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INTERNATIONAL A-LEVEL
ENGLISH LANGUAGE
EN04A

Unit 4 Language Exploration

Mark scheme

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Mark schemes are prepared by the Lead Assessment Writer and considered, together with the relevant questions, by a panel of subject teachers. This mark scheme includes any amendments made at the standardisation events which all associates participate in and is the scheme which was used by them in this examination. The standardisation process ensures that the mark scheme covers the students' responses to questions and that every associate understands and applies it in the same correct way. As preparation for standardisation each associate analyses a number of students' scripts. Alternative answers not already covered by the mark scheme are discussed and legislated for. If, after the standardisation process, associates encounter unusual answers which have not been raised they are required to refer these to the Lead Examiner.

It must be stressed that a mark scheme is a working document, in many cases further developed and expanded on the basis of students' reactions to a particular paper. Assumptions about future mark schemes on the basis of one year's document should be avoided; whilst the guiding principles of assessment remain constant, details will change, depending on the content of a particular examination paper.

Further copies of this mark scheme are available from oxfordaqaexams.org.uk

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International English Language mark scheme

How to mark

Aims

When you are marking your allocation of scripts your main aims should be to:

- recognise and identify the achievements of students
- place students in the appropriate mark band and in the appropriate part of that mark band (high, low, middle) for each assessment objective
- record your judgements with brief notes, annotations and comments that are relevant to the mark scheme and make it clear to other examiners how you have arrived at the numerical mark awarded for each assessment objective
- put into a rank order the achievements of students (not to grade them − that is done later using the rank order that your marking has produced)
- ensure comparability of assessment for all students, regardless of question or examiner.

Approach

It is important to be **open minded** and **positive** when marking scripts.

The specification recognises the variety of experiences and knowledge that students will have. It encourages them to study language in a way that is relevant to them. The questions have been designed to give them opportunities to discuss what they have found out about language. It is important to assess the quality of **what the student offers**.

Do not mark scripts as though they were mere shadows of some platonic ideal (or the answer you would have written). The mark schemes have been composed to assess **quality of response** and not to identify expected items of knowledge.

Assessment objectives

This component requires students to:
AO1: Demonstrate understanding of methods, terminology, concepts and issues in English language.
AO2: Analyse how meanings are shaped in a range of texts and data.
AO3: Demonstrate ability to use English in different ways.

The marking grids

The specification has generic marking grids for each assessment objective that is customised with indicative content for individual tasks. These have been designed to allow assessment of the range of knowledge, understanding and skills that the specification demands.

Within each assessment objective there are five broad levels representing different levels of achievement. Do not think of levels equalling grade boundaries.

On the left-hand side of the mark scheme, in bold, are the generic descriptors that identify the performance characteristics at five distinct levels.

On the right-hand side are statements of indicative content. These give examples of the kind of things students might do that would exemplify the level. They are neither exhaustive nor required – they are simply indicative of what would appear at this level. You will find that they sometimes indicate areas of content that can be handled with increasing sophistication and subtlety. You will also find statements which only characterise work at the bottom or top of the range.

Depending on the part of the examination, the levels will have different mark ranges assigned to them. This will reflect the different weighting of assessment objectives in particular tasks and across the examination as a whole. You may be required to give different marks to bands for different assessment objectives.

Using the grids

These levels of response mark schemes are broken down into five levels, each of which has descriptors. The descriptors for the level show the performance characteristics of the level. There is the same number of marks in each level for an individual assessment objective. The number of marks per level will vary depending upon the number of marks allocated to the various assessment objectives covered by a particular question.

Having familiarised yourself with the descriptors and indicative content, read through the answer and annotate it (as instructed below) to identify the qualities that are being looked for and that it shows. You can now check the levels and award a mark.

Step 1 Determine a level

Start at the lowest level of the mark scheme and use it as a ladder to see whether the answer meets the descriptors for that level. The descriptors for the level indicate the different qualities that might be seen in the student's answer for that level. If it meets all the descriptors for the lowest level then go to the next one and decide if it meets this level, and so on, until you have a match between the level descriptors and the answer. With practice and familiarity you will find that for better answers you will be able to skip through the lower levels of the mark scheme quickly.

When assigning a level you should look at the overall quality of the answer and not look to pick holes in small and specific parts of the answer where the student has not performed quite as well as the rest. If the answer covers different aspects of different levels of the mark scheme you should use a best-fit approach for defining the level and then use the variability of the response to help decide the mark within the level; ie if the response fulfils most but not all of level 3 with a small amount of level 4 material, it would be placed in level 3 but be awarded a mark near the top of the level because of the level 4 content.

Step 2 Determine a mark

Once you have assigned a level you need to decide on the mark.

It is often best to start in the middle of the level's mark range and then check and adjust. If there is a lot of indicative content fully identifiable in the work you need to give the highest mark in the level. If only some is identifiable or it is only partially fulfilled, then give the lower mark.

The exemplar materials used during standardisation will also help. There will be an answer in the standardising materials that will correspond with each level of the mark scheme. This answer will have been awarded a mark by the Lead Examiner. You can compare the student's answer with the example to determine if it is of the same standard, better or worse than the example. You can then use this to allocate a mark for the answer based on the Lead Examiner's mark on the example.

You may well need to read back through the answer as you apply the mark scheme to clarify points and assure yourself that the level and the mark are appropriate.

In addition to the generic descriptors (presented in bold text), paper specific indicative descriptors (presented in plain text) are provided as a guide for examiners. These are not intended to be exhaustive and you must credit other valid points.

An answer that contains nothing of relevance to the question must be awarded no marks.

Annotating scripts

You should write a summative comment at the end for each assessment objective and indicate the marks for each assessment objective being tested at the end of the answer in the margin in sequence. It is vital that the way you arrive at a mark should be recorded on the script. This will help you with making accurate judgements and it will help any subsequent markers to identify how you are thinking. Please do not write negative comments about students' work or their alleged aptitudes; this is unprofessional and it impedes a positive marking approach.

The below mark scheme is used to assess both **Question 1** and **Question 2**.

Either

0 1 Your task is to carry out a language investigation using **two or more** of the texts that have been provided for you.

An investigation is an analysis of language use. **You** decide what to analyse and how to do it. You can choose your own title for your investigation.

(texts as included in Insert 1 – tall buildings)

[50 marks]

or

0 2 Your task is to carry out a language investigation using **two or more** of the texts that have been provided for you.

An investigation is an analysis of language use. **You** decide what to analyse and how to do it. You can choose your own title for your investigation.

(texts as included in Insert 2 – glaciers)

[50 marks]

AO1: Demonstrate understanding of methods, terminology, concepts and issues in English language. AO1 in the context of this paper refers to all the aspects above.		
Level/ Marks	**Performance characteristics**	**Indicative content** These are examples of ways students' work might exemplify the performance characteristics in the question above. They indicate possible content and how it can be treated at different levels.
Level 5 17–20	**Students will:** • **demonstrate an overview of issues** • **explore different views, approaches and interpretations.**	Students are likely to: • articulate aims, scope and focus at the outset and with precision • explore theoretical frameworks and match them with texts and data • use accurate terminology that fits the requirements of the task.
Level 4 13–16	**Students will:** • **identify different views, approaches and interpretations.**	Students are likely to: • explain aims, with scope and focus emerging as analysis proceeds • identify and use relevant theoretical frameworks • use mainly accurate terminology that is mostly relevant to the texts and data.
Level 3 9–12	**Students will:** • **show knowledge of relevant concepts and issues.**	Students are likely to: • offer straightforward aims with little or no discussion of scope and focus • use theoretical frameworks that are partly relevant but do not entirely meet the needs of the task • use terminology with partial relevance and accuracy.
Level 2 5–8	**Students will:** • **show familiarity with the area of study.**	Students are likely to: • describe aims, but with some difficulty – for example, offering aims that are unworkable • refer to theoretical frameworks without being able to apply them to any extent • attempt to use terminology, but with limited relevance and accuracy.
Level 1 1–4	**Students will:** • **discuss issues anecdotally without specialist knowledge.**	Students are likely to: • simply describe texts or data with no aims or overview • lack any theoretical framework • use no terminology • misunderstand the task (1–2).
0	**Nothing relevant written.**	Nothing relevant written.

AO2: Analyse how meanings are shaped in a range of texts and data		
Level/ Marks	**Performance characteristics**	**Indicative content** These are examples of ways students' work might exemplify the performance characteristics in the question above. They indicate possible content and how it can be treated at different levels.
Level 5 17–20	**Students will:** • **evaluate use of language and representations according to context** • **explore analysis within wider social and cultural contexts.**	Students are likely to: • recognise complexity of patterning in texts and data • explore meanings as negotiated • show open-mindedness in interpretations • use detailed examples to explore idea of language as a social and cultural phenomenon.
Level 4 13–16	**Students will:** • **analyse how language choices create meanings and representations** • **analyse how aspects of context work together to affect language use.**	Students are likely to: • trace patterns in texts and data • explain meanings as shaped by contextual factors • demonstrate understanding of context as an interplay of factors • offer good examples to support analytical points.
Level 3 9–12	**Students will:** • **interpret significance of specific choices of language according to context** • **link specific language choices with an aspect of context.**	Students are likely to: • offer a straightforward account of texts or data • see meanings as more fixed than negotiated • explain context in some reasonable but obvious ways • offer some evidence to support interpretations.
Level 2 5–8	**Students will:** • **identify distinctive features of language and significant aspects of context.**	Students are likely to: • focus in detail on a limited area of analysis • identify some meanings but without subtlety • see context as one dimensional or as very broad • offer limited evidence to support interpretations.
Level 1 1–4	**Students will:** • **paraphrase or describe content of texts** • **misunderstand text or context.**	Students are likely to: • make one or two superficial points about the texts or data • offer no evidence for any comment • misunderstand the task by responding to the content or subject matter (1–2).
0	**Nothing relevant written.**	Nothing relevant written.

AO3: Demonstrate ability to use English in different ways.		
Level/ Marks	**Performance characteristics**	**Indicative content** These are examples of ways students' work might exemplify the performance characteristics in the question above. They indicate possible content and how it can be treated at different levels.
Level 5 9–10	**Students will:** • **use form expertly** • **use and sustain register, effective for context** • **show outstanding technical control.**	Students are likely to: • guide the reader through a line of argument by using clear signposting • make effective connections between points and paragraphs • write with clarity and accuracy throughout.
Level 4 7–8	**Students will:** • **use form convincingly** • **use register, effective for context** • **show skilful technical control.**	Students are likely to: • demonstrate a line of argument • cover points in an well organised way • write with clarity and accuracy, showing only an occasional error or lapse.
Level 3 5–6	**Students will:** • **use form competently** • **use register, mainly effectively, for context** • **show competent technical control.**	Students are likely to: • communicate with clear topics and paragraphs • group points in a sensible way • write with general clarity and accuracy.
Level 2 3–4	**Students will:** • **use form with some lack of control** • **use register appropriate for context at times** • **show basic technical control.**	Students are likely to: • attempt an academic format, with uneven result • achieve an academic style but inconsistently • show lapses in clarity and accuracy.
Level 1 1–2	**Students will:** • **use form limited to simple elements** • **shape language broadly for context** • **show limited technical control.**	Students are likely to: • make some points but with little or no organisation • attempt a formal style, with limited success • lack clarity and accuracy, impeding communication.
0	**Nothing relevant written.**	Nothing relevant written.

For examined Paper (4a): Possible types of focus and combinations of texts (this list is neither exhaustive nor definitive). It is also possible to combine the questions below and have several aims.

Texts about tall buildings

- Language and mode: Text 1 is online, Text 2 is written and Text 3 is written to be spoken.
- Language and genre/shaping of discourse/interactivity/voices: Text 1 is a webpage, Text 2 is an extract from a special interest book, Text 3 is a poem.
- Language and audience: how the implied reader for each text shapes register, (shared) pragmatic awareness.
- Language and purpose/function: Text 1 – to discuss/argue, Text 2 – to inform/explain, Text 3 – to express/entertain.
- Representation of tall buildings.
- Representations of wider engineering/architectural discourses.

Texts about glaciers

- Language and mode: originally Text 4 was spoken, Text 5 is multimodal and Text 6 is online.
- Language and genre/shaping of discourse/interactivity/voices: Text 4 is a video voiceover, Text 5 is a children's geography book, Text 6 is a webpage.
- Language and audience: how the implied reader for each text shapes register, (shared) pragmatic awareness.
- Language and purpose/function: Text 4 – to inform/explain, Text 5 – to inform/entertain, Text 6 – to persuade/inform.
- Representation of glaciers.
- Representations of wider geographical/ecological discourses.