



Moderators' Report

Principal Moderator Feedback

January 2023

Pearson Edexcel International GCSE
In English Language (4EA1)
Spoken Language Endorsement

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It was very pleasing to welcome back the Spoken Language Endorsement after a hiatus caused by the covid pandemic. The Endorsement is optional for candidates taking these specifications but it is always encouraging and gratifying to have so many students wanting to research their chosen topics and present their views in front of an audience.

Those who opt to take the Spoken Language Endorsement must provide an oral presentation on a topic of their choice. This must be presented to an audience who should provide feedback and ask questions. The candidate must respond to these questions, and the whole process should take no longer than 10 minutes. Candidates are awarded one of three grades – Pass, Merit or Distinction – or are otherwise Not Classified. In order to achieve a particular grade, a candidate must meet all the criteria for that grade. The key words to describe each approach in each grade are 'straightforward' for a Pass; 'challenging' for a Merit; 'sophisticated' for a Distinction.

Although there is some flexibility in the form a presentation may take, all the candidates this series chose to speak as an individual, directly or remotely, to their audience on their prepared topic. All candidates were asked questions at the end and all responded to these questions.

It appeared that all candidates had chosen their own topics and the vast majority alighted on a subject which offered a degree of challenge or debate. Those candidates awarded **Distinctions** often demonstrated a profound, and sometimes passionate, enthusiasm for their subject. Some spoke without recourse to notes, exhibiting a deeply-embedded mastery of their area of expertise, whether it be 'Social Justice', 'Stem Cells' or 'Artificial Intelligence and Neuro Networks'. These sophisticated ideas were expressed using a sophisticated but accessible range of vocabulary and, most importantly, the candidates used a range of strategies to engage their audience – rhetorical questions and other verbal devices to involve the listeners but also variety of tone and non-verbal gestures and facial expressions. Candidates listened carefully to audience questions, responding perceptively and in sufficient depth.

Those candidates awarded **Merits** had chosen to present challenging material and ideas in a structured and purposeful way. Topics included 'Sport and Mental Health', 'Gender Inequality in Pay', 'The Importance of Zoos'. Most candidates were aware that their topics carried some degree of contentiousness and debate and, in the main, realised that they must form and present their opinions on the subject if they were to meet the needs of their audience. Many students referred to notes but accepted that they must not allow these to dominate and to prevent regular eye contact with the audience. A range of vocabulary was used and questions were answered in some detail.

Pass candidates had tended to present straightforward information and ideas in a straightforward way. Topics included 'Air Pollution' and 'Motorbike Racing' and some candidates had clearly chosen subjects which involved their personal experience, such

as 'My Career in Music' or 'Learning a New Language', which added interest and prompted greater audience engagement. Candidates communicated intelligibly and responded appropriately to questions.

The great majority of candidates had been graded accurately by centres, who are to be commended for this. There were exceptions, however, and these tended to arise when candidates were awarded Distinctions even though they had made no attempt to use 'an effective range of strategies to engage their audience'. Often, this was because a candidate had prepared an interesting and well-expressed presentation but read from a script and took very little account of the people who were listening to them.

One very encouraging feature this series was that question and feedback sessions were treated seriously, with sufficient time given over to these. It was also noticeable that questions tended to be 'open' and formulated to prompt candidates into expanding their ideas. In order for a Distinction candidate to answer 'perceptively', as required, it is important that questions are appropriately demanding.

A number of candidates chose to use slides to support their talk and, although illustrative slides can sometimes add to the impact of what a candidate says, they can often be a distraction, with candidates tending to address the slides rather than their audience. On some occasions, when candidates were presenting remotely, slides filled most of the screen with candidates reduced to a thumbnail on the margin. This made it difficult to assess their non-verbal communication and it is to be hoped that centres can find some technical means of avoiding this.

The introduction of uploading candidate work on to the LWA platform is very welcome and eased the process of monitoring. It is extremely helpful when centres label each video not only with the name and number of the relevant candidate but also with the grade awarded by the centre. It is also very useful if each candidate introduces him or herself by name and number at the start of each video.

Above all, the majority of candidates were graded accurately by centres, who applied the criteria carefully. Centres are also commended for allowing candidates to choose their own topics, albeit, no doubt, with a degree of sensitive guidance from their teachers. It is marvellous to see the return of the Endorsement. Many teachers clearly value the opportunities it provides and it is inspiring to see so many candidates rising to the challenges it offers and presenting sometimes difficult subjects with confidence, skill and engagement.

