

AS ENGLISH LANGUAGE

COMPONENT 1 SECTION A

TEACHERS' NOTES

The notes here are to accompany the digital resources, which offer some suggestions about how to tackle the question in Component 1 Section A. The suggested approach is not definitive—candidates could respond to the question effectively in many other ways.

The digital resources encourage learners to think about and discuss the concepts before the explanatory information is revealed. There are printable copies of all the materials so that learners can carry out tasks individually or in groups before/after discussing the online information. These hard copies also extend the tasks by providing additional material. The printable resources include:

- sample question
- sample marking guidelines
- sample overviews
- sample essay extracts
- 'Tackling Section A' guide
- three sample responses to SAMs (unannotated and annotated)

1. GETTING STARTED

These tasks aim to encourage good practice, with learners developing close reading skills and applying them to the question and general information. It is worth pointing out to learners that the information provided about genre and background is an important part of understanding the transcripts. Having identified the key points, learners should use these to underpin their readings of the texts.

The consideration of 'expectations' is also an important part of reading the transcripts, but learners should be reminded to write specifically about the transcripts they are given rather than about genre in a more general way. In the exam, they will not be rewarded for lists of features associated with the genre where the effects are not explored and where supporting examples are not provided.

2. FIRST READ-THROUGH

By getting a broad sense of the register, the participants, their relationship with the target audience, their role, and the balance of turn-taking, learners will be able to make sensible comparative points about the transcripts.

Encourage learners to think about the areas they may consider under each of the key headings before revealing the suggested bullet points. These are not the only responses, and learners may well think of other valid suggestions.

‘First thoughts’ task: the opening sections of the transcripts (entertainment programmes)

Notes

Register:

- the tenor is informal and intimate in both transcripts because the interactions take place between friends and family
- Text B is slightly more formal—perhaps because of the respectful relationship between mother and son, or because of the more formal context of the programme (BBC1 vs BBC3) and purpose (informative vs human interest)
- the physical setting adds to the informal tenor: Text B = mother’s home (domestic and familiar); Text A = the pub
- both transcripts are based on personal content, but the field of Text A is more informal (wedding planning with a twist vs genealogy)

Participants:

- familiar and known: friends (Text A); mother and son (Text B)
- Text A participants are of similar age/status; age gap in Text B possibly creates a more respectful tenor
- ordinary members of the public (Text A)—but M’s role as a professional wrestler shapes the interaction and provides humour; celebrity (Text B)—engages viewers interested in JB

Relationship with target audience:

- the immediate audience is intimate and familiar
- the secondary television audience is distant
- no direct engagement with viewers

Role of participants:

- J/R (Text A) create social bond (phatic) and reinforce what M says (challenges gender theory that it is predominantly females who provide affirmation/support)
- M (Text A) entertains with his proposals (humorous juxtaposition of traditional wedding and proposed plans)
- BM (Text B) provides information (photographs act as a stimulus)
- JB (Text B) develops his mother’s comments; entertains with humorous interpretations (e.g. bathrobe/sweater; being ‘abandoned’)

Turn-taking:

- M (Text A) is the dominant participant and his main turn is extended
- J/R (Text A) are in supporting roles with short turns
- JB (Text B) initially sets the topic by asking a question, but his mother is the dominant participant with more frequent turns and a longer MLU
- JB’s (Text B) turns are short because he is in a supporting role, encouraging his mother to talk

3. CLOSE READING

As they read a transcript, learners need to become accustomed to marking interesting examples of language use and making marginal notes. Any features that they mark should have a semantic significance.

Encourage learners to think about the areas they may consider under each of the key headings before revealing the suggested bullet points. These are not the only responses, and learners may well think of other valid suggestions.

‘Finding the evidence’ tasks: the opening sections of the transcripts (entertainment programmes)

Using short extracts from the sample question transcripts should make it easier for learners to practise this technique.

It may be helpful to use the annotated example of Text A to demonstrate the kind of text markings/marginal notes that are useful. The annotations can be revealed one by one to allow discussion. Then get learners to work in small groups on the opening of Text B, identifying relevant examples and making marginal notes to explain their significance. The group findings can be compared with the annotated version of Text B as part of a whole class discussion.

At this point, learners can apply the same approach to analysing the rest of the transcripts. Small groups could work on different sections and feedback to the class.

4. ANSWERING THE QUESTION

When the process of text marking is complete, use the four structured sections (Planning, Writing an Overview, Developing an Argument, Summing Up) to stimulate discussion about the importance of producing a well-structured, clearly argued essay. There are a number of tasks which require learners to assess sample responses and then to produce their own.

It is important to emphasise that these are only broad suggestions. In the exam, candidates are free to tackle the essay in any way they wish. However, these key areas remind them of what they should be thinking about as they plan and write.

Having a formula/mnemonic to remind learners of the areas to include can be helpful (particularly for learners who need a little extra support). Where topic sentences are shaped by these, however, it can restrict the ability of more able students to produce a personalised and distinctive response. It is important that learners are able to demonstrate their personal engagement with the transcripts as well as their linguistic knowledge.

‘Making judgements’ task: sample overviews of the transcripts (entertainment programmes)

The first three responses have comments re. strengths/weaknesses. The notes below cover the additional three responses included in the printed material.

Notes

RESPONSE 4

Strengths: sensible connection immediately established (subject matter); engages sensibly with content of Text A; shows secure understanding of central premise of programme and of wrestling theme; accurate and fluent written style

Weaknesses: no examples to support points about Text A; summary of Text B is rather broad; the point about the fluency of the speakers is not developed; links between the subject matter/background of the participants and the spoken features are not made clear

RESPONSE 5

Strengths: perceptive summary of Text A with evidence of engagement with the meaning; confident use of terminology; relevant and concise supporting examples which are effectively embedded in the argument; purposeful connections made re. contrasting moods/purposes; effective discussion of dramatic tension in Text A; coherent and well developed argument

Weaknesses: a little more discussion of Text B would have balanced the paragraph

RESPONSE 6

Strengths: shows basic understanding of medium; some broad understanding of relevant language areas (genre, audience, subject matter, function, tone); basic connection established, but not fully explored

Weaknesses: no need to explain 'semi-scripted'; rather general comments re. audience; no need to list 'expectations'; lacks textual support; limited use of terminology; approach is descriptive rather than analytical; adequate expression, but some technical inaccuracy

5. ASSESSMENT OBJECTIVES FOR SECTION A

This section is designed to develop familiarity with the criteria by which Section A essays will be assessed. Once learners have a clear idea of the key constituents of each AO, they can consider the essay extracts and identify where the AOs are being fulfilled. Response 1 can be discussed as a whole class exercise with the annotated copy used to indicate examples of AO1, AO2 and AO3.

Clearly this is an extract from a longer essay, but it is a good example of writing that demonstrates borderline Band 3 and Band 4 qualities. There is a secure use of terms (B4) and sensible methods of analysis (B3); discussion is competent (B3) and the style is accurate and clear (B4). Understanding of spoken concepts is secure (B4) and apt textual support is used consistently to support points (B4). Linguistic issues are not fully addressed here, but this imbalance could be redressed elsewhere in the response. Connections are purposeful and relevant linguistic knowledge is used to underpin each point (B4).

The notes below cover the two additional responses included in the printed material.

RESPONSE 2

AO4: CONNECTIONS	The topic of Text A is wedding plans and text B is about investigating family history, therefore there is use of multiple	
AO2: EXAMPLES	personal pronouns as events are discussed such as “you” “we” and “me”. There is also use of possessive directives such as “my” and “your” in “my head”, “my favourite”. The use of these	
	create a personal tone suitable to the topics. The guests are all family and friends, Mike and the mother appear to be providing the information and the son in Text B asks the questions. Text A	AO1: EFFECTS
AO4: CONNECTIONS	is present tense because it is happening now such as “is” and “want” but Text B is past tense with multiple additions of the	
	suffix “ed” for example the verb phrase “(we) lived” and “you used to”. This continues with verbs such as “stayed” and “deserted”. The sons interest in the topic is shown by his use of	
AO2: GENRE	interrogatives to receive answers, such as “what was that?” and “who’s this?”. These are relative phrases and cannot be	AO2: EXAMPLES
AO2: CONCEPT	understood out of context. His questions are to do with photographs placed on the wall of his childhood. The two guests	
	seem comfortable together with frequent overlapping and occasional laughs for example “good times there didn’t you	
	//you” and “// I had (1) well all times”. It is more common of men to interrupt women, however due to the relationship the mother	AO2: SPOKEN CONCEPTS
AO2: EXAMPLES	keeps talking and it therefore becomes an overlap. Another gender feature is the theory that women like to praise and support the other members in a conversation. The mother in this	
	text supports this theory with a lot of positive statements such as “you had some good times”. This is the same in Text A	
	because there are laughs with the girls and Becky’s aunt says “Cinderella” to show she agrees.	AO2: ISSUES
AO4: CONNECTIONS		

This response demonstrates qualities of top Band 2. There is evidence of some accurate linguistic knowledge (basic terms such as *pronouns*, *present tense*, *verbs*, *interrogatives*) and basic methods of analysis. Discussion is not wide-ranging, but there is some attempt to make linguistic points—discussion of effects/link to genre remains underdeveloped. Expression is mostly accurate, but with some lapses in spelling and sentence control. Some basic spoken concepts are considered (e.g. overlapping), but the range is narrow. There is an implicit understanding of deixis, but no terms support the discussion. Knowledge of gender theory is demonstrated and linked to the texts—although basic, the points show some understanding of the relationships between participants. Textual support is generally appropriate. Connections across the texts tend to be implied rather than stated, but there is a clear attempt to engage and some overview (e.g. topic, tone, participants). Discussion of effects remains underdeveloped.

RESPONSE 3

AO2: SPOKEN CONCEPTS	Mike has a big personality and dominates the scenes he is in. His turns are longer and he dictates the topic such as ideas for the wrestling wedding, different locations and food options. His friends provide support by agreeing with Mike's decisions	AO4: OVERVIEW
AO2: EXAMPLES	"you've got some good plans" and with backchannel affirmation "yeah". This positive relationship makes it	AO2: SPOKEN CONCEPTS
AO2: GENRE	entertaining for viewers who get carried along with Mike's enthusiastic attitude. The pace of his speech speeds up when he gets very excited in line 5 and the asyndetic list of main clauses starting "I want ..." reflects he is getting carried away with his ideas. The repetition of the first person personal pronoun "I" makes viewers think he is just thinking about himself and not Becky because she has got very different ideas. She juxtaposes the adjectives "masculine" and "princessy" and this makes it humorous for the viewers who know what Mike is planning when Becky does not. The emphatic stress on adjectives like "big", "huge" and "massive" is also humorous because of the scale he wants. The connotations are increasing as the programme goes on. When he says the compound noun phrase "mine and Becky's" with stress on the pronoun and the noun he shows he is trying to make a special day for Becky.	AO1: EFFECTS
AO1: EFFECTS		AO2: GENRE
AO1: DEVELOPING ARGUMENT		AO1: EFFECTS
AO4: CONNECTION	Like Mike, it is Barnes' mother who is in control. She uses interrogatives to prompt Barnes for example in the elliptical interrogative "you remember much about him?", which encourages him to give more information about his grandfather after his short, monosyllabic interjection "yeah". It is surprising that Barnes' mother seems more in control here than Barnes, considering that he is a former football player and therefore possibly used to the limelight. She has a longer mean utterance length and seems to provide most of the information, for example in her use of dates, which are often abbreviated reflecting the informal tenor e.g. "64" and "76", and her lexical set of concrete nouns in the semantic field of domestic items such as "sweater", "bathroom" and "pictures" which entertain the home television audience by giving an insight into the Barnes' personal lives.	AO1: EFFECTS
AO1: EFFECTS		AO2: SPOKEN CONCEPTS
AO1: EFFECTS		
AO2: GENRE		AO2: GENRE

This response is a borderline Band 4/5. There is a confident use of terms and some perceptive discussion. Analysis is intelligent and the points made are wide-ranging. The style is coherent and effective, the argument develops logically, and there is clear engagement with the details of the transcripts, the genre, and the focus of the question. Detailed knowledge of concepts underpins the points made and textual support is well-chosen. Linguistic issues and connections across the texts, however, are not fully addressed—an imbalance which could be redressed elsewhere in the response. Linguistic knowledge is used effectively to underpin points made.

Having completed the exercises on recognising how the AOs can be met in terms of content, discuss the Assessment Grid one AO at a time. Encourage learners to look at:

- the content markers e.g. AO1—methods of analysis; use of terminology; discussion of texts; style/expression
- (if you feel it is appropriate) the key evaluative words e.g. limited, basic, sensible, secure, confident etc.

6. WRITING THE ESSAY

This is an opportunity for learners to put into practice all the things they have considered so far. Writing the essay could be:

- a timed task
- a 'walking, talking' exam
- an individual homework assignment
- group work in which a class plan is created and groups work on different elements of the essay (the ultimate aim being to create a model answer by using class/teacher comments to improve the individual segments).

Where this is an individual task, feedback should aim to consider how well learners have assimilated the knowledge gained from working through the exercises, as well as their ability to meet the AOs.

7. SAMPLE RESPONSES TO THE SAMs

Use the unannotated copies of the three SAMs responses so that learners can apply what they have learnt to complete essays. You may like to use Response 1 as a classroom discussion or small group exercise. Once learners have produced their own annotations, discuss the annotated version. The summative comments are reproduced below for convenience.

RESPONSE 1

AO1 6/15 marks

Basic methods of analysis. Some accurate spoken terminology, but little use of wider linguistic terms. Some sensible points, but discussion lacks a close focus on the texts and on the precise demands of the question. Adequate expression, but some technical inaccuracy.

AO2 6/15 marks

Some sound discussion of spoken concepts and some awareness of genre. Exploration of issues is less developed (e.g. gender, expression of attitudes, engagement of audience). Some sensible selection of textual support, but supporting examples not always provided. Discussion of effects remains underdeveloped.

AO3 10/20 marks

Consistent attempt to link texts. Connections are often sensible (although discussion could go further). Broad overview - loses linguistic focus at times. Generally sound use of spoken knowledge. Wider linguistic knowledge not fully demonstrated.

RESPONSE 2

AO1 13/15 marks

Confident use of terminology. Reasonable range of spoken and other linguistic terms. Some perceptive discussion, but could have gone further in places. Style mostly controlled and coherent. Clear engagement with question.

AO2 11/15 marks

Secure understanding of spoken concepts and genre. Discussion of issues remains underdeveloped (e.g. gender, expression of attitudes). Consistent, apt textual support, but discussion of effects could go further.

AO3 16/20 marks

Purposeful connections. Focused overview. Discussion of textual details could have been more precise (e.g. the events being described, the situation of each transcript), but relevant linguistic knowledge used to support points.

RESPONSE 3

AO1 5/15 marks

Some basic analysis, but remains underdeveloped. Some knowledge of basic spoken terms, but limited use of precise linguistic terminology. Reasonable clarity, but lacks sentence control. A number of spelling errors. Some attempt to engage with question at basic level.

AO 2 6/15 marks

Some understanding of spoken concepts and genre - though range of points is quite narrow. Some points supported by textual references, but not engaging with the details of the texts.

AO3 7/20 marks

Some overview. Consistent attempt to make basic connections. Some linguistic knowledge used to support points.