



Pearson

Principal Moderator Report

Summer 2018

Pearson Edexcel GCE
In English Literature (9ET0_04)
Component 4: Non-Examination Assessment

Edexcel and BTEC Qualifications

Edexcel and BTEC qualifications are awarded by Pearson, the UK's largest awarding body. We provide a wide range of qualifications including academic, vocational, occupational and specific programmes for employers. For further information visit our qualifications websites at www.edexcel.com or www.btec.co.uk. Alternatively, you can get in touch with us using the details on our contact us page at www.edexcel.com/contactus.

Pearson: helping people progress, everywhere

Pearson aspires to be the world's leading learning company. Our aim is to help everyone progress in their lives through education. We believe in every kind of learning, for all kinds of people, wherever they are in the world. We've been involved in education for over 150 years, and by working across 70 countries, in 100 languages, we have built an international reputation for our commitment to high standards and raising achievement through innovation in education. Find out more about how we can help you and your candidates at: www.pearson.com/uk

Summer 2018

Publications Code 9ET0_04_1806_ER

All the material in this publication is copyright

© Pearson Education Ltd 2018

9ET0 04 Principal Moderator report

General comments

Thank you to all centres for your submissions for the 2018 series of non-examination assessment. I am happy to share that there was widespread evidence of good practice amongst teachers and students in the summer 2018 submission. There were some instances where centres did not always succeed in maximising the potential of all their students' entries, and cases where the assessment criteria were applied too generously. This report will highlight areas of good practice as well as identify areas which prevented students from achieving their full potential.

Text choices

There are no prescribed texts for this non-examination assessment (NEA) and centres can receive advice from Pearson on their choices. Overall, moderators reported a mixture of 'typical' scenarios and interesting and unusual combinations.

An aim of this component is to encourage wider, independent reading, so it is positive to see centres opting to offer students a broad range of texts to choose from or students selecting their own choices with guidance and support from available resources. Giving students free choice of texts, titles and critical research is designed to foster an independence of approach and the development of each student's own critical position. The benefits in engagement and personal critical development when personal choice was optimised was evident in some of the strongest responses. Moderators noted that most students had chosen texts that engaged their interest, and selected titles that enabled them to meet the assessment criteria at an appropriate level.

Some centres offer their students one taught/'core' text with which students paired a text of their choice, usually on a similar theme. Such a strategy offers students the support of a 'shared' text combined with the opportunity to demonstrate that independence of approach to literary study which this component was designed to foster. The ability to use a shared text offers the opportunity for support and group discussion, and more able students still have the chance to choose their own combination of texts. Centres should be advised, however, that care should be taken to ensure these texts will give students access to the full range of marks across the AOs. Teachers are reminded that texts on GCSE specifications should generally be avoided.

Centres also took the approach of setting all students tasks on the same two texts, which does not always develop the independent reading skills and differentiation this component promotes. However, some independence of approach could still be achieved through the range of questions devised and background reading undertaken.

Popular text choices were influenced by common themes, such as the American dream, dystopian societies and aspects of the female experience in a variety of cultures. The Gothic and mental health were also popular areas of study, with

many centres examining themes of violence and society in texts such as *American Psycho* and *A Clockwork Orange*.

The Handmaid's Tale was also used by students exploring aspects of the female experience in a variety of cultures. They also selected *The Color Purple*, *Beloved* and *The Bloody Chamber*. The latter also appeared with Gothic texts, such as *Wuthering Heights*, *Frankenstein*, *The Castle of Otranto* or *The Picture of Dorian Gray*. The impact of oppression on female mental health was a frequent selection, using *The Yellow Wallpaper* and *The Bell Jar*. *The Great Gatsby* was once more the most commonly used single text, and a versatile choice, appearing in a range of pairings.

The second most popular choice was *The Handmaid's Tale*, an increase probably linked to the text's raised profile following the television adaptation in the year following the election of President Trump. *The Handmaid's Tale* also fits into the dystopian theme, where previously popular texts retained their attraction – *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, *Brave New World*, *A Clockwork Orange* and *Fahrenheit 451*; more recent texts, including *Never Let Me Go* and *The Road* were also used.

There were few examples of rubric infringements this series but, centres are reminded that texts in translation are not allowed for this component.

Assignment setting

The quality of the task set is crucial in determining how successfully students can address the five Assessment Objectives (AOs) for this component. There were some very good examples where students devised their own questions and had been carefully supported to ensure that the wording of the task draws attention to the ways in which meanings are shaped (for AO2 in particular).

Where students devise their own tasks, they should take into account the need to address the five AOs and to keep a steady focus on AO2, as close textual engagement was often the least well-sustained aspect of students' essays or teachers' assessment where narrative sections, with intermittent textual quotations, were rewarded as though they offered the 'controlled analysis [and] aware[ness] of nuances and subtleties of writer's craft' expected of mid to high Level 4.

In order to support AO4 and AO5 development students should be encouraged to use broad literary theory and apply this to their texts rather than using (possibly unhelpfully) articles found on the internet.

Some centres helpfully incorporated a reminder to students to keep AO3 and AO5 in mind in the formulation of their tasks, though this occasionally had the result of foregrounding these areas to the detriment of AO2.

Most centres continue to use the free resources available from Pearson, such as Pearson Edexcel online exemplar material and the Coursework Advisory Service when assessing work for this component. However, unfortunately, some isolated centres had not availed themselves of these resources, and therefore faced significant difficulties both in preparing their students appropriately and in

assessing their work accurately. It was also rewarding to note that many centres had clearly followed the advice given in last year's report, via the English Subject Advisor and at face-to-face meetings, to emphasise to students the importance of developing their own tasks for their non-examination assessments.

Assignment marking and internal standardisation

It is pleasing to report evidence of much purposeful, effective and enthusiastic engagement with texts and tasks as students met the demands of this component. It is also pleasing to report that most centres applied the standard accurately. The marginal annotation and summative comments of the majority of centres showed familiarity with the AOs.

It was noticeable that marks were more often agreed where a centre had carefully annotated through pertinent marginal comments and detailed summative comments, and where there was clear evidence of thoughtful internal moderation. Internal moderation should have clear rationale and explanation if marks are changed. There was a correlation of moderators being unable to agree the marks when the sample was presented with very little annotation and only brief summative comments, which meant more of a 'marking' exercise for the moderators, who were looking to be able to agree the centre's marks. The annotation on some centres was very helpful, when teachers had identified where AOs were met, and provided helpful commentary to support the level awarded. Most centres identified AOs, but some did not indicate a level or supporting comments. Some centres provided a commentary on the essays, or on the authentication sheet (which is editable), which was good practice.

Best practice is where centres offer detailed summative comments at the end of essays with clear reference to how students had addressed the two sets of AOs. These comments should be in line with the mark grid descriptors, determining the 'best fit' for achievement within each set of AOs. This is much more likely to produce a precise, accurate judgement of the students' work than generalised front cover overviews (even when the language of the descriptors was repeated) or block-highlighted copies of mark grids which were sometimes appended to folders.

Assessment Objectives

As mentioned above, the most accurate marking was seen where centres used the three divisions within the levels-based mark scheme to find 'best-fit' in terms of overall marks for the two sets of AOs.

AO1-AO3

On the whole, the AOs were appropriately awarded for AO1 to AO3. In the best responses centres had rewarded sophisticated expression and conscious crafting and development of an argument (AO1). Where AO1 was over-rewarded this generally was due to teachers not challenging students' assertions, overlooking technical/typographical slips (for example, misuse of the apostrophe; insecure syntax) or mistaking word-classes (for example, 'the adjective 'imperceptibly'...').

For AO1 and AO2 most students were able to use common technical terms appropriately, and some had engaged at a very sophisticated level with writers' lexical choices and syntactical structure. In weaker responses, there was a tendency to rather colloquial, informal expression which did not seem to justify the marks sometimes awarded in the top two levels. For AO2, the best responses engaged with how structure and form, as well as language, crafted meaning, and this differentiated the Level 5 performance for AO2, particularly for those students who had chosen different genres in their pairings.

AO3, contexts, was often well handled by students of all abilities (with most incorporating relevant biographical details or reference to literary movements such as Modernism and Aestheticism). It was especially successful where students referred to the context in which modern readers are now interpreting texts, with some interesting and perceptive points about, for example, the continuing relevance of Orwell's *Newspeak* or Offred's limited access to the printed word in an era of 'false news' and state censorship. There were some interesting and illuminating references to recent stage performances and film adaptations of texts (for example, Miller's *A View from the Bridge*, *The Crucible* and *The Glass Menagerie*) and one or two students had found some highly-topical references to the texts they were studying, (such as Atwood's 2017 article in *The New York Times* on the significance of *The Handmaid's Tale* in the Age of Trump!).

AO4 and AO5

Most students were able to offer a reasonably balanced discussion of their texts for AO4, and this usually took the form of alternating paragraphs on each text, (generally opened with discursive links), with an attempt to draw the discussion together in the conclusion. To be placed in the higher levels for AO4, students and teachers assessing them might like to consider the extent to which essays exhibit a 'controlled discriminating approach to integration with detailed examples' for Level 4 or 'an evaluative, sophisticated connective approach with exemplification' for Level 5. This was an area that was over-rewarded by some centres.

AO5 seems to have been the most problematic AO for students to incorporate in their essays, and for teachers to assess, with some over-rewarding Level 4/5 marks: 'different interpretations of texts' can, of course come from a range of sources, including classroom discussion, but in order to meet the demands of the upper mark-levels, students need to do more than simply cite a critical source: 'integrated exploration of alternative interpretations in the development of [students'] own critical position' or 'sustained evaluation... supported by sophisticated use of the application of alternative interpretations to illuminate [their] own critical position' are the key performance descriptors. Students should also consider their own critical position on the texts and title and make this clear in their response.

Good advice to centres would be to keep in mind the difference between 'clear, detailed', 'discriminating, controlled' and 'critical and evaluative' for Levels 3, 4 and 5.

Word counts and bibliography

Many centres encouraged students to include word counts and bibliographies. There were, however, a number of centres where no word counts were supplied at all, and centres should be advised that where essays were clearly below 2,500 words students were unable to develop their arguments in the depth and detail required to meet the AOs at the upper levels, and where they had significantly exceeded 3,000 words they were less likely to have achieved the controlled argument required for a mark in Level 4 for AO1.

In developing study skills generally, centres might find it helpful to offer some guidance on how to use footnotes in an academic essay since it was often difficult to see where students' own responses to texts were differentiated from those of other readers in their essays.

Bibliographies, a specification requirement, were usually supplied by students but there was considerable variation in the format adopted and the range of background material referenced. Centres should remind students to include the publication details of their primary texts in the list of sources and should give guidance on how to set out the bibliography according to academic conventions.

Administration

As with the previous series, the vast majority of submissions arrived punctually, in good order and containing all the necessary constituent parts. However, there were some submissions with administrative issues.

- Ideally, folders should be organised as follows: completed NEA authentication sheet, completed non-examination assessment piece. The recommended way of keeping folders together is via treasury tags.

The submission to the moderator must include the following:

- the sample of students' work indicated by ticks against candidate names on Edexcel Online (each student's work with the authentication sheet attached to the front using a treasury tag). If any student has been withdrawn or if they have an incomplete submission, a replacement folder along with a covering note for the moderator. Please check the number of folders is matched to the size of your cohort
- in addition to the sample, the work of the highest and lowest-scoring students (if either were already in the sample, please include additional folders at similar levels)
- a print-out of the marks entered for the whole cohort from Edexcel Online.
- a note to the moderator if you are a 'lone teacher' in a centre to explain that there will not be evidence of internal moderation on the sample submitted.
- centres are **not** required to submit a 'centre authentication sheet' signed by all teachers assessing NEA. The only authentication sheets required are those for each individual candidate.

While errors of addition, missing signatures or other administrative inaccuracies were by no means widespread this series, where they did occur, they were likely to cause delays to the moderation process.

Some useful advice to centres is:

- request students use at least font 12 and double-space their work
- samples must be secured together with treasury tags and without plastic wallets.
- use the latest Non-Examination Assessment (rather than the previous Coursework) Authentication Sheet and ensure that all student numbers and teacher/student signatures are appropriately completed before dispatch to the moderator.
- ensure folders are correctly assembled; students should number their pages to ensure essays are correctly collated.
- text coverage checks need to be completed by all students, so the moderator can ensure the correct number and combination of texts have been covered for the qualification
- centre-assessors should ensure that marks for each set of AOs as well as the overall total out of 60 (ensuring correct adding-up of the two sets of AOs) are entered on the front cover
- check the essay title on the NEA Authentication Sheet matches the task actually undertaken by the student
- some centres helpfully prefaced their students' folders with a centre-designed mark sheet with boxes for marks and comments on each set of AOs as well as a section for completion by another teacher to confirm internal standardisation had been carried out.

Overall, the vast majority of centres, teachers and students provided moderators with evidence of a wide variety of interesting work.

Thank you to all those involved in making this moderation series successful and enjoyable and I wish you a very successful 2018/19 academic year.