

OXFORD

INTERNATIONAL  
AQA EXAMINATIONS

# INTERNATIONAL GCSE ENGLISH LANGUAGE

(9270) Paper 2 Source-based reading and  
directed writing

Report on the examination

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June 2018

## **REPORT ON EXAMINATION: INTERNATIONAL AS ENGLISH LANGUAGE 9270 UNIT 2 JUNE 2018**

### **Introduction**

The resource booklet's theme was entertainment and considered various types and their benefits, advantages and surprises.

### **QUESTION 1**

Students were to write about what they had learnt about the purposes of the puppets. This was a straightforward collation of details from the three paragraphs in the source. Higher marks were rewarded for identifying a range of details and exploring the puppets' importance in being able to convey information that human performers would not be allowed to do.

### **QUESTION 2**

This question focused on language to describe the writer's first visit to the cinema. A word that appeared in a number of scripts to describe the writer's emotions was 'shocking' and this would normally mean he was frightened or more colloquially, appalled, and neither emotion is evident in the text.

Identification of technique was often found but explanation was needed to gain the higher marks for the question. For example, it was noted that exaggeration was used to describe the carpets as 'four inches thick' but then not what form of feeling this conveyed and possibly how it related to other observations. Students who gained higher marks were able to analyse the writer's close attention to details outside and within the building and then link this to his emotions of awe and wonder.

### **QUESTION 3**

Students needed to explain the benefits of playing computer games. Again, higher marks were gained for identifying a range and summarising these rather than just copying the sentences.

### **QUESTION 4**

In this question two articles about theatre audiences' behaviour in the 1600s and in modern times had to be considered and compared. Sharper readings of the texts lead to more thoughtful answers that noted that audiences in Shakespeare's time were not noisy because they were bored but highly responsive, even passionate about characters, events and performers. Some people in modern theatres were not involved in the play (unlike their Elizabethan predecessors) and virtually indifferent, preferring to spend time on their mobile phones.

A common link was respect (or lack of it) for the performers which many students identified. It was important to note with modern audiences that not every member was disruptive. The writer does conclude that that the 'vast majority of theatre-goers will be compromised by the rudeness of the minority.'

One other feature was that students that tended to repeat the same points, often in lengthy concluding paragraphs, gained no additional marks.

### **QUESTION 5**

The mystery and suspense surrounding the arrival of the circus was to be examined and many students engaged with the resource. Better answers were able to examine how the writer made careful use of punctuation with short sentences to build the anticipation. The plain opening sentence, 'The circus arrives without warning' was identified for its strangeness when a circus would normally have lots of publicity. Very good responses homed-in on the word 'warning', suggesting something mysterious and possibly dangerous.

Good answers considered how the changing light added to the mysterious aura that was gathering outside the area and the people's response: almost nervous, held in suspense. The use of 'you' invites us to be part of that crowd adding to the feeling of suspense.

## QUESTION 6 and 7

The majority of students answered Question 6: an essay writing competition and discussion on why entertainment is important in our lives. Question 7 was an article for a magazine for teenagers on the various forms of entertainment and their impact on different audiences.

Common features in both answers was an impressive range of vocabulary and, despite little evidence of planning, a strong sense of structuring an argument with points appropriately paragraphed. Basic punctuation, e.g. full-stops and commas, were appropriately placed but it would have been encouraging to see a wider and more adventurous use of punctuation to create effects within the expression, particularly to persuade or, for example, a colon preceding a list of benefits.

The resource booklet deliberately concludes with a stylish piece of prose as a lead-in to inviting students to write about their own views on the set topic. A stylish approach and especially an individual 'voice' satisfies many of the higher band requirements such as: 'communicates in a sophisticated way'... 'skilful manipulation of reader's response' and 'fully engages readers.'

The rubric informs candidates that they may use information from the sources but this should be chosen selectively, preferably not copied but summarised and, where possible, used as a springboard for additional ideas. Some essays relied on a tidy but not engaging rewrite of the sources, particularly the benefits of computer games. A better use of this would be to name a particular game, the tasks involved and what skills that game could enhance. This would have shown 'assured selection of detail and developed ideas' (Band 5). Candidates should also try to make use of examples from their own life and from current affairs or knowledge from other taught subjects.

For some, entertainment for both titles rarely extended beyond what could be seen on a screen. Entertainment can be sports, stadium events (hardly considered), a long walk or playing an instrument. Having identified these activities it is important to discuss and explore how they enhance our lives and not just as a relief before returning to work.

Those who undertook Q7 often focused their answer on the requirements for Q6. The impact on *different* audiences was not given considered discussion.

Overall though, the quality of responses was impressive with well-structured and articulate essays. The handling of grammar, English vocabulary and the peculiar idiosyncrasies of English were not only tackled but put to good use in thoughtful, well-expressed essays.

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**OXFORD INTERNATIONAL AQA EXAMINATIONS**  
GREAT CLARENDON STREET, OXFORD, OX2 6DP  
UNITED KINGDOM

[enquiries@oxfordaqaexams.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@oxfordaqaexams.org.uk)  
[oxfordaqaexams.org.uk](https://oxfordaqaexams.org.uk)

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