emoji as as a correction to user one for the wrong spelling. It creates it's own message in response. Whereas in text C, the register is more formal in some areas but still contains some directed opinions as it is a blog - with one view asserted. For example, 'Salaries' 'industry' 'business' which relate more to economy than personal opinions and emotive tones. This is different to text B as its sole purpose is to create more awareness and inform the audience.
user 1.		furthermore, text B uses premodifying adjectives to explain a strong opinion about fast fashion. Using the 'expensive brands' 'ridiculous amounts' 'slow fashion' to convey this idea that fast fashion is not a real thing to them as they believe it is only fast if it is a waste. They also suggest that it is expensive having to buy clothes, especially since the the cost of living crisis

This is a good comparison because it clearly links linguistic features to both purpose and audience across the texts. The candidate confidently discusses lexical choices, such as low and high frequency lexis, and explains how these choices contribute to tone, shifting between informative and entertaining registers. They also identify polysyllabic nouns ("symbolism," "mythology") to show how each text appeals to different audience expectations: one more educated, the other more conversational and youth oriented.

Furthermore, the response shows awareness of writer-reader relationships, recognising how techniques like personal pronouns and inclusive adjectives foster engagement. The candidate also demonstrates the ability to link language features to context and audience with terms like 'converging' and 'inclusive', showing good command of key concepts.

Overall, the comparison is well structured, supported by relevant examples, and evaluative in its approach successfully incorporating analysis of form, function, and audience impact.

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