

OCR GCSE in English/English Language written commentary and guidance

For English/English Language
Speaking and Listening DVD



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Introduction

Welcome to OCR's Training and Guidance DVD for GCSE English and English Language Speaking and Listening for teaching in September 2011 – 2012.

The DVD and this commentary should be used in conjunction with the specifications for GCSE English and English Language, and the Speaking and Listening marking criteria. The units covered are A643 GCSE English Unit 3 and A652 GCSE English Language Unit 2 Section A.

The DVD and accompanying commentary are designed to support centres in their delivery of these units from 2011 – 2012, in task setting and in their assessment of candidates through accurate application of the marking criteria. Particular attention has been paid to the requirement of the 'real-life context' in terms of role, purpose and audience.

We visited three schools – Shenfield High School, Stanborough School and The Polesworth School, filming students doing assessments in their usual classroom environment. The assessments on the DVD cover all three contexts: Individual Extended Contribution, Group Activity, and Drama-focussed Activity.

The DVD also offers advice on the administrative procedures that need to be followed when submitting marks for moderation by OCR.

Best Practice for Delivery

Best Practice in terms of delivery of the Speaking and Listening Units should include:

- multiple opportunities offered throughout the course for candidates to develop and hone their skills
- specific feedback on performance, firmly linked to the marking criteria, given to students
- tasks planned and integrated into the overall structure of the course, rather than 'bolted on' activities
- efficient record keeping of marks and activities
- secure internal standardisation procedures in centres, including the use of this DVD to standardise all staff, and completion of the Internal Standardisation record when submitting entries (GCW330), as well as classroom observations across teaching groups

Real-Life Context and Task Setting

There are two particular focus areas in the DVD and this commentary:

1 Real-life Context

One assessment submitted for each student must fulfil the requirement of the 'real-life context' as described in the specification:

'One activity must allow candidates to participate in a real-life context in and beyond the classroom'

This requirement should be met through careful consideration of role, purpose and audience. A discussion of subject matter that deals with issues beyond the classroom is not sufficient.

Before each assessment on the DVD there is a clear explanation of whether the requirement of the real-life context has been met, and where appropriate, advice is offered on how a minor alteration to the task could have fulfilled the criteria.

Centres can find further advice on the OCR website in the following document:

Real-life Context – A Guidance Document for Schools

2 Task Setting for Drama-focussed Tasks

The DVD includes a number of drama-focussed activities designed to demonstrate how the marking criteria is most aptly fulfilled.

In the specification the Drama-focussed Activity is described as **creating and sustaining roles** and should therefore be approached through role-play rather than the use of pre-scripted drama texts. Where centres use literary drama texts as a basis for the Drama-focussed activity, the material should be used as a stimulus, but candidates should develop the role beyond the text, using their own language to create and sustain the character. Putting on scenes from plays does not enable candidates to meet the marking criteria as described in the mark bands, as the creation and development of character is clearly assessed through language choices as well as the effectiveness of the performance.

The Drama-focussed Activities featured on the DVD offer candidates the opportunity to develop and sustain roles, with a clear sense of purpose. Only one of the activities is based on literary characters, and in that instance the action is based on the events following the novel's final chapter. This ensures that the candidates have to make the crucial language choices necessary to fulfil the demands of the Drama-focussed Activity.

Commentary on the DVD Assessments

The DVD menu is designed for use as a training resource in centres. Centres may view the assessments in relation to the three context areas – Individual Extended Contribution, Group Activity and Drama-focussed Activity – or in the order listed below. There is guidance offered on how to fulfil the requirement of the real-life context, and instructions regarding the administrative procedures that must be followed when submitting marks to OCR, including a list of documents to be sent to the moderator.

At the end of each assessment the DVD will offer users the chance to watch the assessment again, or to view the marks awarded to the candidates before moving on to the next assessment. It is hoped that centres will use this format to discuss the performances with reference to the band descriptors before accessing the marks.

Assessments:

1. **Megan, Maddy, Anna and April – Drama-focussed Activity** *Chat Show*
2. **Emily, Connor, Rachel and Tom – Group Activity** *School Statue*
3. **Chris and Jamie – Drama-focussed Activity** *Complaining Customer*
4. **Lydia – Individual Extended Contribution** *Sex Education*
5. **Charlie, Ashley, Michael and Emma – Drama-focussed Activity** *Public Sector Pay*
6. **Alex and Morgan – Individual Extended Contribution** *Help for Heroes*
7. **Luke, Joe, Matt and Miguel – Drama-focussed Activity** *'Of Mice and Men' Police Interviews*
8. **Mac, Gretel, Harrison and Rebecca – Group Activity** *Single Sex vs. Mixed Classes*
9. **Emily and Rachel – Individual Extended Contribution** *Water Aid*
10. **Harrison, Alex and Mac – Drama-focussed Activity** *Police Visit*

1 Megan, Maddy, Anna and April

Chat Show – Drama-focussed Activity (Real-life Context)

This drama activity was undertaken as part of the group's Spoken Language Study for A652 Section B. Through devising their own chat show, the candidates explored the nature of questioning in interviews and the rapport between interviewer and interviewee. This activity fulfils the requirements of the 'real-life context' as it clearly takes place beyond the classroom setting and the students take on roles dealing with real-life experiences.

Megan, as the interviewer, has the most complex and challenging role. She shapes and directs the focus of the whole piece, with an effective opening, skilful management of the transitions between guests and an appropriate conclusion. She uses a variety of question-types to add interest and fluidity to the chat show. She responds quickly and effectively to others and is able to alter the pace and tone of the interviews through an insightful choice of dramatic approaches.

Maddy plays a successful singer, creating a convincing character in terms of her language choices and non-verbal communication. She responds quickly to a range of question-types, sustaining the character and exploring ideas and issues throughout the interview.

Anna, in role as a pop-star, creates a lively character, successfully integrating verbal techniques with appropriate facial expression and body language. Although at times her responses lack development, she does explore ideas and issues successfully in her answers to the questions.

April plays an actress appearing in her first film, convincingly sustaining a slightly gauche personality and over-awed attitude throughout the interview. Although slightly faltering at the beginning of the questioning, she develops in confidence and expands her answers effectively.

Megan – Band 1: a mark of 36

Maddy – Band 2: a mark of 27

Anna – Band 2: a mark of 26

April - Band 2: a mark of 26

2 Emily, Connor, Rachel and Tom

School Statue – Group Activity

The group have a clear purpose: to decide on a subject for an inspirational statue to be placed at the front of their school. Each group member is asked to make a suggestion and then debate the issues raised before making a final decision. This gives clear focus to the discussion, with all members understanding the task. All four candidates show careful listening skills, interacting in a lively discussion, responding effectively to others in keeping with the nature of the context and the demands of the marking criteria. This activity does not fulfil the requirement of the 'real-life context' as the students have not been given a particular purpose or audience that moves it beyond the classroom setting. If they had been put in role as the student council, or addressing an audience of parents and staff, it would have fulfilled the necessary criteria.

Emily responds very effectively to the other members of the group, seeking clarification and asking apt questions. She is able to reflect on what she hears and develops the discussion through her own questioning and responses. Her contributions are purposeful and move the discussion forward.

Connor begins the discussion effectively, introducing the task and inviting suggestions. He asks apt questions and responds thoughtfully to others. Connor helps to structure the discussion through helpful contributions and reflective suggestions.

Rachel makes lively contributions and challenges others, moving the discussion forward. She often seeks clarification through her questioning and is able to reflect effectively on what she hears. Her comments are direct and purposeful, but she listens carefully to the group's responses and is willing to change her own opinions as a result.

Tom makes some very useful contributions to the discussion, although he occasionally reacts without thinking fully about his responses. As the discussion develops his contributions become stronger, and he successfully seeks clarification through apt questioning. He also analyses and reflects on others' ideas to move the discussion forward, making purposeful contributions.

Emily – Band 2: a mark of 28

Connor – Band 2: a mark of 27

Rachel – Band 2: a mark of 27

Tom – Band 2: a mark of 26

3 Chris and Jamie

Drama-focussed Activity – Complaining Customer (Real-life Context)

In this role-play Chris plays a manager dealing with a difficult, complaining customer. The performance has a slightly ironic tone and is clearly intended to be comic. It is not a highly developed piece, and does not really offer opportunities to develop complex characters: perhaps a slightly more serious approach could offer more scope to the candidates in terms of the marking criteria. This activity fulfils the requirements of the 'real-life context' as it is clearly set beyond the classroom and the students are in role dealing with a 'real-life' situation.

Chris creates a convincing character using a range of techniques to manage the complaint. Although not always entirely sensitive to his customer, he does explore some issues and ideas in the scenario.

Jamie creates a convincing character and uses a range of verbal and non-verbal techniques to communicate his frustration and dissatisfaction to the manager. The role he creates is eccentric but generally convincing.

Chris – Band 2: a mark of 25

Jamie – Band 2: a mark of 24

4 Lydia

Individual Extended Contribution – Sex Education

Lydia has prepared a talk and an accompanying PowerPoint presentation for her class, responding to a newspaper article outlining plans to offer sex education to five year olds. This activity does not fulfil the requirement of the real-life context because Lydia is presenting her talk as herself and addressing her class. It does not move beyond the classroom in terms of role, purpose or audience.

Lydia presents her talk confidently, using the PowerPoint effectively to highlight key points. She does not rely on notes, or appear to have learned a script: her presentation is very natural, if a little fast-paced at times. She uses her voice effectively to highlight priorities and essential detail, and answers the questions thoroughly, displaying a sophisticated understanding of her subject-matter. Importantly, in terms of the marking criteria, Lydia has chosen to explore complex subject matter – a crucial differentiator in terms of the band awarded.

Lydia – Band 1: a mark of 34

5 Charlie, Ashley, Michael and Emma

Drama-focussed Activity – Public Sector Pay (Real-life Context)

In this activity the students assume the roles of public sector workers, each arguing why their particular profession should be awarded a pay increase. Molly chairs the discussion as a government minister, but is not being assessed. Although this is an appropriate task for a Drama-focussed Activity, more attention needs to be paid to the development of the roles, in terms of developing a credible viewpoint and understanding the issues involved, to fulfil the marking criteria for this context. This activity fulfils the requirements of the 'real-life context' as the students are clearly taking on roles that move them beyond the classroom setting, and the purpose and audience are firmly linked to a 'real-life' scenario.

Charlie plays a Police Officer and is able to briefly express his point of view and feelings. He develops a little detail to add interest, but his development of character is rather limited.

Ashley, playing a teacher, is also able to briefly express a viewpoint, although sometimes struggles to express her ideas clearly. She does attempt to add some detail to her contributions, but again her character development is limited and tends to draw on stereotypical ideas.

Michael develops a straightforward role as a member of the armed forces, but tends to repeat the same idea, particularly in his answers to the questions. He conveys information quite clearly and begins to use language and facial expression with some effect. Again, the actual role is rather limited in development and a little stereotypical.

Emma plays a nurse communicating her views effectively and expressing herself fluently. She uses language appropriately, and is able to make a contribution to the development of the situation. However, she did not seize opportunities offered by the questions to explore the issues fully.

Charlie – Band 5: a mark of 7

Ashley – Band 5: a mark of 5

Michael – Band 4: a mark of 10

Emma – Band 3: a mark of 21

6 Alex and Morgan

Individual Extended Contribution – Help for Heroes (Real-life Context)

Alex and Morgan present a joint presentation as representatives of ‘Help for Heroes’. In their talk, they encourage the class to become more aware of the charity’s work and to offer their support. A shared presentation can work very well in this context, as it allows each individual some time to reflect on their next contribution. This activity fulfils the requirements of the ‘real-life context’ as Alex and Morgan have taken on roles which take them beyond the classroom setting, and give them a clear purpose.

Alex opens the presentation confidently, conveying information effectively. He uses a range of verbal and non-verbal techniques to adapt and shape his talk, using emotive language with good effect, and gesture and inflection to emphasise significant points. At times, he is a little hesitant, and repetitive, but his contribution is effective throughout.

Morgan is also confident and purposeful. Occasionally he hesitates before finding the most appropriate vocabulary, but generally he maintains the fluency of the piece. His rapport with the audience is good and he is convincingly passionate about the subject-matter he is presenting.

Alex – Band 2; a mark of 31

Morgan – Band 2: a mark of 30

7 Luke, Joe, Matt and Miguel

Drama-focussed Activity – ‘Of Mice and Men’ Police Interviews

In this role-play the group have devised a scene set in a police station at the end of the novel, ‘Of Mice and Men’, in which the characters of Candy, Curley and George are interviewed by the officer investigating the deaths of Lennie and Curley’s wife. This is a useful task in this context, as it gives the students very clear ideas for the development of their roles, while requiring them to make their own language choices and decisions. This activity does not fulfil the requirement of the real-life context because the roles are based on fictional events and characters.

Luke plays the Police Officer in the scene. His language is very straightforward, reading the same pre-prepared questions to each suspect. He does not take opportunities to develop his role by responding to their answers in any detail or through expressing his opinions and ideas.

Joe plays the role of Candy, developing the character through appropriate language. He shows understanding of the issues being addressed and responds to the questions effectively. His language choices are appropriate for the role and the situation created in the improvised scene.

Matt plays Curley, developing the aggression and possessiveness displayed by the character in the novel effectively. There is some attempt to sustain the role, although Luke's lack of reaction in the interview is rather limiting.

Miguel creates a completely convincing character, exploring George's feelings after Lennie's death, leading to his eventual confession. His dramatic choices are insightful and the voice he creates is exceptionally powerful. He is not hindered by Luke's failure to develop the issues raised because his own command of character is so strong.

Luke – Band 5: a mark of 3

Joe – Band 3: a mark of 21

Matt – Band 3: a mark of 17

Miguel – Band 1: a mark of 40

8 Mac, Gretel, Harrison and Rebecca

Group Activity – Single Sex vs. Mixed Classes (Real-life Context)

In this activity the students are meeting as the Student Council to discuss the benefits of single-sex classes as opposed to mixed groups. Gretel has been asked to chair the discussion. This activity fulfils the requirements of the 'real-life context' because they are in role as the student council and have a clear purpose which takes them beyond the classroom.

Mac makes a lively contribution, challenging others' viewpoints, seeking clarification through apt questions and generally helping to move the discussion forward. He is able to reflect on ideas raised by other group members through careful listening and effective interaction.

Gretel is articulate and makes intelligent contributions throughout the discussion. She opens the discussion well, giving a clear viewpoint and clarifying the issues raised. She is able to challenge others' viewpoints but is not always an effective listener in terms of responding to what she hears and using thoughtful and considered responses to develop the discussion. Her responses to some of Rebecca's suggestions were rather unhelpful in this respect: had she sought clarification at this point, the issues raised by Rebecca could have more usefully developed.

Harrison makes some useful suggestions, and reflects and analyses what he hears to develop the discussion. His contributions are thoughtful and well-considered.

Rebecca says less than the others but the contributions she makes are significant and have the potential to move the discussion forward. She listens closely and attentively and is clearly engaged. She refers to precise detail in her suggestions, engaging with others' feelings.

Mac – Band 2: a mark of 27

Gretel – Band 2: a mark of 28

Harrison – Band 2: a mark of 27

Rebecca – Band 3: a mark of 19

9 Emily and Rachel

Individual Extended Contribution – Water Aid

Emily and Rachel have prepared a joint presentation on Water Aid. They are encouraging their audience to become more aware of the issues surrounding water supplies in the Third World and to donate to their cause. The piece is not fully developed, particularly as it is a shared presentation: this has affected the outcome of the assessments. This activity does not fulfil the requirements of the real-life context because Emily and Rachel present their talk as themselves addressing their class. Had they taken on the roles of volunteers from Water Aid, the change of role and purpose would have enabled them to be assessed for 'real-life context'.

Emily communicates effectively, promoting clear issues and viewpoints. She uses a range of verbal and non-verbal techniques to add impact to her contributions. At times she is a little reliant on her supporting notes but her rapport with her audience is maintained through some variation in her presentational techniques.

Rachel is more reliant on her notes than Emily but uses some well-judged vocabulary to achieve her purpose. She communicates effectively promoting the issues raised successfully.

Emily – Band 3: a mark of 23

Rachel – Band 3: a mark of 21

10 Harrison, Alex and Mac

Drama-focussed Activity – Police Visit (Real-life Context)

In this role-play a police officer visits a father to discuss complaints about his son's anti-social behaviour in the neighbourhood. This activity fulfils the requirements of the 'real-life context' as it clearly takes place beyond the classroom setting, with the students dealing with a real-life situation.

Harrison, as the Police Officer, has the most demanding role, requiring him to adapt his language to suit his character, and respond sensitively to a difficult situation. He is convincing and chooses his vocabulary well, and successfully exploring the issues being raised through the development of his role.

Mac develops and sustains the role of the son well, using appropriate language and some highly effective facial expressions and gestures. For assessment purposes this is a less demanding role than the others in terms of the need to shape and adapt language for the development of the role, as it does rely on some stereotypical ideas.

Alex plays the father with some success, although he does not always adapt his body language and facial expression to reflect his language and enhance his characterisation. He does develop the role and makes a contribution to the development of the situation, showing some insight into his character's desire to protect his son, but awareness of his need for discipline.

Harrison – Band 2: a mark of 26

Mac – Band 3: a mark of 21

Alex – Band 3: a mark of 21

Administration

Centres should be aware that for the Speaking and Listening units: A643 GCSE English Unit 3 and A652, GCSE English Language Unit 2 Section A, all documentation should be sent to the moderator with the computer printed mark sheets.

The following documentation should be sent to the moderator by January 10th, in the January session, or by May 15th in the June session:

- Computer Printed Mark Sheets (MS1s) or equivalent
- Controlled Assessment Forms GCW316. Each centre should select their own sample of 7 candidates per teaching group, including the highest and lowest marks awarded.
- The Internal Standardisation Record GCW330
- The Centre Authentication Form CCS160

For further guidance on the administration of Speaking and Listening, please refer to the following documents, both of which can be found on the OCR website:

- Instructions to centres on the Marking and Moderation of Coursework (CWI769)
- Units A643/A652 Speaking and Listening Checklist for Teachers (GCW331)

Entry options:

Candidates may be entered for January and/or June examination series. There is a direct crossover between English A643 and English Language A652 Section A, so whilst assessment for Section A may be completed separately, entry must be made for the whole unit ie. Section A together with Section B: the Spoken Language Study.

Terminal rule:

Because the Units are controlled assessment units, Speaking and Listening may be used as part of the “terminal rule”.

Record keeping:

Centres have appropriate recording procedures for candidates; formal and informal records are kept by Centres. OCR provides a Candidate Assessment form here for the purpose:

http://www.ocr.org.uk/download/forms/ocr_43219_form_gcse_2010.pdf

Many centres have developed their own on-going records and data tracking methods, which feed into the formal record sent as part of the sample to the external moderator.

Internal standardisation procedures:

Centres must have procedures in place to ensure that internal marking is standardised and that a reliable rank order of marks is sent to the external moderator. The internally set standard is judged against the agreed OCR standard by the use of filmed assessments from OCR and confirmed by visits to Centres.

Assessment:

The weighting of Speaking and Listening is 20%. The mark range is 0-40. The units are centre assessed and externally moderated. The process for marking is unchanged; the most appropriate band fixed on and then, whether performance was top, middle or bottom of the band and finally a specific mark awarded. The final mark awarded is now based on a mathematical average: the three performances, one from each context, are each marked out of 40; they are then totalled, giving a mark out of 120. The mark out of 120 is divided by 3 to provide the final mark. The relationship between bands/marks and grades has changed. There should be no assumption that a band equates to a grade.

Visits to Centres will continue as part of the assessment and moderation process. Each centre will receive a visit about once every three years.

www.ocr.org.uk

OCR customer contact centre

General qualifications

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