

Aspects of Writing
IN 16+ *English*
EXAMINATIONS
BETWEEN *1980*
& *1994*

Vocabulary, Spelling, Punctuation, Sentence Structure,
Non-Standard English and their Implications
for Comparability of Grading Standards

A.J.Massey and G.L.Elliott

1996

Occasional Research Paper 1



UNIVERSITY of CAMBRIDGE
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Contents

	Page
Acknowledgements	4
1. Who says standards are declining?	5
2. Our evidence: writing from GCE 1980 v GCSE 1993 v GCSE 1994	7
The writing samples and their limitations	7
These 16+ examinations and the changing curriculum in English	10
<i>The 1980 Oxford (01) GCE Ordinary Level Examination</i>	10
<i>The 1993 MEG (1501) GCSE Examination</i>	11
<i>The 1994 MEG (1510) GCSE Examination</i>	13
3. Empirical Comparisons	17
Preamble	17
Sentence length	17
Vocabulary	20
Spelling	22
Punctuation	26
Sentence type and construction	34
Effective communication	38
Non-Standard English	39
Error-free sentences	41
4. Might direct comparisons be biased?	43
Varying tasks	43
Varying perceptions of good writing	43
Varying styles	44
Varying syllabus contexts	45
5. Conclusions	47
Methodology	47
Gender	47
Comparing 1980 with 1993/1994	48
Comparing 1993 with 1994	49
Are these comparisons fair?	49
Should 16+ grades have improved since 1980?	50
All in all	50
Looking forwards	51
6. References	53
Appendix The Examination Papers	55
Oxford Local Examinations GCE Ordinary Level English language (01), June 1980	
Midland Examining Group GCSE English - Syllabus B (1501), June 1993	
Midland Examining Group GCSE English (1510), June 1994	

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We hope that it will contribute to the current public debate about longitudinal standards in UK school examinations. Very little direct evidence of candidates' work from the past is available and it is tempting to assume that if only it were, authoritative research in this field would be readily forthcoming. This study shows how this may often prove over optimistic. The comparisons which can be made are of considerable interest but not all the key questions can be answered. Moreover, if such work is problematic in English, most other subjects seem likely to prove even less tractable.

We are grateful to many of our colleagues at UCLES for their help and advice, notably Margaret Lorman-Hall for her assistance with the analysis of vocabulary and spelling. We must also give special thanks to Kate Foster, for her work on the analyses of punctuation and sentence construction, and to various members of the editorial board for their comments on an earlier draft.

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February 1996*

Who says standards are declining?

Schools' critics often declare that 'standards' have fallen since some perceived golden age but usually present only anecdotal evidence, if any, to back their claims. Teachers of English have faced their fair share of this, including suggestions that recent school leavers lack some 'basic skills' in written English. For instance Lamb (1995) describes examples of shortcomings in spelling and punctuation of undergraduate scientists, amongst others, and argues that in many cases they fail to express themselves precisely enough to convey their intended meaning. But evidence of this sort does not really help us compare today's students with those of yesteryear, not least because hard evidence from past times is usually lacking and personal impressions are unreliable. Rosy memories are not the only problem. Participation rates in FE and HE have changed dramatically in recent years, so when today's employers or university teachers compare new workers/students unfavourably with those of the past they may not always be comparing like with like. More objectively, a series of national surveys of the reading performance of 15/16 year olds suggested that reading standards rose slightly between 1948 and 1952 and then held steady until 1979 (Brooks et al, 1995). From 1979 to 1988 a series of Assessment of Performance Unit (APU) tests monitored achievements at this age in both reading and writing and suggested that levels of performance in England and Wales were unchanged (Gorman et al, 1991). APU monitoring also suggested that the quality of spelling by 15-16 year olds was unchanged across the period 1980 - 1992 (Brooks et al, 1993).

Similarly, suggestions that public examinations have let the standards of their awards slip over the years are difficult to prove or disprove. Here, as in allegations of declining performance in schools, the water is muddied by changing participation rates and the variety of meanings of the concept of 'standards' commonly applied in educational discourse (Massey, 1994). The proportion of 16 year olds entering and succeeding in public examinations has increased substantially over the past two decades and success rates in English are higher than those for any other subject (Rose, 1993). For some critics 'more' automatically means 'worse', although others, including quasi-government bodies, exhort schools to improve standards of teaching and learning: seemingly anticipating higher and higher pass rates (eg NACETT, 1995). Controversy over school examination results in 1995 goaded the British government into an inquiry into standards over time (TES, 1995). Examinations are asked to maintain the same grading standards from one year to the next. This is not to say that pass rates must remain constant: instead the proportion of entrants obtaining high grades should rise (or fall or remain the same) each year in accordance with the quality of candidates' work, whatever fraction of the age group is examined. Can the examiners' judgements really achieve this consistency - especially in a subject like English?

The formidable conceptual difficulties inherent in measuring absolute trends in achievement over time include the many ways in which the knowledge and skills learned and assessed change as years go by (Goldstein, 1983). Data and archive material are also scarce and with the notable exception of Christie and Forrest (1980) there has been little empirical study of the longitudinal comparability of grading standards in British school examinations over an extended period. This paper does not pretend to solve the conceptual or methodological problems and cannot say conclusively if grading standards in English have risen or fallen in recent years. But it does present some rare comparative data concerning features of the writing of pupils awarded ostensibly 'equivalent' 16+ examination grades between 1980 and 1994, which are interesting and worth public consideration.

These 14 years have seen three generations of public examinations at 16+ in England, Wales and Northern Ireland: the dual system of the General Certificate of Education Ordinary Level (GCE OL - introduced in 1951 to replace School Certificate) and the Certificate in Secondary Education (CSE - designed for middle ability pupils and dating from 1965); the introduction of the General Certificate in Secondary Education (GCSE), first examined in 1988; and its revision for the 1994 examination to incorporate the curricular changes introduced by the imposition of the National Curriculum in England and Wales. Some of the differences between the examinations which provided our samples of pupils' writing illustrate the changes in curriculum and assessment in English over this period and may help us appreciate why longitudinal comparisons of grading standards are so difficult.

Our evidence: writing from GCE 1980 v GCSE 1993 v GCSE 1994

The writing samples and their limitations

If we wish to compare the examination work of today's candidates with those from the past there is a fundamental practical problem: archives of candidates' scripts from public examinations set more than a few years ago simply do not exist today. If they did the research design for this study might well have been much wider. As they do not we have taken advantage of a rather limited writing sample collected in 1980 for a quite different purpose (see below), matched it with evidence from more recent years as well as possible (given that English examinations have changed substantially) and made what comparisons these data allow. We are acutely aware of the methodological weaknesses which restrict our capacity to reach well founded judgements on the equivalence of grading standards, as will be acknowledged as we discuss our analyses. But we ask readers to appreciate at the outset that we are using the only data available, to try to make what comparisons we can.

Massey (1982) described aspects of the performance of candidates awarded different GCE grades in English as a contribution to the efforts to define grading standards prior to the introduction of GCSE. This work was based on a GCE Ordinary Level English Language examination set in 1980 by the Oxford Delegacy of Local Examinations and amongst other things analysed features of a sample of sentences taken from the writing of boys and girls at each GCE grade. A stratified random sample of pupils were selected to give 30 boys and 30 girls awarded each of the grades A-E (except grade C boys where only 29 were available), also drawn so that each pupil came from a different school. Their writing was then sampled, by taking the fourth sentence from each pupil's composition (Paper 1 Part 1, described later). A sentence was defined for this purpose as the writing between two consecutive full stops. Candidates awarded the higher grades made fewer spelling, punctuation and grammar errors and used a richer vocabulary but little evidence of variation in sentence length or syntactical complexity between high and low grades was detected. The writing sample formed an appendix to the report and was thus available for re-analysis in this project alongside similar samples from more recent years.

An unpublished evaluation of the measurement characteristics of the MEG English 1501 (Scheme 1) examination set in June 1993 (the last year in which the pre-national curriculum GCSE syllabuses were examined) drew on a random sample of 22 schools. These were the source of data for the present study. Again a stratified random sample of scripts was selected to give 30 boys and 30 girls for each grade A-G, from as wide a range of the schools as possible. The fourth sentence from an extended writing task (Paper 2 - Personal and Expressive Writing: the nearest equivalent to the compositions of 1980 and described later) was taken from each script to produce a sample of writing similar to that available from 1980. However so few Grades F & G scripts were available that additional alternate sentences were taken from some, in order to produce writing samples of 30 sentences by boys and 30 by girls for each grade.

An unpublished evaluation of the first examination of the MEG English (Syllabus 1510) examination, introduced in 1994 to match the national curriculum in English, was based on scripts from a random sample of 50 schools. From these a similar stratified random sample of writing was drawn; again from the examination task considered most like the compositions of 1980 (Section B of Papers 2 or 4, described later) and again maximising the number of schools 'represented' for both sexes at each grade.

Table 1 summarises the sources of the writing samples from each year. A systematic sub-sample of the sentences from each year's writing sample (from boys and girls in grades A, C and E) are displayed in table 2 as examples, so that readers can see the nature of this form of evidence for themselves.

Table 1 Summary of the sources of sentences forming the writing samples

Year	1980			1993			1994			All
Origin	Paper 1/ Part 1			Paper 2			Paper 2 or 4/ Section B			
Grade	Boys	Girls	All	Boys	Girls	All	Boys	Girls	All	
A*							30	30	60	60
A	30	30	60	30	30	60	30	30	60	180
B	30	30	60	30	30	60	30	30	60	180
C	29	30	59	30	30	60	30	30	60	179
D	30	30	60	30	30	60	30	30	60	180
E	30	30	60	30	30	60	30	30	60	180
F				30	30	60	30	30	60	120
G				30	30	60	30	30	60	120
All	149	150	299	210	210	420	240	240	480	1199

The nature of these writing samples - each a series of isolated sentences removed from their contexts - clearly restricts the comparisons possible. Consequently the analyses which follow focus mainly on features which lend themselves to quantitative evaluation (vocabulary, spelling, punctuation, sentence structure and use of Non-Standard English) whilst investigation of many vital qualitative features of writing, such as imagination, content and style, is impossible without the further evidence necessary.

We also recognise that the sentences in these writing samples may have been affected by their contextual settings. These are broader than examination questions and mark schemes and include the nature of pupils' courses, teaching and wider cultural influences. Whilst we have extracted sentences for 1993 and 1994 from the tasks we judged most like those providing the stimulation for the writing by the 1980 candidates available, the contexts for these data do vary across the years and will have influenced the writing we have sampled. The next section of this report explores the nature of these variations so that we may consider their potential effects on our comparisons. It outlines the examinations set each year in turn and points to salient differences between them, and to their relationship to curricular changes.

The examination papers themselves are reproduced in full as an appendix.

Table 2 Example' sentences from grades A, C & E

A*/A	1980	1993	1994
Boys	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The four men sat in silence as the Challenger sped on with the tall broad shouldered figure of the red headed Scotsman at the wheel, as he wrestled with it to keep the car in the right direction on the ever moving dunes, the other three men staring mindlessly into space. He had always tried to join in with their schoolboy pranks, games of football and teenage parties, but they had never accepted him; instead they would make fun of him and humiliate him in front of other people. But now, over the Afghanistan Crisis, it looked as though World War Three was well on its way. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> "You're not going out like that, young man!" We had some strange teachers! Bad idea. John had misbehaved on the coach to the hotel and Richard expected me to be able to control him. Her dream was shattered by the yelling of her husband and she opened her eyes to see the dull grey of overhead clouds. It had started alright, Mary was sure of that. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Yes, that sounds like a good idea. I would get up at eight, lock in the morning, get ready for school, and go downstairs. She was larger than all the others, she stood 3 inches above the tallest boy. 'Now, don't be silly, Rosie, it's time to put your hat and coat on, I can't do that when you're rolling on the floor.' This house appeared rather grim and old in comparison. Other children's fathers would proudly show them off to their friends and read out good school reports.
Girls	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How early darkness fell in winter. After this, they are allowed to make short visits on their own. At the same time, in France there was a similar situation with another High School. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The plane came at 11:30 am, two and a half hours late, they climbed aboard and sat down in the packed seats, the wife commented saying, "I feel like I'm in a car." To their disappointment and annoyance already large dark and heavy rain clouds had covered the sky when they got out of the car. We used to get into trouble more times than I could remember. Everyone drifted off after dinner, so they went for a little walk, as the rain had stopped. Half an hour it took us to find it. There had been strong gales and no aeroplanes were departing. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> She's always whining wellingtons and a black beret and she whairs glasses with cracked lenses. Due to this fact Rosie has to have thing explained to her carefully. My father was sat in his old chair watching the television with his walking stick clutched in both hands. My father loved his garden, if ever there was a spare minute, he would be outside doing something. Mum had a couple of cleaning jobs but she either got this sack for being late or the company would close. I knew this because the hands on the clock were almost in a straight line down the middle of the clock.
C	1980	1993	1994
Boys	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The second kind of luck is much more likely to influence somebody's life. he second time I had almost landed him, but as always he had fought off the Challenge. On this, my attention was distracted by my younger brother who wanted me to show him how he should fix his cycle. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The brick work was painted red, and a porch came out to rest on the pillars. It was a small school with many children some times 35 in a class, and only 13 teacher, I hurry enough use to like to get to school because a home my parents were always arguing and I use to try and seek refuge at school but sometimes I was shown a more dramatic time at school than at home. It's a mess as well rubbish every where the local council have tried to clean it up. My mum keeps on telling me that I am not older enough to go out and socialize but that only because if I wanted to go out she knows that I most probably going with somebody else she doesn't know, and doesn't like me walking around the small village by myself or with just one person, just incase something happens. I can remember all the horrible things about it I wished I never went there. When we walked a little bit up the corridor we came to a door with the headmasters board hanging from the door. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> As I was looking I found smashed glass everywhere where graffiti all over the walls, where young people have come and vandalised the place. I have seen very old weak, exhausted men and women who have tried to find shelter in alleys and in shop door ways beaten by gangs of drugen youths. I told her to change them as in prosecute them but she though I meant change as in go and fight back do what they do to you. Well I hope you are all fine I am. My work experience is not present I wish I could come home now I am feeling so ill. At first we looked at each other then she asked me to come in she got the cat down from a chair and asked me to sit down.
Girls	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Just before evening the school bells ring to dismiss the millions of school children allowing them to overflow the streets. If his friends are in the same position, they may all go off together without the parents even knowing, and start trouble. However if she does go to work, on that particular day, I ride my bicycle down to the bus-stop in the morning so that I can get home in the evenings. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The brick work was painted red, and a porch came out to rest on the pillars. It was a small school with many children some times 35 in a class, and only 13 teacher, I hurry enough use to like to get to school because a home my parents were always arguing and I use to try and seek refuge at school but sometimes I was shown a more dramatic time at school than at home. It's a mess as well rubbish every where the local council have tried to clean it up. My mum keeps on telling me that I am not older enough to go out and socialize but that only because if I wanted to go out she knows that I most probably going with somebody else she doesn't know, and doesn't like me walking around the small village by myself or with just one person, just incase something happens. I can remember all the horrible things about it I wished I never went there. When we walked a little bit up the corridor we came to a door with the headmasters board hanging from the door. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> As I was looking I found smashed glass everywhere where graffiti all over the walls, where young people have come and vandalised the place. I have seen very old weak, exhausted men and women who have tried to find shelter in alleys and in shop door ways beaten by gangs of drugen youths. I told her to change them as in prosecute them but she though I meant change as in go and fight back do what they do to you. Well I hope you are all fine I am. My work experience is not present I wish I could come home now I am feeling so ill. At first we looked at each other then she asked me to come in she got the cat down from a chair and asked me to sit down.
E	1980	1993	1994
Boys	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In my opinion the greatest majority of vandalism occurs at football matches, where two rival teams of supporters get together and start firing slogans and abuse to one another. The race was to start at 1.30 p.m. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The brick work was painted red, and a porch came out to rest on the pillars. It was a small school with many children some times 35 in a class, and only 13 teacher, I hurry enough use to like to get to school because a home my parents were always arguing and I use to try and seek refuge at school but sometimes I was shown a more dramatic time at school than at home. It's a mess as well rubbish every where the local council have tried to clean it up. My mum keeps on telling me that I am not older enough to go out and socialize but that only because if I wanted to go out she knows that I most probably going with somebody else she doesn't know, and doesn't like me walking around the small village by myself or with just one person, just incase something happens. I can remember all the horrible things about it I wished I never went there. When we walked a little bit up the corridor we came to a door with the headmasters board hanging from the door. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> As I was looking I found smashed glass everywhere where graffiti all over the walls, where young people have come and vandalised the place. I have seen very old weak, exhausted men and women who have tried to find shelter in alleys and in shop door ways beaten by gangs of drugen youths. I told her to change them as in prosecute them but she though I meant change as in go and fight back do what they do to you. Well I hope you are all fine I am. My work experience is not present I wish I could come home now I am feeling so ill. At first we looked at each other then she asked me to come in she got the cat down from a chair and asked me to sit down.
Girls	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This is just a minor offence to be committed within vandalising, when kids are travelling they tend to have nothing to do, so they off course get their pen out and start scribbling. Rick was nicknamed "Whizz Kid" by his friends as they said he drove hard and like a wild cat. I was sipping my cool orange juice and different ideas than on a normal evening filled my head. Such things as strips and drugs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The brick work was painted red, and a porch came out to rest on the pillars. It was a small school with many children some times 35 in a class, and only 13 teacher, I hurry enough use to like to get to school because a home my parents were always arguing and I use to try and seek refuge at school but sometimes I was shown a more dramatic time at school than at home. It's a mess as well rubbish every where the local council have tried to clean it up. My mum keeps on telling me that I am not older enough to go out and socialize but that only because if I wanted to go out she knows that I most probably going with somebody else she doesn't know, and doesn't like me walking around the small village by myself or with just one person, just incase something happens. I can remember all the horrible things about it I wished I never went there. When we walked a little bit up the corridor we came to a door with the headmasters board hanging from the door. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> As I was looking I found smashed glass everywhere where graffiti all over the walls, where young people have come and vandalised the place. I have seen very old weak, exhausted men and women who have tried to find shelter in alleys and in shop door ways beaten by gangs of drugen youths. I told her to change them as in prosecute them but she though I meant change as in go and fight back do what they do to you. Well I hope you are all fine I am. My work experience is not present I wish I could come home now I am feeling so ill. At first we looked at each other then she asked me to come in she got the cat down from a chair and asked me to sit down.

1 These examples are a systematic sub-sample of the full writing sample. They are the 10th, 15th and 25th sentences in the samples from boys and girls in grades A, C and E in 1980 and 1993 and for grades A*/A sentences shown are the 15th grade A* sentence and the 10th and 25th grade A sentences in the samples from boys and from girls.

These 16+ examinations and the changing curriculum in English

What is taught and examined in schools is always value ridden and fashions in English teaching change over time, as they do in all spheres of life. Allegations of declining standards form part of the never ending struggle between traditionalists and progressives (emotive labels both) which governs the continuing process of curriculum and examination reform. The syllabuses/examinations providing the stimuli for our samples of writing were widely used by schools throughout England and were fairly typical of their times. They illustrate the evolution of the curriculum in English in recent years.

The 1980 Oxford (01) GCE Ordinary Level Examination

In 1980 candidates taking the Oxford Delegacy's 01 English Examination were required to sit two written papers. There was no written coursework or assessment of speaking (although these were an integral feature of CSE English examinations of this vintage) and teachers played no direct part in the assessment process.

Paper 1 (1 hour 30 minutes), Part 1 (the source of the 1980 writing sample) offered candidates a choice of 5 general composition titles, from which candidates selected one and Part 2 asked candidates to produce a short article for a school magazine, including and elaborating on a number of pieces of information provided (on the subject of the Romans in Britain).

Paper 2 (1 hour 45 minutes) contained two passages; the first (500-600 words) a historical piece reflecting the work of the UN Food and Agriculture Organisation and the second (about 800 words) an extract from Winifred Holtby's 'South Riding'. Candidates were asked to answer 14 questions on the two passages, ten of which were short answer questions requiring paraphrases of words/phrases or brief explanations of events. The remaining four questions asked for more detailed answers, including summaries of the authors' arguments and reasoned descriptions of underlying issues.

A review of the content and standards of writing in the 1978 English Language examinations of all the GCE boards (Massey, 1979), suggested that the Oxford Syllabus 01's examination papers and grading standards were typical of their era.

In addition to their English Language examinations many of 1980's candidates would also have attempted examinations in English Literature, most having been prepared for both by the same teacher within a single timetable slot allocated to English.

Contemporary critics argued that the GCE examination's focus on formal comprehension, summary and predominantly discursive essay writing, discouraged development of proficiency across a wider range of writing forms (MacLure, 1986). Compared with the wealth of rich and pertinent support material contained within the 1993 and 1994 papers, the 1980 examination appears stark and dry. It has an historical bias in both the UN extract and the journal article. The materials have little human interest and lack contextual relevance to pupils' own experiences.

The GCE examination was targeted more selectively than the GCSE examinations set in 1993 and 1994, as in 1980 many less able candidates would have been prepared for CSE examinations in English. This system was castigated for its divisiveness. In Caperton's (1989) caricature 'While GCE people were reading Shakespeare and serious poetry, the CSE classes were stuck with what

seemed relevant to their lifestyle - typically novels about underprivileged boys (yes, mostly boys) from council estates CSE children were encouraged to be creative since being correct was the preserve of the clever, and GCE pupils were the ones who were taught to think critically and consecutively.....'.

The 1993 MEG (1501) GCSE Examination

GCSE was designed to be accessible to the wide range of pupils formerly taking both CSE and GCE examinations. The MEG 1993 examination followed the model then most common in GCSE English examinations by providing a common stimulus for all, with differentiation being achieved via the outcomes of pupils' work and the marking process.

Although a separate examination in English Literature remained an additional option, the unitary 'English' GCSE required 30% of the marks to be awarded for candidates' response to literary texts but followed the CSE tradition of allowing teachers considerable choice of literature to suit their own pupils' needs. The GCSE Criteria were seen (e.g. Cliff Hodges, 1993) as flexible and encouraging a wider range of work, especially through the requirements for coursework assessment, which became a compulsory feature of all GCSE English examinations, counting for between 30% to 100% of total marks according to the syllabus chosen. Talking and listening (alias oral communication) was also by now recognised as part of the English Syllabus (although not as a legitimate contributor to GCSE grades).

The style of the GCSE examination papers alone came to represent a major curricular shift. The design model for the 1993 MEG papers descends from the 1986 MEG English examination for which Sweetman (1987) described some of the issues facing examiners; not least the variability of pupils' responses and the desirability of providing questions '... closely embedded within the given text even if this requires the provision of more detail ...' to guide and support pupils' answers. GCSE English question papers consequently became much longer than their predecessors; containing extensive stimulus materials, as well as more detailed questions, designed to help pupils recognise the more specific tasks they were now being set and to help them to respond appropriately. Cover pages apart, the MEG GCSE 1993 papers ran to 9 A4 pages compared to only 4 pages for the Oxford 1980 GCE.

Candidates for 1993 MEG 1501 English attempted two written papers, as in the Oxford 1980 GCE. Despite taking 45 minutes longer than the 1980 GCE papers, these counted for only 70% of total marks; with the remaining 30% awarded for coursework folders marked by their teachers. In addition candidates were awarded a separate Oral Grade, also on the basis of their own teachers' assessments.

Paper 1 Argumentative & Informative Writing (2 hours) contained 3 related tasks about an imaginary job application, each supported by relevant documents (job description, programme of events etc) mostly in realistic facsimile form: to write a letter of application for a job; to prepare a transcript of the job interview; and to write a journal article about the selection procedure for the job.

Paper 2 Personal & Expressive Writing (2 hours) provided candidates with two literary extracts to study - a poem (175 words) and an extract describing a student teacher's first day in school, set in the 1940's (about 800 words). In each case candidates were asked for a single extended response (which was the source of the 1993 writing sample), and were given 4 or 5 questions/topics

around which to structure their answer. Candidates could choose to write about either the poem or the prose passage: the task being essentially the same in each case (to write a background to the events in the extract).

Coursework Folders were required to contain evidence of personal and expressive writing, response to reading during the course, including at least one whole work of literature and understanding of and response to 1 or 2 of the five topics specified (Contemporary Issues; Film; Linguistics; Literature; Mass Media). Beyond this the only stipulation was that sufficient examples of each pupil's work should be provided to allow assessment against the assessment objectives. Folders were assessed by their own teachers, whose marking was moderated by the examining board.

Oral Assessments were made by teachers in a range of group and individual situations involving both speaking and listening. The number of situations was unspecified although MEG suggested 3 as the minimum likely to prove satisfactory. Internal and external moderation were both required.

The linked theme of the tasks in Paper 1 of English 1501 provided candidates with a wealth of material from which to work, whilst testing a number of styles of writing.

But GCSE examination papers in English did not get a universally good press. Griffiths (1989) criticised MEG's model roundly. The syllabus listed examples of various types of response (letters; reports; summarising; note making; speech writing) which might be required as argumentative and informative writing but the examiners could and did ask for others, making the syllabus in effect infinite. With examinations which are 'tightly structured and devoid of choice, then it is going to be at least in part a matter of luck as to which candidates are best able to deal with any given paper'. Moreover candidates are forced to write about situations outside their own experience, making the assignment's much vaunted realism no more than an illusion. Similarly she suggests that many questions either fail to define the expected audience or format required adequately or allow candidates to choose for themselves without knowing which might be most valued by the examiners. She is also concerned that 'grimly repetitive thematic content' in a paper may bore some candidates. If choice is not available the candidate who misunderstands or is not engaged by the materials is inevitably disadvantaged throughout. Paper 1 in 1993 was not above such criticisms, which seem intrinsic to the model. Whilst letter-writing, play-scripts and journal articles may be studied in English lessons, candidates are also being judged on the aptness of their response, which may disadvantage those who have neither experienced, studied nor are able to imagine the process of applying for a management-traineeship. Most candidates wrote autobiographically, despite the suggestion that some details might be imagined. Lower ability candidates were especially disadvantaged because of the nature of the fictional post (requiring 5 GCSEs at C or above) and were forced to write creatively (candidates who honestly announced that they were not likely to gain 5 GCSEs because they were only sitting 3 obtained few marks) whilst the more able could describe their own aspirations.

Interestingly, the 1993 GCSE candidates had less choice of titles for extended writing than the 1980 GCE candidates, whose options covered a variety of styles of writing including discursive, narrative and descriptive writing. However undirected writing in the forms possible in 1980 may well be harder than writing based on an existing scenario and materials, as provided in 1993. In compensation, most of the comprehension based tasks in 1980 required only short answers, whilst 1993 candidates needed to produce a coherent extended piece of writing with a number of short answers embedded within it.

MEG's 1501 Scheme 1 examination was in one sense necessarily untypical of GCSE in 1993. Although it had the largest entry of those examinations which included externally examined written papers, by 1993 about 80% of all schools (Cliff Hodges, op.cit.) had opted to enter pupils for GCSE English via 100% coursework assessment syllabuses, including MEG's own (Syllabus 1501 Scheme 2). Griffiths (op.cit.) suggested there could be valid reasons for the preference of the minority remaining loyal to external examinations. Coursework could be seen as a 'millstone round the neck experience' or examinations as more objective or a better preparation for more advanced work. Whilst candidates for Scheme 1's examination spanned the full ability range there were indications that it included a relatively high proportion of abler pupils. A comparatively high proportion of schools concerned were selective and/or fee paying and it was known that some schools only entered their abler candidates through this option. The distribution of grades awarded reflected this.

Many of the English teachers opting for 100% coursework asked pupils to undertake a wide range of challenging work and showed how coursework conditions enabled candidates to demonstrate qualities which they could not have shown within the confines of the timed examination. Most balanced the established canons of literature with more adventurous selections of reading matter and their good practice was cited as evidence of rising standards, achieved in the face of some reductions in the time available to English teachers in the fuller curriculum of the 1990s (Dombey, 1987; Cliff Hodges, op.cit.). The increasing proportions of pupils obtaining higher GCSE grades throughout the period 1986-1993 were thus considered justifiable.

Not everyone agreed. Robson's (1989) wry appreciation of GCSE's new freedoms (written from the secluded perspective of an independent school) was coloured by cynicism concerning the value of teaching and assessing speaking/listening skills or a sense of audience and purpose for communication in general, and accompanied by a self-confident dismissal of some of the niceties of teacher assessment and moderation. There was, too, the matter of opposing value systems. For instance Williams (1989) perceived threats to the newly born GCSE during the early stages of discussions concerning the shape of the national curriculum in English and his outrage at possible restrictions in teachers' freedom to decide what canons of literature to teach and assess was clear; as was his derision for suggestions that grammatical structures and Standard English should receive greater emphasis. He was angry and suspicious that pressures for further curriculum change were motivated by the desire to foster ideological conformism. Polarisation of values and opinion concerning education has seldom been stronger than during this period.

Education's critics may have been willing to concede that good practice could be found but they remained concerned that achievements in some schools failed to reflect it. As a result, in 1993 Cliff Hodges was writing in lament of her impressive practice, in reply to political attacks which had created the climate for the introduction of the national curriculum in English and the consequential changes to GCSE taking effect from 1994.

The 1994 MEG (1510) GCSE Examination

The 1994 MEG 1510 examination was designed to assess the national curriculum in English and to meet new criteria for GCSE English examinations introduced by the School Curriculum and Assessment Authority (SCAA). The Assessment Objectives followed the national curriculum in English and were described under four 'attainment targets' (ATs): AT1 Speaking and Listening, AT2 Reading, AT3 Writing and AT4/5 Presentation (Spelling, Handwriting and Presentation). These continued to recognise the value of experience and appreciation of a varied range of forms, topics, contexts, purposes, and audiences for language and stressed the importance of drafting

and revision in the production of high quality writing. They also stipulated the need for knowledge about language and its use and emphasised the importance of Standard English, together with presentation: explicitly including spelling, layout and neatness as integral parts of all writing tasks.

As in 1993 the 1994 English examination included candidates' response to literature even though a separate English Literature examination was also available. The syllabus makes it clear that the latter was intended to complement the examination in English and enable a unified approach to planning and teaching and submission of coursework; formally recognising the curricular realities dating back to the days of GCE and CSE. Under SCAA's criteria coursework was now restricted to a maximum of only 40% of total marks. In addition, two 'tiers' of examination papers were required; varying in their levels of demand/difficulty and targeted at overlapping sections of the full ability range. The 'Standard Tier' was targeted at grades C-G and the 'Higher Tier' at A-E. About three-quarters of all candidates entered for the Higher Tier. Each candidate again attempted two written papers, each lasting two hours and counting for 30% of all marks. The trend towards provision of more stimulus material continued and even the Standard Tier papers were longer than those set in 1993. These contained 10 A4 pages excluding covers, whilst the Higher Tier papers ran to 12 pages. Both sets of papers, however, included a 'reading booklet' accompanying one paper in each tier, which candidates could study prior to the examination.

1994 GCSE English examinations included speaking and listening skills within the grading process. Moriarty (1995) pointed out to those who professed regret that shy types who wrote well would no longer reach the highest GCSE grades, or complained at the greater assessment workload, that it was English teachers themselves who demanded greater prominence for speaking; because they believed that today's emphasis on the telephone, meetings and presentations made it increasingly important. Their demands were recognised in part by the separate oral grades attached to GCSE at its outset and finally by SCAA's requirement that coursework assessments of speaking counted for 20% of grades in national curriculum GCSE English in 1994.

How far these changes of assessment arrangements for speaking and listening caused a major shift in curricular emphasis or reflected existing practice is thus difficult to determine. It is unlikely that schools in general increased the overall time available to English teachers between 1993 and 1994: so did they increase the curricular emphasis on oracy at the expense of other language skills, including writing? Likewise it is difficult to say how far the introduction of other curricular emphases via the national curriculum have caused teachers to change their practice. Anecdotal evidence suggested that for the first year of the new syllabuses, many schools intended to retain as much of their (relatively newly) established 100% coursework approach as possible, because they believed it interested and motivated their pupils most effectively (Broadbent and Moger, 1992).

Papers 1 (Standard Tier) or 3 (Higher Tier): Non-Literary and Media Texts (2 hours) were structured in the same way, albeit using entirely different source material. Paper 1 Section A presented three sources on the subject of juvenile crime: a pensioner's letter to a local newspaper, a 'Guardian' newspaper article and some graphical data. Candidates were asked to summarise the article and to write a further letter to the local newspaper. In Paper 3 Section A, Higher Tier candidates were also faced with three sources: an article about pet keeping and a report and photograph from 'The Independent' newspaper about a family's pet Vietnamese pot-bellied pigs. Again there were two tasks: a summary of the points made in both articles about the responsibilities of pet keeping and an analysis of the effectiveness of the newspaper piece as

humorous journalism. The first two questions on both Paper 1 and Paper 3 carried 20 marks. In Section B of both papers (maximum mark 30), candidates could select one from a choice of three topics for extended writing.

Differences between the tasks set for standard and higher tier candidates are evident. Standard Tier candidates were required to summarise a single piece of material and were given a set of subheadings to structure their answers; whereas Higher Tier candidates summarised a single feature of all the sources. Standard Tier candidates received some guidance to the structure and contents (but not the format) of the letter forming their second task. Higher Tier candidates analysed the material and formulated arguments regarding the nature and degree of humour, although they too were given three suggested directions by which to structure their reply. In Section B of both tiers a range of writing activities was available. Their scope was very similar in the two tiers and responses could be based on the materials/themes opened earlier if desired, although candidates were free to take their own approaches if they wished, rather as in the 1980 GCE paper. One difference, however, was that Standard Tier candidates were reminded to allow themselves time to correct their work - Higher Tier candidates were presumably expected to remember this themselves.

Papers 2 (Standard Tier) or 4 (Higher Tier): Literature (2 hours) were again structured similarly. Standard Tier candidates had two prose passages (one long, one short) and a poem to study. These were supplied during the term prior to the examination for classroom study and repeated in the examination paper. In Section A the first task involved an analysis of the longer piece of prose; comparing the characters of an old woman and her cat. The second required a comparison between the other two sources. Section B (from which the 1994 writing samples were taken in this tier) offered candidates a choice of two questions; one involving descriptive writing based on the longer prose passage, the other an imaginary letter based on the same theme as the poem and short prose passage but not requiring any link with those pieces. Higher Tier candidates studied a long prose passage and two poems. Again these were supplied in advance of the examination and repeated in the paper. The first task in Section A required a descriptive analysis of the character in the passage and the second involved comparisons between the two poems. In both some pointers were given to help candidates structure their writing. Section B (from which the 1994 writing samples were also taken) offered candidates a choice of three questions (one being further subdivided, effectively giving a choice of four tasks) asking them to extend and develop either the story or one of the poems.

The nature and length of the source material provided the major difference between the tiers. The Higher Tier prose passage was about twice the length of the longer of the Standard passages, and Higher Tier candidates had two poems to contend with (one free verse and also long), rather than the shorter passage and short poem presented to Standard Tier candidates.

Coursework assessment counted for 40% of total marks. Because Speaking and Listening were assessed wholly via coursework and were required to account for 20% of total marks, comparatively small proportions of total marks were available to coursework assessments of Reading (10%) and Writing and Presentation (10%), within the 40% ceiling on coursework imposed by SCAA. 1994 Coursework folders were expected to contain examples of the best work a candidate could produce: a shift from previous practice where submissions might illustrate a candidate's development.

The Examiners' report on candidates' work (MEG, 1994) suggested that in some schools lack of familiarity with formal examinations in English had created difficulties in 1994; citing time management and identifying the focus of the questions as examples. Preparation using pre-released material had varied so that some candidates appeared to tackle it unseen whilst others repeated remembered notes without establishing their relevance to the tasks set. The examiners asserted that teaching for the national curriculum had produced evidence, in both coursework and written papers, testifying to 'an increase in the amount and quality of work in the classroom on the study of language'. However they were in several places critical of candidates' use of language which was not appropriate for the purpose, including inappropriate use of colloquial language and, conversely, failure to employ an oral register when drafting talks. The examiners were, on balance, satisfied with standards of presentation and accuracy, including spelling and punctuation: declaring that 'a majority of examiners feel that a gradual improvement is taking place'.

It is likely that the standards set by MEG's examiners were reasonably typical of those in other examining groups in 1994. A study of inter-group comparability in the 1994 GCSE examination included MEG English 1510 (Gray, 1995). This suggested that whilst MEG may have set rather demanding questions, candidates' work was broadly equivalent to that from other GCSE groups at the grade C/D borderline - although there were hints of severity at grade A and lenity at grade F.

Empirical Comparisons

Preamble

In all comparisons of grading standards we need to compare like with like, and to consider if it is reasonable to expect similarity given the circumstances and nature of the comparisons made. In this case, as in most other investigations of comparability, this is not necessarily as straightforward as it might seem. For instance the curricular contexts from which these writing samples were drawn, described above, may not always lead to the view that it would be fair to expect sets of candidates awarded equivalent grades from these three years to write in a similar fashion, or even (in some sense) equally well. Moreover even the equivalence of some of grades across the years is disputable. Is it entirely fair to compare those awarded GCSE grades D and E in 1993 and 1994 with those awarded similar GCE grades in 1980, when the CSE examination would have provided an alternative curricular route for many pupils in this ability range? Note also the effects of introducing the A* grade in 1994, thus sub-dividing the A grade. Separate A and A* samples for 1994 were drawn in the belief that the distinction would be of interest, but to be strictly fair comparisons with previous years would need to amalgamate them (weighted appropriately to reflect the pupils gaining each).

But in the first instance we will put such matters aside and simply compare the writing samples as though all things were equal, to see if we can detect any overall differences in the writing of pupils awarded ostensibly equivalent grades in different years. Whether or not the null hypothesis implicit in this is reasonable will be discussed at a later stage.

The extensive analyses which follow are fairly straightforward. Statistical significance tests are deliberately abjured. This is partly due to technical reservations (about equivalence of some grades in different years (as described above), the nature of the data (often the incidence or proportion of errors/attributes identified in the sets of sentences from each grade/year) and the large numbers of comparison being made) but mainly because it seems preferable in this case to display (and summarise) as much of the data as possible and allow readers to decide for themselves if they are convinced by it. Where trends in differences between years are consistent across a range of grades they speak for themselves.

Sentence length

Counts of the length of the writing samples were made by a research assistant, who obtained initial estimates from word processing software and checked and corrected these clerically. Counts included both the number of words per 'sentence' (i.e. the writing sample for each pupil) and the total number of characters involved, so that average word length could also be estimated.

Table 3 gives the average number of words per sentence and the average number of letters per word for boys and girls awarded each GCE or GCSE grade in each of the years 1980, 1993 and 1994.

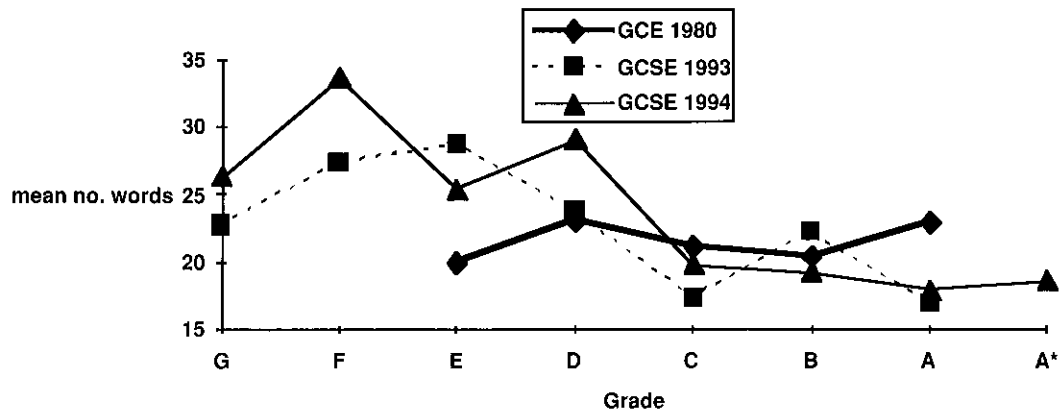
Table 3 Average sentence and word length

		1980			1993			1994		
		boys	girls	all	boys	girls	all	boys	girls	all
A*	characters per word							4.3	4.1	4.2
	words per sentence							18.0	19.1	18.6
A	characters per word	4.5	4.2	4.4	4.1	4.1	4.1	4.2	4.3	4.2
	words per sentence	24.9	20.8	22.9	15.0	18.8	16.9	19.3	16.5	17.9
B	characters per word	4.3	4.3	4.3	4.5	4.3	4.4	4.1	4.0	4.1
	words per sentence	20.5	20.3	20.4	19.7	24.7	22.2	19.5	18.9	19.2
C	characters per word	4.3	4.1	4.2	4.2	4.2	4.2	4.1	4.0	4.0
	words per sentence	22.3	19.8	21.1	17.5	17.1	17.3	19.3	20.2	19.8
D	characters per word	4.4	4.0	4.2	3.9	4.0	4.0	3.9	3.9	3.9
	words per sentence	22.1	23.8	23.0	23.7	23.8	23.8	33.7	24.5	29.1
E	characters per word	4.2	4.1	4.2	4.0	4.0	4.0	3.9	3.8	3.9
	words per sentence	19.7	20.0	19.9	33.0	24.3	28.7	31.2	19.5	25.4
F	characters per word				3.8	3.9	3.9	3.7	3.7	3.7
	words per sentence				27.8	27.0	27.4	37.7	30.0	33.6
G	characters per word				3.8	3.8	3.8	3.5	3.8	3.6
	words per sentence				27.8	17.5	22.7	30.4	30.0	26.3
A*-E	characters per word	4.3	4.1	4.2	4.1	4.1	4.1	4.1	4.0	4.0
	words per sentence	21.7	20.9	21.3	21.8	21.7	21.8	23.5	19.8	21.7
A*-G	characters per word				4.0	4.0	4.0	3.9	3.9	3.9
	words per sentence				25.0	21.8	23.4	26.1	21.3	23.7

Number of words per sentence

In both the 1993 and 1994 GCSE examinations weaker candidates (say those below the erstwhile GCE passing grade of C) tended to write longer sentences (as measured by their average number of words) than abler ones: most markedly so in 1994. Figure 1 illustrates this. The briefest inspection of writing samples suffices to show that many of the long sentences by weak candidates stemmed from their inability to put full stops where required.

Figure 1: Average Sentence Length



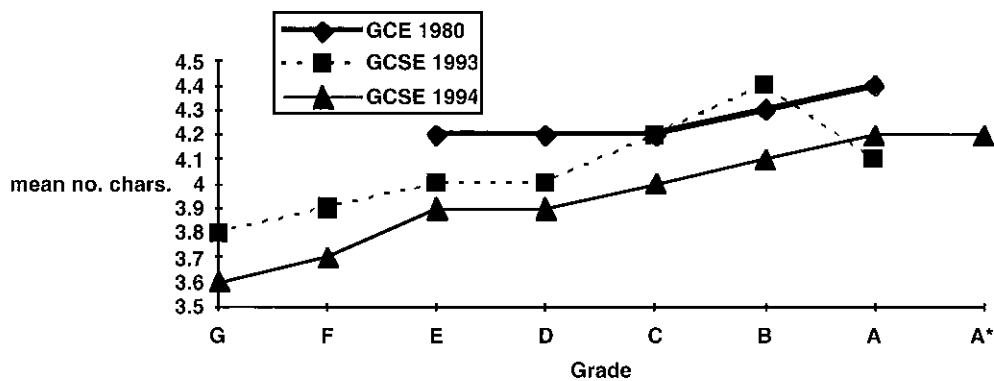
In the 1980 GCE examination there was comparatively little variation in the average sentence lengths of pupils awarded different grades within GCE's A-E range. At all these grades 1980 GCE candidates tended to write shorter sentences than weaker 1993 or 1994 GCSE candidates but, in contrast, their sentences were longer than those produced by GCSE candidates awarded grade C or above.

In 1980 sex differences in respect of sentence length were relatively small and were inconsistent across the range of grades. But in both 1993 and 1994, very long sentences produced by a few of the boys awarded grades D or E account for much of the overall difference between these years and 1980. Further possible explanations for variations in sentence length between different years, especially amongst abler candidates, will come to light later.

Word length

Figure 2 illustrates how, on average, candidates awarded higher grades tended to use longer words than weaker pupils in each of the three years considered. Grade for grade, 1980 candidates tended to use the longest words and those examined in 1994 the shortest; most notably in grades D and E. 1993 was intermediate in this respect also, with abler candidates (at B & C, though not at A) often matching their 1980 counterparts but those awarded lower grades averaging word lengths more characteristic of 1994's candidates.

Figure 2: Average Word Length



Any sex differences in the average length of words used seem small and inconsistent. Although the average word length for boys slightly exceeded that for girls in four of the five GCE grades in 1980, this did not recur in 1993 or 1994. Again, explanations for the variations observed will emerge as the data are explored further.

Vocabulary

To provide an estimate of variations in the vocabulary ranges of different groups the research assistant also classified each word according to the Cambridge English Lexicon (Hindmarsh, 1980). This is based on the lexicographic and pedagogical literature relating to word frequency counts, as moderated by a teacher's discretion. It consists of approximately 4,500 lexical items, each of which is graded on a seven point scale according to their frequency of use. Level 1 contains the most frequently used 598 words; level 2 the next commonest 617 words; level 3 has 992 words; level 4 1034 words and level 5 has 1229 words. Cumulatively, level 5 is said to correspond to the everyday language forming the *comprehension* vocabulary of competent learners of English as a *foreign language*. The Lexicon attempts to list all lexical items up to level 5 only. Points 6 and 7 on the scale represent later stages in the development of a passive vocabulary and are used in the Lexicon to classify alternative and less common meanings. The earlier analysis of 1980 candidates' vocabulary suggested that the Lexicon's scale provided an effective means of comparing the *active* vocabularies of the *native speakers* entering 16+ examinations, as a high proportion of the words used fell within the range of levels 1-5. Accordingly each word in the writing samples was classified as in grades 1-4; grade 5; or grade 6+.

Table 4 gives the percentages of words in each of these categories for boys and girls awarded each grade in each year. As would be expected the great majority (always more than 90%) of words used by pupils at all grades were within the lowest lexical category (4 or below on the Cambridge Lexicon's scale). Overall there were small differences between the sexes which were consistent from year to year. The A-E totals illustrate how boys used a slightly richer vocabulary (in the sense that they included a higher proportion of words which appear less often in everyday language) than girls in all three years. The difference was greatest in 1980. The consistency in the direction of the sex difference observed over the years does however encourage some confidence that the evidence for it may be robust. Such differences should not however hinder comparisons between years - our prime aim.

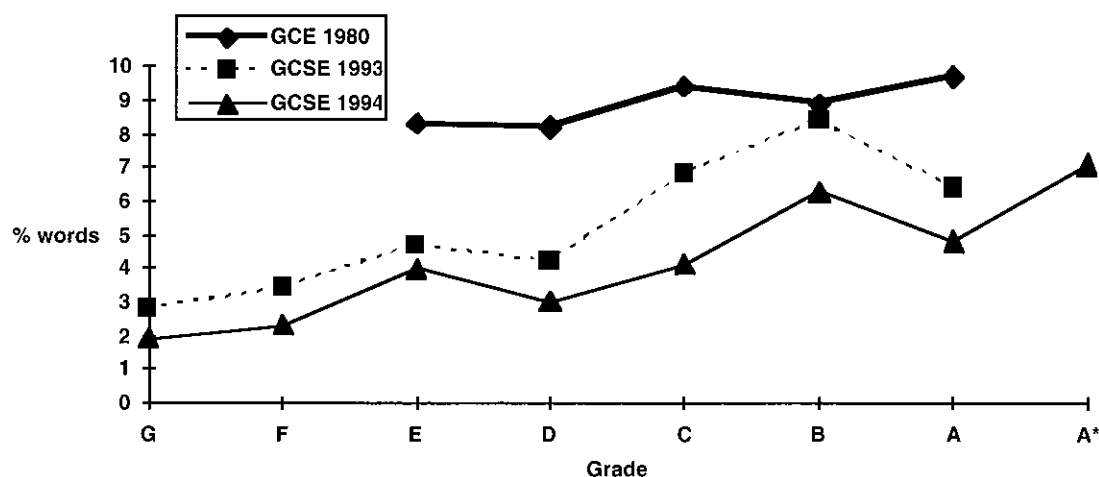
Figure 3 illustrates trends in vocabulary, grade by grade, between years: showing the percentage of words used by pupils at each grade which are at or above lexical grade 5. It indicates that, on average, the writing samples from pupils awarded higher grades had a more extensive vocabulary than those with lower grades in all three years. However the differences between candidates across the A-E grade range were rather less marked in 1980 than in either 1993 or 1994.

Figure 3 also shows that, on average and grade for grade, the writing samples for 1980 GCE candidates use a wider vocabulary than their counterparts from both more recent years. The vocabulary of 1994 pupils appears narrowest and that of 1993's pupils intermediate but approaching the higher levels of 1980 more closely in the A-C grade range than in grades D-E.

Table 4 Vocabulary: % of words at each lexical level

	1980			1993			1994			
	boys	girls	all	boys	girls	all	boys	girls	all	
A*	<=4						92.2	93.5	92.9	
	5						1.9	2.9	2.4	
	>=6						5.9	3.6	4.7	
							100%	100%	100%	
A	<=4	88.8	92.1	90.3	93.2	93.9	93.6	95.4	94.8	95.2
	5	3.0	1.9	2.5	1.4	1.6	1.5	1.8	2.1	1.9
	>=6	8.2	6.0	7.2	5.4	4.4	4.9	2.8	3.1	2.9
		100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
B	<=4	88.4	93.8	91.1	91.0	92.1	91.6	92.8	94.6	93.7
	5	3.8	1.8	2.8	2.7	2.4	2.6	2.6	1.8	2.2
	>=6	7.8	4.4	6.1	6.3	5.5	5.8	4.6	3.6	4.1
		100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
C	<=4	92.0	89.0	90.6	93.9	92.5	93.2	94.8	97.0	95.9
	5	2.2	5.0	3.5	1.2	1.8	1.5	1.4	1.4	1.4
	>=6	5.8	6.0	5.9	4.9	5.7	5.3	3.8	1.6	2.7
		100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
D	<=4	89.8	93.8	91.8	95.0	96.6	95.8	96.7	97.5	97.0
	5	3.4	1.8	2.6	0.7	0.6	0.7	1.0	0.7	0.9
	>=6	6.8	4.4	5.6	4.2	2.8	3.5	2.3	1.8	2.1
		100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
E	<=4	90.2	93.2	91.7	95.1	95.6	95.3	95.6	96.6	96.0
	5	3.1	2.1	2.6	0.9	1.1	1.0	2.1	1.9	2.0
	>=6	6.7	4.7	5.7	4.0	3.3	3.7	2.3	1.5	2.0
		100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
F	<=4				96.8	96.2	96.6	97.6	97.8	97.7
	5				1.4	1.5	1.4	1.4	0.9	1.2
	>=6				1.8	2.3	2.0	1.0	1.3	1.1
					100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
G	<=4				98.0	96.0	97.2	98.3	97.8	98.1
	5				0.5	2.0	1.1	0.5	1.8	1.0
	>=6				1.5	2.0	1.7	1.2	0.4	0.9
					100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
A-E	<=4	89.8	92.4	91.1	93.9	94.2	94.1	95.3	96.2	95.7
	5	3.1	2.5	2.8	1.3	1.5	1.4	1.7	1.5	1.6
	>=6	7.1	5.1	6.1	4.8	4.3	4.5	3.0	2.3	2.6
		100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Figure 3: Vocabulary: % words at lexical grade 5 or higher



One limitation of the lexical analysis is that it takes no account of whether words are used correctly or not. Our subjective impression was that candidates awarded higher grades in a given year were more likely to use their vocabulary appropriately and that this problem did not affect comparisons between grades. Note also that Figures 2 and 3 are a very close match, indicating that the lexical analysis closely matches the data for word length, as might be expected, but shows less overlap between grades and years.

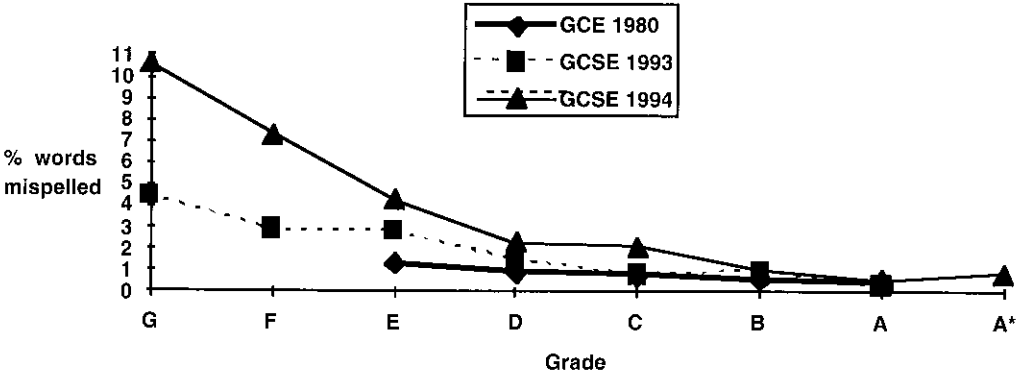
Spelling

The writing samples were checked for correct spelling by a research assistant, using word processing software for an initial screening and subsequently checking each word clerically. In a few cases it is possible that spelling errors were recorded where the real fault lay with poor handwriting; either way, communication was impeded!

Poor spelling is an emotive issue but the evidence here is reasonably objective. Table 5 shows the numbers of spelling errors for boys and girls awarded each grade in each year. It distinguishes between straightforward misspellings and wrong meaning errors (where wrong, but accurately spelled, homophones for the word required were used) and also give the proportion of all spelling errors per 100 words, to assist fair comparisons between pupils awarded different grades and/or boys and girls, where some groups have tended to write longer or shorter sampled 'sentences'. Table 6 lists the spelling errors encountered.

The distinction between wrong meaning errors and other misspellings does not appear of any great significance but, overall, boys' writing included more spelling mistakes than girls' - who thus compensated for a narrower vocabulary with greater accuracy. Figure 4 illustrates the year on year comparisons. Clearly 1980 GCE candidates made fewest spelling mistakes. Overall, 1993 GCSE candidates awarded grades in the A-C range achieved error rates much like those encountered in the 1980 writing samples but 1993's D and E candidates performed comparatively poorly. The proportion of misspellings in the 1994 writing sample was higher still, . From A*- E, 1994's writing samples had about two to three times the error rate of their 1980 equivalents. Spelling by 1994 candidates in grades F-G too compared badly, with more than twice the error rate of those obtaining equivalent grades in 1993.

Figure 4: Spelling mistakes per 100 words



There is no obvious explanation which might excuse such differences between the years. Any suggestion that 1993 and 1994 candidates were falling down as a result of trying to use a more adventurous vocabulary will not wash. The evidence above shows the opposite to be the case. Grade for grade, the 1994 candidates were using a more restricted vocabulary than those of 1980 but were less capable of spelling correctly.

Table 5: Spelling errors: misspellings and wrong-meaning errors

		1980			1993			1994		
		Boys	Girls	All	Boys	Girls	All	Boys	Girls	All
A*	n misspellings							8	2	10
	n wrong meanings							0	0	0
	n total							8	2	10
	n total per 100							0.015	0.003	0.009
A	n misspellings	4	0	4	1	1	2	3	2	5
	n wrong meanings	0	1	1	0	1	1	0	1	1
	n total	4	1	5	1	2	3	3	3	6
	n total per 100	0.005	0.002	0.004	0.002	0.004	0.003	0.005	0.006	0.006
B	n misspellings	5	1	6	5	5	10	6	5	11
	n wrong meanings	0	1	1	2	1	3	1	0	1
	n total	5	2	7	7	6	13	7	5	12
	n total per 100	0.008	0.003	0.006	0.012	0.008	0.010	0.012	0.009	0.010
C	n misspellings	7	2	9	4	3	7	15	9	24
	n wrong meanings	1	0	1	1	0	1	0	1	1
	n total	8	2	10	5	3	8	15	10	25
	n total per 100	0.012	0.003	0.008	0.010	0.006	0.008	0.026	0.016	0.021
D	n misspellings	7	4	11	8	11	19	24	11	35
	n wrong meanings	0	1	1	0	2	2	1	4	5
	n total	7	5	12	8	13	21	25	15	40
	n total per 100	0.011	0.008	0.009	0.011	0.018	0.015	0.025	0.020	0.023
E	n misspellings	8	6	14	22	13	35	41	18	59
	n wrong meanings	2	0	2	6	7	13	6	1	7
	n total	10	6	16	28	20	48	47	19	66
	n total per 100	0.017	0.010	0.013	0.028	0.027	0.028	0.050	0.032	0.043
F	n misspellings				26	19	45	95	45	140
	n wrong meanings				5	7	12	7	1	8
	n total				31	26	57	102	46	148
	n total per 100				0.027	0.032	0.029	0.090	0.052	0.073
G	n misspellings				18	20	38	86	64	150
	n wrong meanings				14	7	21	12	5	17
	n total				32	27	59	98	69	167
	n total per 100				0.038	0.053	0.044	0.107	0.104	0.106
A-E	n misspellings	31	13	44	40	33	73	89	45	134
	n wrong meanings	3	3	6	9	11	20	8	7	15
	n total	34	16	50	49	44	93	97	52	149
	n total per 100	0.010	0.005	0.008	0.015	0.014	0.014	0.026	0.017	0.022

Table 6 Incorrect spellings observed

A*	1980	1993	1994
A	<p>boisterous (boisterous) imaginary (imaginary) shear (sheer) tarmacd (tarmacd) tendancies (tendancies)</p>	<p>accomodation (accommodation) disappointment (disappointment) ther (there)</p>	<p>abundance (abundance) clamed (clamed) fighly (fighly) hopskotch (hopskotch)</p>
B	<p>benneath (beneath) chaous (chaos) inquired (inquired) occasion (occasion) phenomina (phenomena) stepped (stepped) wringing (ringing)</p>	<p>aloud (allowed) apologetic (apologetic) assembly (assembly) cocktail (cocktail) dae (date) disappointment (disappointment) mared (marrd) overrun (overrun)</p>	<p>separately (separately) source (source) suddenly (suddenly) tounge (tongue)</p>
C	<p>adolescents (adolescents) challenge (challenge) dazlering (dazzling) farfill (fulfil) farfilled (fulfilled) friend (friend) graffiti (graffiti) meters (metres) severly (severely) whitness (whiteness)</p>	<p>assembly (assembly) bumper (bumper) disappointment (disappointment) everywere (everywhere) experienced (experienced) finaly (finally) gails (gales) Hawian (Hawaiian)</p>	<p>adolescent (adolescent) aggravates (aggravated) always (always) blinded (blinded) burning (burning) bully (bullies) enough (enough) laught (laught) have (they)</p>
D	<p>alright (all right) attention (attention) behaved (behaved) friend (friend) mischiev (mischievous) opportunity (opportunity) preasent (present) prehaps (perhaps) privleges (privileges) programs (programs) relatvity (relativity) to (too)</p>	<p>affraid (afraid) alright (all right) apologize (apologize) arithmatic (arithmetic) arrived (arrived) creat(Crate) dosile (docile) excitement (excitement) finaly (finally) restaurant (restaurant) sinys (?) sneek (sneak) waitor (waiter)</p>	<p>or (on) oxygen (oxygen) peice (piece) propely (properly) reorch (reproach) senial (senile) sewerage (sewage) storted (started) their (there) there (their) to (too) where (were) witch (which)</p>
E	<p>are (our) committed (committed) defence (defiance) distruction (destruction) except (accept) jealousy (jealousy) memories (memories) occasion (occasion) off (of) pasting (passing) pigeon (pigeon) x2 plainly (plainly) society (society) the (they) vandalism (vandalism) verified (verified)</p>	<p>activities (activities) aloud (allowed) alright (all right) building (building) boar (bore) bicycles (bicycles) communitize (communicate) corridor (corridor) direction (direction) embarrasing (embarrassing) exiting (exciting) fashion (fashion) horible (horrible) horrorable (horrible) jew (due) knewing (knowing) manor (manner) of (off) x2 pillers (pillars) plain (plane) playfields (playing fields) prepaired (prepared)</p>	<p>helplessley (helplessly) horrible (horrible) hospital (hospital) is (it) ladie (lady) lake (lake) leased (least) living (living) murning (morning) noone (no one) officialy (officially) on (are) opend (opened)</p>
E	<p>really (really) recieved (received) receiving (receiving) senisless (senseless) shoulder (shoulder) smached (smashed) smidging (smidgen) spensat (spend) steppe (stepped) suddenly (suddenly) their (they are) though (thought) to (too) x2 tried (tried) visted (visited) white (write) wich (which) wonder (wandered)</p>	<p>another (another) be (by) beaten (beaten) beggars (beggars) x3 bullded (bulld) buter (butter) carefully (carefully) close (close) concul (council) diffrent (different) door ways (doorways) drunpen (drunken) exchother (each other) enorm (enough) experiance (experience) feal (feel) finaly (finally) found (fund) gargene (gargene) graphy (graph) happend (happened)</p>	<p>really (really) recieved (received) receiving (receiving) senisless (senseless) shoulder (shoulder) smached (smashed) smidging (smidgen) spensat (spend) steppe (stepped) suddenly (suddenly) their (they are) though (thought) to (too) x2 tried (tried) visted (visited) white (write) wich (which) wonder (wandered)</p>

The sudden and substantial turn for the worse in spelling observed in 1994, as compared to 1993, is of considerable interest. What can have brought about such a change between two successive years, when any marginal changes in the proportions of candidates reaching given grades should have comparatively little impact? The tasks set are not dissimilar and the most likely explanation lies in different curricular emphases in the schools from which the 1993 and 1994 writing samples were drawn. Schools opting for an external examination in 1993 were by definition untypical, as the vast majority took the 100% coursework alternative. They included a relatively high proportion of selective and independent schools who might, arguably, have seen themselves as the inheritors of the curricular traditions of 1980. In 1994, the introduction of new national curriculum based syllabuses forced all schools into the examination's net. Might schools which had formerly used the 100% coursework option (who formed the majority of those examined in 1994) have placed less emphasis on the necessity of accurate spelling? No other explanation comes readily to hand.

This shift between 1993 and 1994 is all the more surprising, and disappointing, in light of the national curriculum's strictures concerning spelling, which had supposedly governed the preparation of 1994's candidates since they entered secondary schools five years beforehand.

Inspection of the mistakes themselves made fails to provide any other explanations for the differences between years - but it is both sobering and salutary, providing a visual aid which drives home the scale of the variation between years. It may well be of interest to teachers.

Punctuation

An analysis of the punctuation of the writing samples was undertaken by an experienced teacher of English, according to the authors' specifications. This explored the use and abuse of the various stops, apostrophes and abbreviations. In general the approach adopted was to give the candidates the benefit of any doubt. Inevitably this analysis depended upon professional judgement and another judge would not always agree with the decisions made. But every effort was made to be consistent and there is no obvious reason why any subjectivity involved should bias the comparisons we might wish to make between grades or the groups awarded the same grade in different years.

Stops

The selection of the writing samples was governed by the use of full stops. The writing taken from each candidate's script was that found between the third and fourth full stops used in his or her answer to the question providing the sample for each year.

Run-on

Writing samples were judged to contain run-on errors if a full stop was needed but had been omitted; so that within a candidate's writing sample one 'sentence' ran on into another. For example: 'Jimmy Baxter was fourteen, at the time and had just reached the age of maturity, in the eyes of his fellows, his short Black hair stood erect on the top of his head, looking as though tufts of grass grew from it.' (1980 grade C boy)

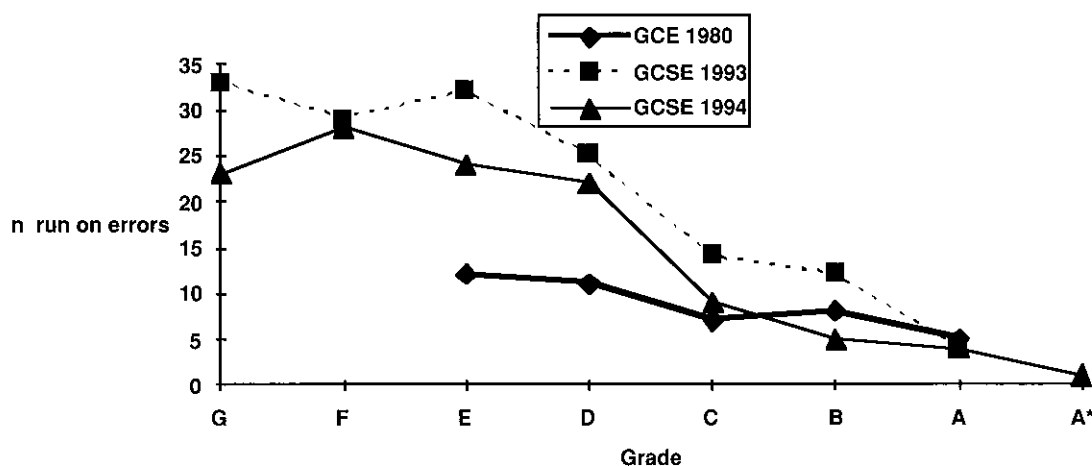
Table 7 shows the numbers of such missing full stops for boys and girls at each grade in each year. Boys may be more likely to make this mistake than girls (they did in 1980 and 1994 but not in 1993) but this does not affect comparisons between years.

Figure 5 summarises these and reveals that in 1980 run-on errors were a little more common in the writing samples from grade D-E candidates than in A-C candidates' work. In 1994 this type of mistake occurred at about as often as in 1980 in grades A*-C, but about twice as often in grades D-E. Below these grades run-ons were even more frequent. In 1993 this kind of error was slightly more common still, at all levels below grade A.

Table 7 Run-on: missing full stops

	1980			1993			1994		
	boys	girls	all	boys	girls	all	boys	girls	all
A*							0	1	1
A	4	1	5	2	2	4	3	1	4
B	3	5	8	4	8	12	1	4	5
C	4	3	7	6	8	14	7	2	9
D	7	4	11	13	12	25	14	8	22
E	7	5	12	17	15	32	12	12	24
F				18	11	29	14	14	28
G				18	15	33	14	9	23
A-E	25	18	43	42	45	87	37	27	64
A-G				78	71	149	65	50	115

Figure 5: Run on errors



Comma

Judgements about the use of commas are inevitably subjective but the teacher judge attempted to record all instances where the comma was used correctly and those where it was used wrongly, giving the benefit of the doubt wherever possible. Also, every attempt was made to identify cases where (absent) commas were definitely needed to convey meaning effectively.

However it proved so difficult to identify absences or incorrect use of the comma in the long concatenated writing samples from some F & G grade candidates that efforts were abandoned. The relatively low numbers of errors in grade E writing samples reported below may also be an artefact of the difficulty encountered in identifying such mistakes in poorly structured sentences.

Table 8 reports the analyses for boys and girls awarded each grade in each year and shows the total numbers of incorrect and correct uses, and the number of 'absent' commas, for all candidates in the relevant groups. Figures 6 and 7 respectively summarise the information regarding use and abuse (the latter being the sum of absence and misuse) of the comma, by expressing the information in terms of the average number of accurate or wrong uses per sentence by candidates awarded a given grade in each year. There are no evident sex differences.

It would appear that 1980 candidates were marginally more likely than those awarded equivalent grades in 1994 to make effective use of the comma, especially in grades D-E, although this may be because they tended to write slightly longer sentences which more often required them. Grade for grade, 1993 candidates seemed rather less likely to use the comma accurately.

The data for comma abuse/absence suggests that there was little to choose between these three years in these respects. Whilst 1994's candidates made marginally fewer mistakes with the comma than were observed in other years, this is perhaps because they wrote the shortest sentences and thus had least opportunity to err!

Table 8 Use and misuse of the comma: n used correctly(✓), incorrectly (X) or absent (abs)

		1980			1993			1994		
		boys	girls	all	boys	girls	all	boys	girls	all
A*	✓							31	24	55
	X							1	1	2
	abs							1	0	1
A	✓	26	24	50	14	15	29	29	22	51
	X	9	2	11	5	2	7	3	3	6
	abs	1	1	2	2	0	2	1	1	2
B	✓	23	27	50	20	22	42	22	15	37
	X	4	9	13	6	4	10	4	5	9
	abs	2	3	5	4	6	10	0	2	2
C	✓	21	17	38	10	7	17	18	20	38
	X	9	3	12	3	8	11	5	5	10
	abs	2	1	3	3	4	7	0	3	3
D	✓	22	19	41	10	14	24	8	25	33
	X	8	15	23	15	8	23	14	10	24
	abs	1	0	1	4	3	7	0	1	1
E	✓	17	16	33	13	7	20	5	9	14
	X	4	9	13	12	8	20	6	3	9
	abs	2	1	3	1	0	1	7	0	7
F	✓				13	9	22	4	6	10
	X									
	abs									
G	✓				0	1	1	4	0	4
	X									
	abs									
A-E	✓	109	103	212	67	65	132	82	91	173
	X	34	38	72	41	30	71	32	26	58
	abs	8	6	14	14	13	27	8	7	15

✓ = correct uses X = incorrect uses abs = missing when required

Figure 6: correct use of comma

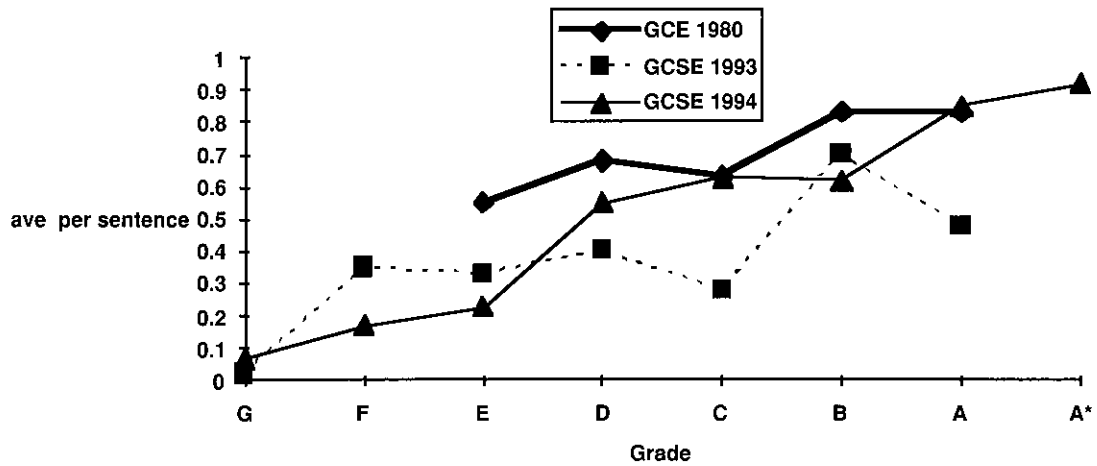
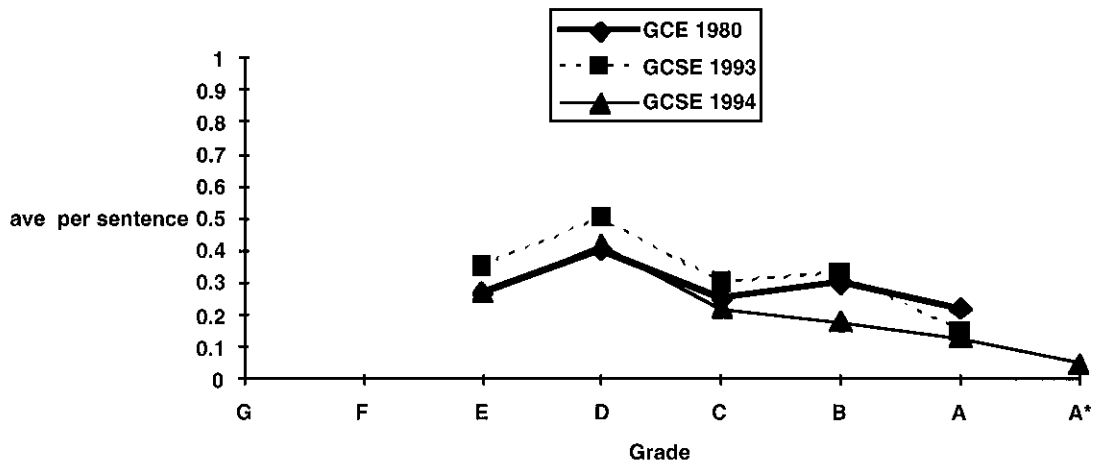


Figure 7: absence and incorrect use of comma



Semi-colon

Correct and incorrect uses of the semi-colon were also identified and these are reported in table 9. In 1980 the semi-colon was used appropriately only eight times in the 60 writing samples: four of these were by grade A candidates but the other three came from the writing samples from grades D and E. In addition, this stop was judged to have been used incorrectly only once, by a grade D candidate. In both 1993 and 1994 only three correct uses were recorded (by candidates from grades A, C and F in 1993 and by grade A or B candidates in 1994). There were no incorrect uses in 1993 and just 1 in 1994.

Colon

Correct and incorrect uses of the colon are also featured in table 9. This was even less common than the semi-colon. Two effective uses were recorded in 1980, both by lower grade candidates. One attempt to use the colon by a grade C candidate was judged unsuccessful. In 1993 the colon was conspicuous only by its absence from the writing samples, whilst in 1994 one A* candidate made use of this device.

Table 9 Use and misuse of (a) semi-colon / (b) colon (n observed)

		1980			1993			1994				
		boys	girls	all	boys	girls	all	boys	girls	all		
		a/b	a/b	a/b	a/b	a/b	a/b	a/b	a/b	a/b		
A*	✓									0/0	2/1	2/1
	✗									0/0	1/0	1/0
A	✓	2/0	2/0	4/0	0/0	1/0	1/0	1/0	0/0	0/0	1/0	1/0
	✗	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0
B	✓	0/0	1/0	1/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0
	✗	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0
C	✓	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	1/0	1/0	1/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0
	✗	0/1	0/0	0/1	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0
D	✓	2/0	0/1	2/1	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0
	✗	1/0	0/0	1/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0
E	✓	1/0	0/1	1/1	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0
	✗	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0
F	✓				0/0	1/0	1/0	1/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0
	✗				0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0
G	✓				0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0
	✗				0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0
A-E	✓	5/0	3/2	8/2	0/0	2/0	2/0	2/0	1/0	0/0	1/0	1/0
	✗	1/1	0/0	1/1	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0

Figure 8: correct uses of semi-colon & colon

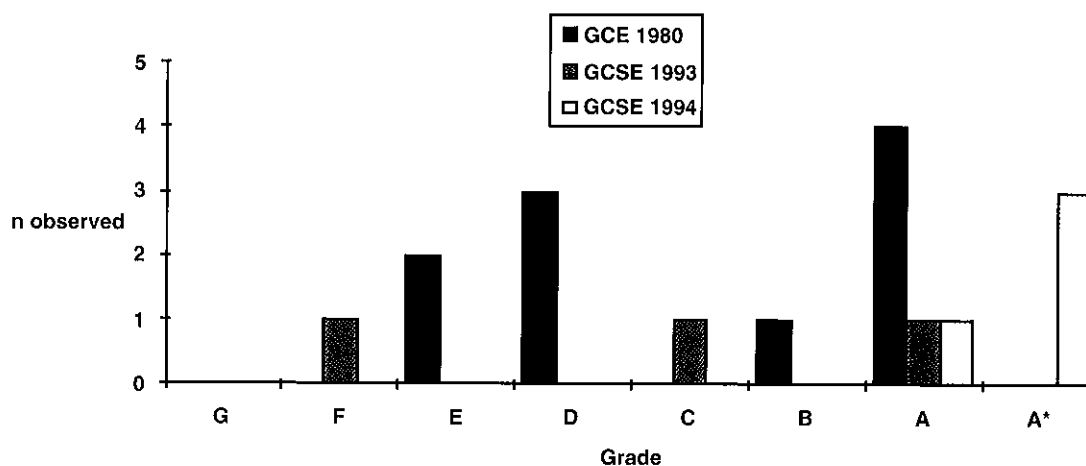


Figure 8 compares the total number of correct uses of both the semi-colon and the colon by candidates awarded each grade in each year. 16+ examination candidates seem to have avoided these less familiar stops quite successfully and the data are too sparse for firm conclusions, although curiosity is aroused by their greater use (by lower grade candidates too) in 1980 than in 1993 and 1994.

Stops: overall

The only noteworthy sex difference in the use of stops is boys' propensity to fail to end their sentences where they should. Poor use of stops was most apparent amongst lower graded candidates in all three years.

The most consistent differences between years concerned candidates awarded grades D-E. Those awarded such grades in 1980 performed noticeably better than their equivalents in 1993 and 1994 in this respect, as in several others. But at grade C and above 1994 candidates made about the same number of mistakes with their stops as those of 1980, although we should remember that they wrote shorter sentences which may have given less room to do so. If anything 1994's candidates made fewer errors in this category than their counterparts in 1993, so the marked increase in spelling errors between these years noted above was not repeated in their use of stops.

Apostrophe

The teacher judge also addressed the use made of the apostrophe in the writing samples and recorded all cases where it was used correctly and incorrectly and those where an apostrophe was missing when needed. Separate counts were made when apostrophes were used to denote plurals (mind your p's and q's); to denote possessives (Mr Smith's dog); or to indicate abbreviation (that's the way to go).

Table 10 Use and misuse of apostrophe (a) plural (b) possessive (c) abbreviation (n obs)

		1980			1993			1994		
		<i>boys</i>	<i>girls</i>	<i>all</i>	<i>boys</i>	<i>girls</i>	<i>all</i>	<i>boys</i>	<i>girls</i>	<i>all</i>
		<i>a/b/c</i>	<i>a/b/c</i>	<i>a/b/c</i>	<i>a/b/c</i>	<i>a/b/c</i>	<i>a/b/c</i>	<i>a/b/c</i>	<i>a/b/c</i>	<i>a/b/c</i>
A*	✓							0/2/9	0/2/11	0/4/20
	✗							0/0/0	0/0/0	0/0/0
	abs							0/0/0	0/1/1	0/1/1
A	✓	0/1/1	0/1/0	0/2/1	0/0/5	0/0/5	0/0/10	0/2/14	0/1/10	0/3/24
	✗	0/0/0	0/1/0	0/1/0	0/1/0	0/0/0	0/1/0	0/0/1	0/1/0	0/1/1
	abs	0/0/0	0/1/0	0/1/0	0/0/0	0/1/0	0/1/0	0/0/2	0/0/1	0/0/3
B	✓	0/0/4	0/1/5	0/1/9	0/0/7	0/2/3	0/2/10	0/1/13	0/2/6	0/3/19
	✗	1/0/0	0/0/0	1/0/0	0/0/1	1/0/0	1/0/1	0/1/1	0/0/0	0/1/1
	abs	0/2/0	0/1/2	0/3/2	0/1/0	0/1/0	0/2/0	0/2/1	0/0/2	0/2/3
C	✓	0/2/4	0/0/0	0/2/4	0/1/6	0/3/4	0/4/10	0/0/10	0/2/8	0/2/18
	✗	0/1/0	0/0/0	0/1/0	0/0/0	0/0/0	0/0/0	0/0/1	0/0/0	0/0/1
	abs	0/2/1	0/1/0	0/3/1	0/1/1	0/0/1	0/1/2	0/1/2	0/2/1	0/3/3
D	✓	0/1/3	0/1/1	0/2/4	0/2/8	0/0/15	0/2/23	0/0/5	0/1/9	0/1/14
	✗	0/0/0	0/0/0	0/0/0	0/0/0	0/0/0	0/0/0	1/0/2	1/0/0	2/0/2
	abs	0/0/0	0/1/2	0/1/2	0/0/1	0/0/0	0/0/1	0/1/3	0/1/2	0/2/5
E	✓	0/0/1	0/2/1	0/2/2	0/1/12	0/0/6	0/1/18	0/1/2	0/0/4	0/1/6
	✗	0/0/0	1/0/0	1/0/0	1/0/0	0/0/0	1/0/0	1/0/2	0/0/1	1/0/3
	abs	0/0/0	0/0/1	0/0/1	0/3/6	0/4/1	0/7/7	0/0/2	0/0/4	0/0/6
F	✓				0/0/14	0/0/4	0/0/18	0/0/3	0/1/5	0/1/8
	✗				0/0/0	1/0/0	1/0/0	0/0/1	3/0/4	3/0/5
	abs				0/1/6	0/4/2	0/5/8	0/1/6	0/2/2	0/3/8
G	✓				0/0/14	0/0/3	0/0/17	0/0/5	0/0/3	0/0/8
	✗				0/0/1	0/0/1	0/0/2	2/0/1	8/0/0	10/0/1
	abs				0/0/4	0/1/1	0/1/5	0/1/5	0/0/1	0/1/6
A-E	✓	0/4/13	0/5/7	0/9/20	0/4/38	0/5/33	0/9/71	0/4/44	0/6/37	0/10/81
	✗	1/1/0	1/1/0	2/2/0	1/1/1	1/0/0	2/1/1	2/1/7	1/1/1	3/2/8
	abs	0/4/1	0/4/5	0/8/6	0/5/8	0/6/2	0/11/10	0/4/10	0/3/10	0/7/20

Table 10 shows how often apostrophes were used or misused in these ways by boys and girls awarded each grade in each year. Figure 9 illustrates the total number of correctly used apostrophes observed in the writing samples from each grade in each year and figure 10 portrays the combined numbers of incorrectly used and missing apostrophes. There was an enormous increase in apostrophe usage in 1993 and 1994 by comparison with 1980; largely concerned with the use of the apostrophe to denote abbreviation. Levels of plural and possessive usage in the recent years were much more like those of 1980, although F and G grade candidates (below the 1980 GCE grade range) frequently mis-used all three forms.

Figure 9: effective use of apostrophe

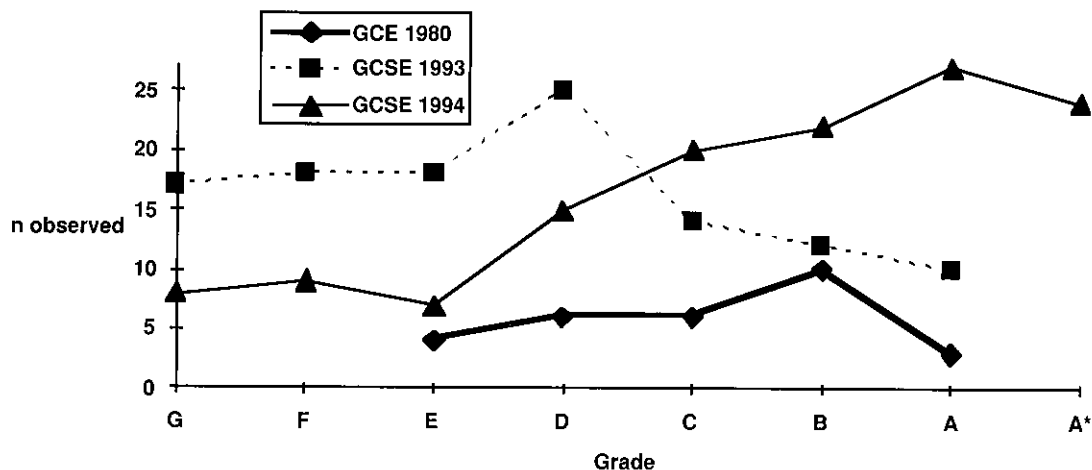
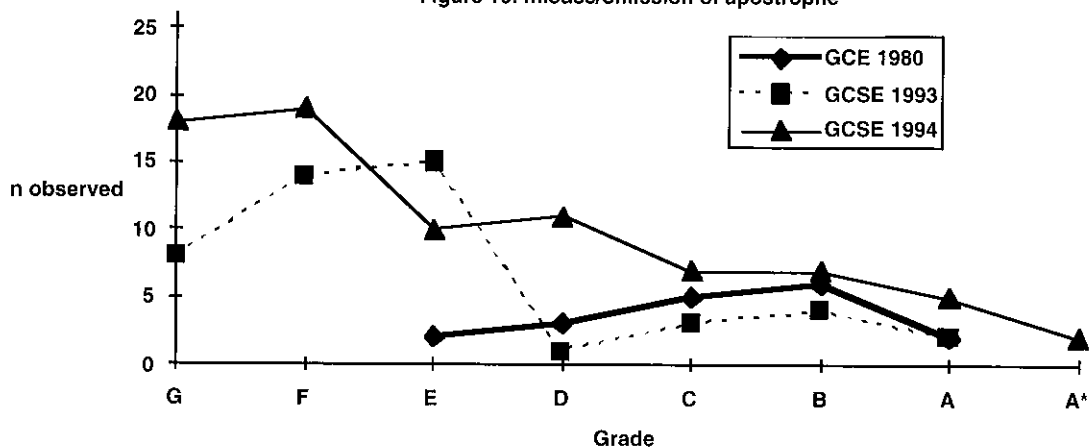


Figure 10: misuse/omission of apostrophe



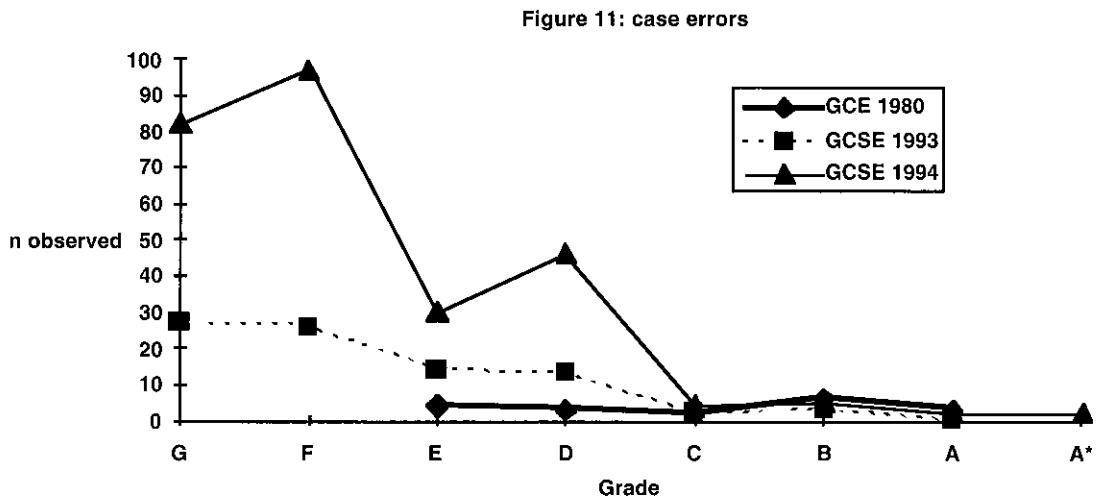
Juxtaposition of the two figures reveals striking contrasts between the years. In 1980 candidates in all grades were much less likely to use the apostrophe successfully than candidates from the more recent years. In 1993 lower graded (D-G) candidates were about four times more likely to use apostrophes effectively than their 1980 counterparts although abler pupils (grades A-C) were much less likely to do so and behaved more like GCE candidates of an earlier era. 1994's weaker pupils were no more likely to use the apostrophe correctly than were pupils in 1980 but abler pupils did so at a rate comparable with lower grades in 1993. This apparently confusing pattern is more easily understood when correct usage is set against misuse or omission. The candidates of 1980 were restrained in their use of the apostrophe: they made comparatively little use of it and consequently made few errors. However 1994's D-E grade candidates were four to five times more likely to misuse or omit the apostrophe than those obtaining the same grade in 1980 (and F-G candidates even more likely to make such mistakes), as were E-G grade candidates in 1993.

However abler pupils from 1993 and 1994 were not so error prone and were no more likely to make mistakes in the use of the apostrophe than their 1980 equivalents. Whilst 1993 A-D pupils' writing samples were a little less likely to include apostrophe errors than those of 1980, and 1994 A*-C pupils were marginally more likely to make such mistakes, at this end of the ability range the small differences between years in numbers of errors seem of little significance. Thus more recent able candidates (especially in 1994) made more use of the apostrophe and were no more likely than their more cautious counterparts of 1980 to make mistakes in so doing. Less able candidates were less good judges of their own capacity to use this punctuation device.

Case errors

The teacher judge's analysis of case errors is presented in table 11. This details (for each year and sex by grade) the numbers of candidates who did not provide an initial capital letter at the beginning of their 'sentence', those where capitals required for proper nouns were missing, and the incidence of unnecessary capitals. The table also includes the total numbers of case errors made by candidates of each sex in each year. Figure 11 compares the total numbers of case errors made by pupils from each grade.

In the 1980 writing sample candidates never failed to use an upper case letter to begin the new 'sentence', and this fault was also rare amongst candidates awarded higher grades in 1993 and 1994, although it was not uncommon in candidates awarded F or G. Failure to use capitals for proper nouns was also uncommon in 1980 (throughout the GCE A-E grade range) and in candidates graded A-C in 1993 and 1994. But candidates from the more recent years below this grade range made more mistakes of this sort and were also much more likely to use capital letters where they were not required. Overall, boys proved themselves more likely than girls to make case errors in all three years.



The comparison of the total numbers of case errors illustrated by figure 11 shows the much higher numbers of such mistakes detected in the work of 1993 and 1994 candidates below grade C. Above this threshold, candidates from the more recent years were broadly comparable to those of 1980. Below it, case errors abounded, especially in 1994 - when weaker candidates were about six times more likely to use capitals in the wrong place than their counterparts in 1993. This shift is at least as dramatic as that observed in spelling and might be explained in the same way.

Table 11 Case errors

		1980			1993			1994		
		boys	girls	all	boys	girls	all	boys	girls	all
A*	Initial capital							0	1	1
	Proper nouns							0	1	1
	Not required							0	0	0
	Total							0	2	2
A	Initial capital	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Proper nouns	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
	Not required	1	2	3	0	0	0	1	0	1
	Total	1	2	3	0	0	0	2	0	2
B	Initial capital	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0
	Proper nouns	1	0	1	1	0	1	0	0	0
	Not required	5	0	5	0	1	1	2	3	5
	Total	6	0	6	2	1	3	2	3	5
C	Initial capital	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0
	Proper nouns	0	0	0	1	0	1	1	1	2
	Not required	1	1	2	0	0	0	1	1	2
	Total	1	1	2	2	0	2	2	2	4
D	Initial capital	0	0	0	1	1	2	1	1	2
	Proper nouns	0	0	0	1	5	6	2	7	9
	Not required	2	1	3	1	4	5	19	16	35
	Total	2	1	3	3	10	13	22	24	46
E	Initial capital	0	0	0	2	0	2	0	0	0
	Proper nouns	1	0	1	6	1	7	4	4	8
	Not required	2	1	3	5	0	5	19	3	22
	Total	3	1	4	13	1	14	23	7	30
F	Initial capital				2	1	3	3	3	6
	Proper nouns				11	1	12	14	4	18
	Not required				6	5	11	39	34	73
	Total				19	7	26	56	41	97
G	Initial capital				8	4	12	1	2	3
	Proper nouns				3	3	6	12	2	14
	Not required				7	2	9	25	40	65
	Total				18	9	27	38	44	82
A-E	Initial capital	0	0	0	5	1	6	1	1	2
	Proper nouns	2	0	2	9	6	15	8	12	20
	Not required	11	5	16	6	5	11	42	23	65
	Total	13	5	18	20	12	32	51	36	87

Sentence type and construction

Type

The structure of the 'sentence' from each pupil was analysed by the teacher judge according to the classification below:

- Simple: One principal clause and no subsidiary clauses.
- Compound: Two or more principal clauses and no subsidiaries.
- Complex: One principal clause with one or more subsidiary clauses.
- Multiple¹: Two or more principal clauses with one or more subsidiaries.
- Other: Mostly 'sentences' lacking a verb and not classifiable.

¹ or compound/complex.

These are summarised in table 12, by sex and overall. Figures 12, 13 and 14 show the numbers of sentences of different types in 1980, 1993 and 1994 respectively to aid comparisons between years.

In the 1980 and 1993 writing samples the better candidates produced a higher proportion of complex sentences than in 1994, when abler candidates were rather more likely to produce simple or compound sentences. In 1993 and 1994 (especially the latter) weaker pupils (below grade C) were the most likely to produce multiple sentences, often as a result of run-on errors. But such year on year comparisons need also to consider the likelihood that sentences are correctly constructed, as described below.

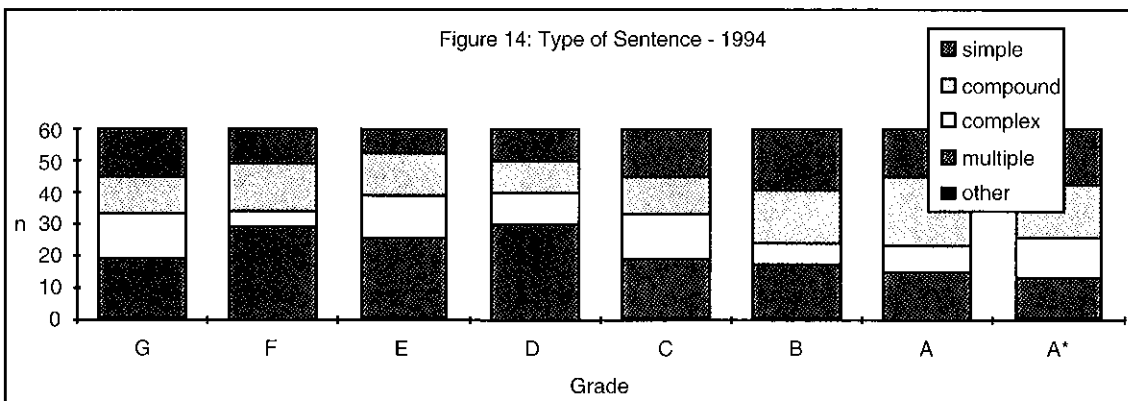
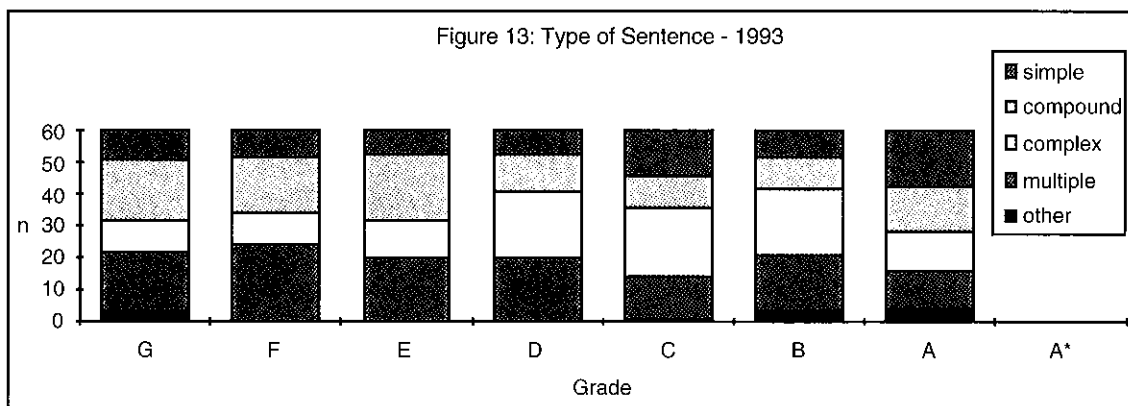
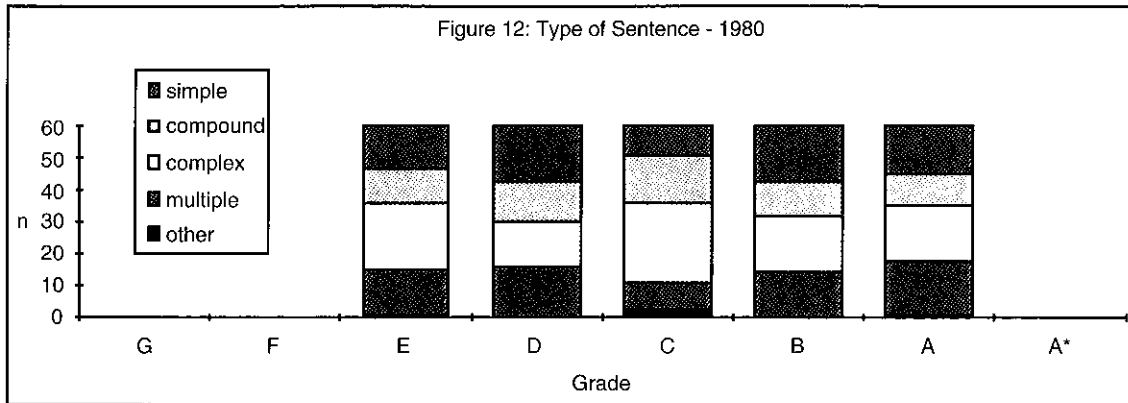


Table 12 Sentence construction (n / n judged adequately constructed)

	Type	1980			1993			1994		
		boys	girls	all	boys	girls	all	boys	girls	all
A*	simple							9/9	8/8	17/17
	compound							7/7	10/9	17/16
	complex							9/9	4/2	13/11
	multiple							5/5	7/7	12/12
	other								1/0	1/0
A	simple	7/5	8/7	15/12	11/8	6/6	17/14	10/10	5/5	15/15
	compound	3/2	7/7	10/9	4/2	11/11	15/13	9/7	13/13	22/20
	complex	12/12	6/6	18/18	8/3	4/3	12/6	4/4	4/3	8/7
	multiple	8/5	8/7	16/12	4/2	8/5	12/7	7/5	8/7	15/12
	other		1/0	1/0	3/0	1/0	4/0			
B	simple	6/6	11/11	17/17	6/5	2/2	8/7	10/10	9/8	19/18
	compound	5/3	6/4	11/7	6/5	4/1	10/6	7/7	10/6	17/13
	complex	14/11	4/4	18/15	11/8	10/9	21/17	6/6	1/1	7/7
	multiple	5/4	9/6	14/10	6/4	12/6	18/10	7/6	9/3	16/9
	other				1/0	2/0	3/0		1/0	1/0
C	simple	4/3	5/5	9/8	5/3	9/7	14/10	8/7	7/6	15/13
	compound	6/4	9/6	15/10	3/1	7/2	10/3	4/2	8/8	12/10
	complex	15/12	10/6	25/18	16/10	6/4	22/14	7/7	7/6	14/13
	multiple	4/3	5/3	9/6	5/2	8/1	13/3	10/5	8/6	18/11
	other	1/0	1/0	2/0	1/0		1/0	1/0		1/0
D	simple	9/7	8/5	17/12	3/1	4/4	7/5	3/2	7/7	10/9
	compound	9/2	4/4	13/6	6/2	6/1	12/3	7/3	3/2	10/5
	complex	5/3	9/8	14/11	10/8	11/7	21/15	6/3	4/4	10/7
	multiple	7/5	9/5	16/10	11/3	9/1	20/4	14/3	16/9	30/12
	other									
E	simple	8/5	5/4	13/9	4/4	3/2	7/6	3/2	4/3	7/5
	compound	5/2	6/3	11/5	10/2	11/3	21/5	6/4	8/1	14/5
	complex	11/7	10/5	21/12	4/3	8/4	12/7	7/6	6/4	13/10
	multiple	6/4	8/2	14/6	12/1	8/2	20/3	13/2	12/4	25/6
	other		1/0	1/0				1/0		1/0
F	simple				2/2	6/6	8/8	5/4	6/5	11/9
	compound				12/3	6/2	18/5	9/3	6/2	15/5
	complex				2/1	8/4	10/5	3/3	2/1	5/4
	multiple				14/2	10/2	24/4	13/3	16/4	29/7
	other									
G	simple				5/4	4/0	9/4	5/2	10/5	15/7
	compound				8/2	11/4	19/6	10/1	2/0	12/1
	complex				2/1	8/4	10/5	5/2	9/1	14/3
	multiple				13/1	6/1	19/2	9/2	9/1	18/3
	other				2/0	1/0	3/0	1/0		1/0
A-E	simple	34/26	37/32	71/58	29/21	24/21	53/42	34/31	32/29	66/60
totals	compound	28/13	32/24	60/37	29/12	39/18	68/30	33/23	42/30	75/53
	complex	57/45	39/29	96/74	49/32	39/27	88/59	30/26	22/18	52/44
	multiple	30/21	39/23	69/44	38/12	45/15	83/27	51/21	53/29	104/50
	other	1/0	3/0	4/0	5/0	3/0	8/0	2/0	1/0	3/0

Sentence construction

Candidates' capacity to construct grammatically acceptable sentences is of considerable interest. Following the classification of sentences into types, as described above, the teacher judged if each candidate's 'sentence' could be regarded as well constructed or not. Sentences were classed as badly constructed if they contained substantial errors of punctuation or syntax: for instance lack of agreement between subject and verb, or use of different tenses, or an incorrect relative pronoun etc. Well constructed in this context means only 'not badly constructed' or adequate in this respect. The judgements again gave the benefit of any doubt to the writers and in no sense was grammatical elegance a pre-requisite for a 'well constructed' verdict! These judgements too appear in table 12 and they are illustrated by figure 15.

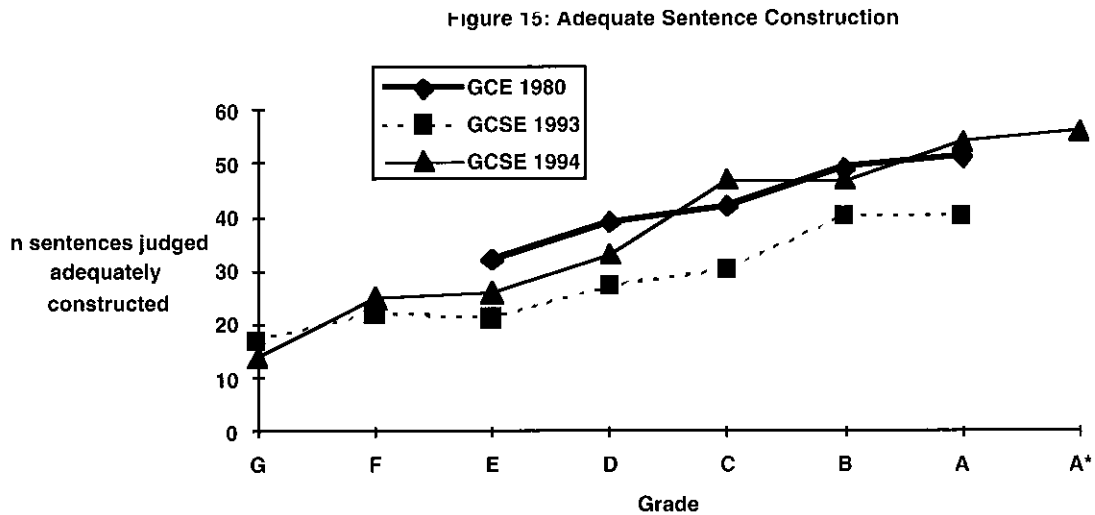


Figure 15 shows that 1993 appears the odd year out in terms of the number of sentences adjudged to be adequately constructed. Fewer of the sentences produced by 1993's pupils were adequate than those from equivalent grades in 1980 or 1994 (except for the very lowest grades). 1980 and 1994 were quite similar in this respect; the most noticeable difference being in grades D and E, where 1994's candidates produced greater numbers of poorly constructed multiple sentences.

If we consider the widest range of equivalent grades for which comparisons between all three years are possible (A-E, further summarised in table 13) only 53% of all writing samples were deemed adequately constructed in 1993, as compared with 71% in 1980 and 69% in 1994. But with respect to the balance between different types of sentences the pattern in 1993 was more like 1980 than 1994, as in the latter year simple or compound sentences (as compared with the complex or multiple) formed a higher proportion of the total than in the other two studied. However this does not explain weak sentence construction in 1993, as even simple/compound sentences produced then were less likely to be well constructed than those produced in 1980 or 1994. 1994's candidates achieved most success in constructing simple or compound sentences but they were less capable of constructing complex/multiple sentences than 1980's pupils.

The confusion concerning 1993 may be resolved by the detail in table 12, which suggests that many abler candidates (notably in grades A and C) in 1993 may have resembled those from 1994 in tending to use rather more simple or compound sentences than candidates in 1980. However 1993's D and E candidates' writing samples include more poorly constructed multiple sentences (although not quite as many as their equivalents in 1994). Thus the sentence types and

construction of abler candidates in 1993 also resembled those from 1980, whilst weaker 1993 candidates were more akin to their fellows in 1994.

Overall boys and girls were about equally successful in sentence construction in each of the years studied. There were however small (but consistent) differences between the sexes in the types of sentences each used. In each of these three years boys produced rather fewer simple or compound sentences than girls and rather more of the complex or multiple forms (see table 13).

Table 13 Summary of sentence types and adequacy of construction for grades A-E (cells contain n observed and % of these judged adequately constructed)

Sentence Types	1980			1993			1994		
	boys	girls	total	boys	girls	total	boys	girls	total
simple & compound	62	69	131	58	63	121	67	74	141
	63%	81%	73%	57%	62%	60%	81%	80%	80%
complex & multiple	87	78	165	87	84	171	81	75	156
	76%	67%	72%	51%	50%	50%	58%	63%	60%
all	150	150	300	150	150	300	150	150	300
(inc other)	70%	72%	71%	51%	54%	53%	67%	71%	69%

Effective communication

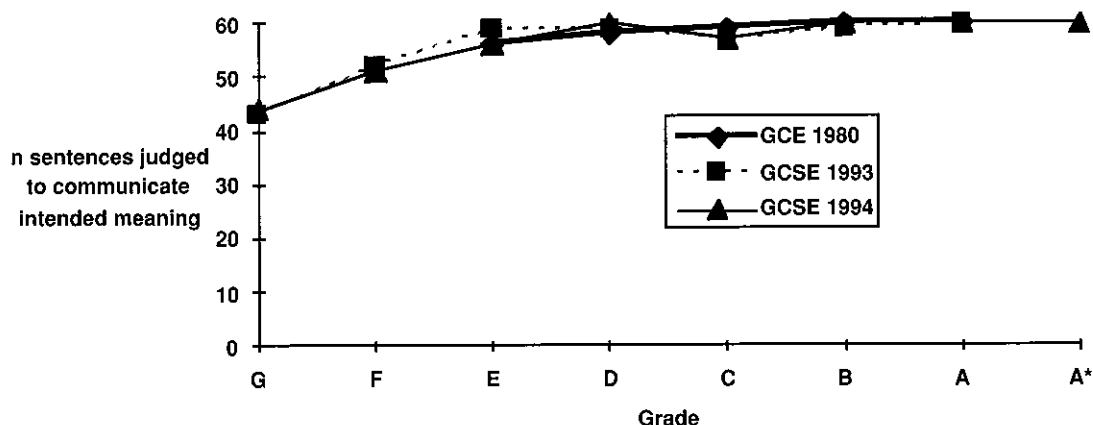
The teacher/judge was also asked to reach an overall judgement about the effectiveness of each 'sentence' in communicating its meaning. Did the intended meaning come across in spite of poor punctuation, spelling or grammar? These verdicts are summarised in table 14, which gives the numbers of boys and girls awarded each grade in each year judged to have failed to communicate their intended meaning. Figure 16 presents the same information in a positive light.

Table 14 No of sentences failing to communicate meaning effectively

	1980			1993			1994		
	boys	girls	all	boys	girls	all	boys	girls	all
A*							0	0	0
A	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
B	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0
C	1	0	1	1	2	3	2	1	3
D	1	1	2	0	1	1	0	0	0
E	0	4	4	1	0	1	3	1	4
F				3	5	8	5	4	9
G				9	8	17	4	12	16
A-E	2	5	7	2	4	6	5	2	7

Despite the indications above that the writing samples for 1993 contained rather more grammatical errors than those in either 1980 or 1994 it would seem that they were no less effective in getting their message across. Figure 16 shows that high (and very similar) proportions of candidates are judged successful in this respect each year. It is only in GCSE's grades F and G that appreciable numbers fail to do so.

Figure16: Effective Communication



Non-Standard English

Children's use of spoken Standard English was investigated by Hudson and Holmes (1995), who expressed the view that whilst some judgements concerning the boundary between Standard Spoken English (SSE) and Non-Standard English (NSE) were inevitably subjective, most could be made with some confidence. Hudson and Holmes employed three general principles to govern decisions. The first, dismissing accent, is of no relevance in the context of this study of pupils' writing. The second - that SSE need not be formal - seems to apply equally to evaluation of writing as varied as that encountered in 16+ examinations. Their third principle - that SSE is constantly being redefined, especially by young people - is also important when judging writing if spontaneity and the use of contemporary language is not to be penalised. However it is the researchers' view that some expressions which may be not uncommon in SSE would be regarded by most people as NSE when written rather than spoken. A good example here (quoted by Hudson and Holmes as a borderline case in SSE) is the use of the verb 'go' to mean 'say', as in 'she goes to him "....."', a form especially common amongst young people. Hudson and Holmes listed 13 NSE forms from speech samples from four regions of England, together with a further 16 regional NSE forms they had encountered. The analysis of NSE in our writing samples reported below employed the same categories of NSE forms as Hudson and Holmes, supplemented by some which Hudson and Holmes appear not to have encountered (or perhaps *identified* in their *spoken* language samples) or which may be more likely to be regarded as NSE in writing than speech. Following the example of Hudson and Holmes we have listed all categories of NSE used and provided an example of each form encountered as its label (see table 15), so that readers may evaluate these decisions for themselves.

All instances of the use of NSE in the writing samples (except for any which appeared to be reported speech, where the use of NSE forms might well be intentional) were noted. This is not to say that the use of NSE was inappropriate in all (or indeed any) such cases. Such decisions are necessarily subjective and the lack of context for these writing samples makes it impossible to reach soundly based judgements of this nature. It must also be understood that this analysis was not an attempt to identify all colloquial or other informal language, of which there were many examples (for instance 'big flash houses' (1994 D boy); '.. teachers were one hell of a miserable ..' (1993 F boy); '.. in towns and such like ..' (1980 C girl)).

Table 15 Non-Standard English forms (number of instances encountered)

	1980	1993	1994	total
<i>NSE forms cited by Hudson & Holmes (1995)*</i>				
have <i>fell</i> (NSE past participles, typically SSE past tense forms)		1	3	4
she <i>come</i> (reverses above - NSE past tense = SSE past participle)		3		3
there <i>is</i> two (<i>is</i> with <i>there</i> & a following plural)	2		2	4
things <i>what</i> (for SSE <i>that</i>)	1	1	2	4
<i>not</i> <i>no</i> (double negatives)		2	2	4
they <i>was</i> (<i>was</i> with a plural subject)		2	1	3
<i>me and him</i> went (<i>me, him, her, us, them</i> in compound subjects)		3	1	4
<i>dead good</i> (for SSE <i>very</i>)		1		1
Additional NSE forms encountered in these writing samples				
<i>real</i> keen (for SSE <i>really</i>)	1			1
<i>may of</i> disliked (for SSE <i>have</i>)		3	3	6
a <i>load of</i> (for SSE <i>lot</i>)		3	2	5
<i>funny</i> enough (for SSE <i>funnily</i>)		1		1
<i>that</i> had (for SSE <i>who</i> or <i>which</i>)			4	4
<i>like</i> usual (for SSE <i>as</i>)			3	3
<i>make</i> through (for SSE <i>go</i>)			1	1
in <i>someways</i> (for SSE <i>some way</i>)			1	1
she <i>goes</i> (for SSE <i>says</i> or <i>said</i>)			1	1
All	4	20	24	48

* Note that the remaining 21 NSE forms listed by Hudson & Holmes (1995) were not encountered here

How frequently should we expect to see NSE forms in 16+ examination scripts? We might expect them to be much less common in this written corpus of language than in the speech samples analysed by Hudson and Holmes (where 77% of 15 year olds used some NSE forms during a few minutes of speech). NSE is less likely to be appropriate in writing, especially for an external examination. In practice NSE forms were quite rare: examples were found in only 48 of our 1,200 sentences (4%) across the three years studied. Many of the NSE forms noted by Hudson and Holmes did not appear at all in this body of writing (including all but one of those confined to particular regions) but a small number of additional NSE forms were detected. Table 15 shows the frequency of each NSE form in each of the three years. NSE was even rarer in 1980 than in the two later years, although comparisons are somewhat exaggerated by the larger samples in 1993 and 1994 (because of the wider ranges of grades awarded then).

Despite such caveats, the analysis does enable us to see if the likelihood of NSE forms occurring is greater, grade for grade, in one year as opposed to another. Table 16 and Figure 17 summarise the data for this purpose.

Whilst these data are limited they would seem to suggest that girls are rather less likely than boys to use NSE forms in their writing (as Hudson & Holmes found in speech), although they were by no means immune.

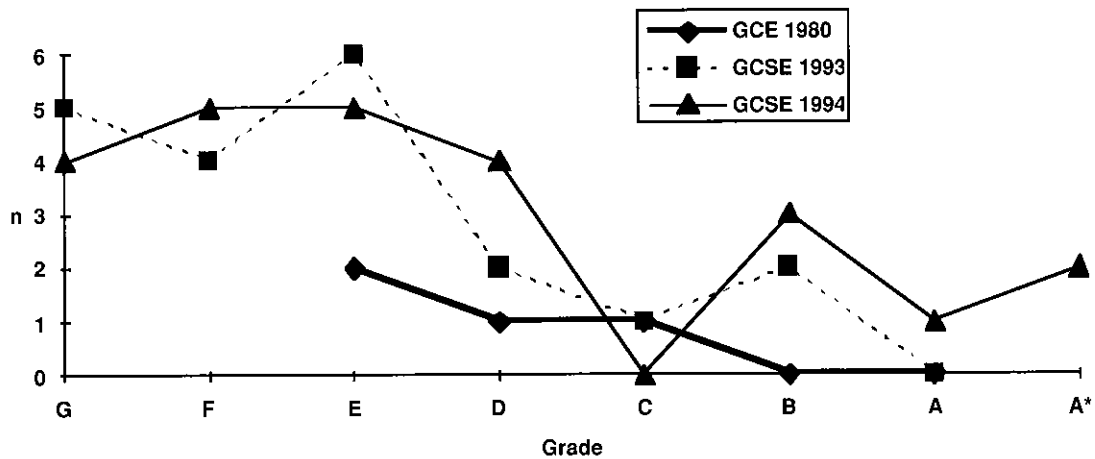
Weaker pupils were more prone to use NSE forms in all three years, although grade D-E candidates in 1980 were noticeably less likely to do so than those of 1993 and 1994. Abler candidates in 1993 and 1994 were also rather more likely to use NSE forms than those awarded equivalent grades in 1980.

Our subjective impression was that the use of NSE in different grades/years roughly matched the tendency to use colloquial or other informal language.

Table 16 Incidence of Non-Standard English forms

		G	F	E	D	C	B	A	A*	A-E	total
1980	boys			1	1	0	0	0		2	2
1980	girls			1	0	1	0	0		2	2
1980	total			2	1	1	0	0		4	4
1993	boys	2	3	3	1	1	2	0		7	12
1993	girls	3	1	3	1	0	0	0		4	8
1993	total	5	4	6	2	1	2	0		11	20
1994	boys	2	3	3	3	0	1	1	2	8	15
1994	girls	2	2	2	1	0	2	0	0	5	9
1994	total	4	5	5	4	0	3	1	2	13	24

Figure 17: Non-Standard English Forms



Error-free sentences

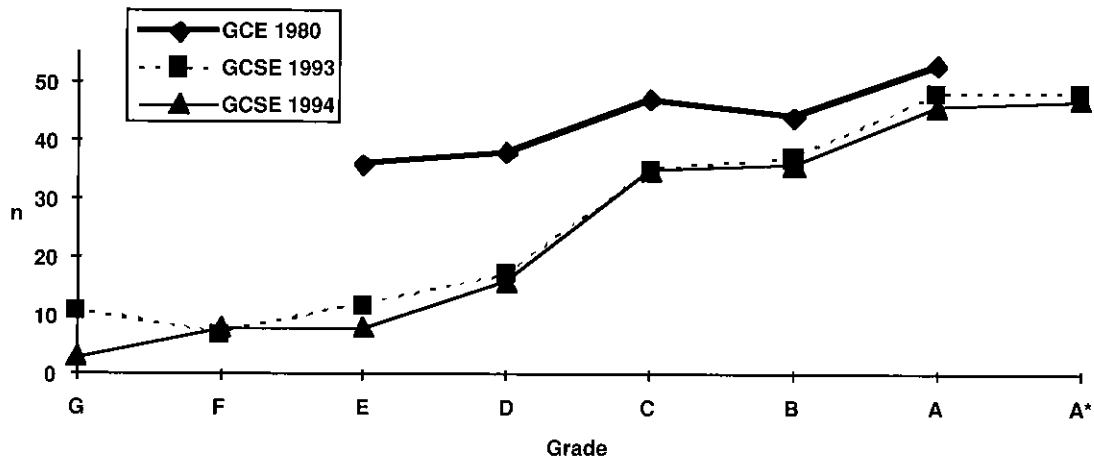
To provide a single overall indicator of accurate writing, those sentences which appeared completely error free were identified by one of the researchers. This perhaps serves to summarise the overall impression of candidates' mechanical writing skills obtained by inspecting the writing samples (although it cannot reflect the multiple errors often found in the samples from lower graded candidates). Whilst it takes no account of other qualities in pupils' work, might this be the kind of criterion the 'man in the street' would use?

Table 17 shows the numbers of error free sentences produced by boys and girls awarded each grade in each year and figure 18 summarises the comparisons between years. All other things being equal, it is hard to resist the conclusion that candidates awarded any given grade in 1980 were more capable of producing accurate writing than those from 1993 or 1994 (which seem remarkably alike on this overall yardstick).

Table 17 Number of error-free sentences

		<i>G</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>E</i>	<i>D</i>	<i>C</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>A</i>	<i>A*</i>	<i>A-E</i>
1980	boys			16	19	22	22	24		103 (69%)
1980	girls			20	19	25	22	29		115 (77%)
1980	total			36	38	47	44	53		218 (73%)
1993	boys	5	2	7	5	17	19	23		71 (47%)
1993	girls	6	5	5	12	18	18	25		78 (52%)
1993	total	11	7	12	17	35	37	48		149 (50%)
1994	boys	1	3	4	6	16	21	23	21	70 (47%)
1994	girls	2	5	4	10	19	15	23	26	71 (47%)
1994	total	3	8	8	16	35	36	46	47	141 (47%)

Figure 18: Error-Free Sentences



Might direct comparisons be biased?

How fair is it to assume that all things are equal and to make these direct comparisons between writing samples from the three years? Are there reasons why pupils may have been likely to write in different ways in the writing samples taken from examinations set in different years or to have been more or less prone to make mistakes? Are there any good reasons why it might *not be fair* to expect pupils from different years to achieve the same levels of writing skill? When one aspect of achievement (however crucial) in a subject is used to monitor standards, the possibility that it may be less relevant to, or biased against, one curricular setting or another must be considered before reaching any conclusions (Newbould and Massey, 1979).

Varying tasks

How far differences between the writing samples might stem from differences in the tasks set is a moot point. Certainly candidates' choice of questions and how to answer them in 1993 and 1994 allowed many to write a personal response, where dialogue and direct and less formal language may have been more natural. But they were not forced to do so. The questions set in 1993 and 1994 asked candidates to develop their own writing from the platform offered by the extensive stimulus materials available but allowed for a wide range of responses if candidates wished. Two (perhaps three) of the five composition titles set in 1980 largely precluded dialogue and informality.

Whilst it was not always clear from a single sentence which questions pupils were answering or what the purpose behind their writing might be, it was often possible to gain an impression of such things. Overall it did appear that candidates in 1993 and 1994 were more likely than those of 1980 to have been writing in narrative or dialogue forms and less likely to have been concerned to discuss issues or present an argument or write descriptively. But these were general tendencies only and there were many sentences in all three years which were clearly part of dialogue or description or the development of an argument.

Varying perceptions of good writing

The questions were not the only reason why pupils' responses might vary. Candidates were prepared for their examinations by teachers working within the cultural climate prevailing in their schools at the time. Both factors may have considerable influence on how candidates perceive the tasks set. For instance, could there have been changes in the kinds of writing schools would value and/or expect the examiners to reward with high marks? Has there been increasing emphasis on clear, concise writing and on the fitness of language for its purpose and audience in recent years? Is it possible that teachers may have been more likely to encourage pupils to try to impress the examiners with long words and complicated prose in 1980 than in 1994?

Our evidence that in 1994 abler candidates tended to use rather shorter sentences, simpler grammatical structures and to be less likely to employ vocabulary beyond the commonplace, might support such notions. More subjectively, our impression is that although some sentences from each year's sample seemed stilted or forced, with words where the meaning or tone did not quite fit, the 1994 writing sample probably suffered least of all from this because of the pupils' simpler language. On balance it does seem possible that 1994's candidates may on the whole have been least inclined to view their writing (in the parts of the examination sampled) as a showcase for their vocabulary and grammatical range, with 1980's candidates perhaps the most likely to do so.

It seems unlikely that 1994's candidates would have been tempted to use more complex language elsewhere in these examinations, as we took our writing samples from the questions where candidates were most free to extend themselves - although they may have been asked to show off their paces in coursework assignments. Keeping writing simple has many virtues, but we should recognise that whether or not the more recent candidates could have displayed a wider vocabulary, if they had been challenged to do so, remains uncertain.

We must therefore concede that it is possible that some combination of the question papers and the prevailing view in schools of what comprises good writing might have contributed to a tendency to use simpler sentences and hence the less extensive vocabularies displayed in 1994. But there is another side to this coin. It is difficult to see why candidates who used simpler forms should not be expected to display at *least* the same levels of accuracy as those who were more ambitious. Yet there is no real doubt that, grade for grade, 1994's candidates often compare poorly with those of 1980 in this respect.

Varying styles

Question papers and candidates' ambitions may make a difference but the influence of the general cultural climate in schools and elsewhere is also powerful. The changing patterns between years, evident in these data, provide clues suggesting differences between the writing samples which may be of wide significance. For instance the shorter sentences found in the more recent years, together with the explosion in the use of the apostrophe observed, may well reflect a rather less formal *style* of GCSE pupils' writing in more recent years. Less formal writing is often more likely to *need* the apostrophe, particularly for abbreviation and perhaps today's pupils (and perhaps also their teachers and examiners) feel that contractions have now become acceptable in written communication. Better pupils were able to use apostrophes successfully, (especially in 1994; 1993's abler candidates seem to have behaved not unlike those of 1980) whilst weaker candidates displayed less caution and consequently made more mistakes. The suggestion that the use of NSE increased in recent years provides additional confirmation. Readers' impressions of differences in style are inevitably very subjective, but in our view this trend seems clear.

This change in style across the years, evident throughout the range of grades, may also help account for the differences relating to sentence structure, being reflected in the shorter, simpler sentences produced by able candidates in both 1993 and 1994. But whilst some pupils' writing was admirably direct in 1993 and 1994, many more (than in 1980) candidates from these years seemed to write in registers close to those more appropriate to speech. Language which merited classification as NSE may have been a very small proportion of the total, but phrases which the examiners of 1980 might well have regarded as beyond the examination's pale were much more common in 1993 and 1994. This may often have been unwise - as the Examiners' report on candidates' work for 1994 noted.

The longer average sentence length for less able pupils in the two more recent years does not contradict this view. It was clearly a result of poor punctuation: most of these longer sentences were a series of short ones end to end. Poor sentence construction of this sort was more common at grades D and E, and even at C, in 1993 and 1994. The briefest inspection of the writing samples confirms that informality was very common in writing from candidates awarded the lower grades.

This is not to suggest that greater informality is always a bad thing or vice versa. Some of the more formal writing from all three years - most noticeably 1980 - was somewhat forced. What really matters is how well the pupils bring off their chosen approach and how well they can vary their style to meet different demands, which we cannot assess.

The various influences on pupils' writing are inter-linked. Thus candidates who are more at home with a less formal style may well be likely to see or take strategies for responding to questions which would exploit their strengths. The 1993 and 1994 examinations left candidates fairly free to do so. If anything, there is probably less evidence of range of purpose within the writing samples from 1993 and 1994 than from 1980. But we have no sure means of knowing just how well any of the candidates would have coped with a different task.

Varying syllabus contexts

Changes in syllabus content are at the heart of any discussion about whether or not we should expect candidates in different years (and thus prepared for different syllabuses) to write equally well at all. Such matters are never easy to judge. Our review of these examinations showed how they have reflected (and/or influenced) the teaching of English over the years. Thus in 1980 the syllabus examined made no reference to literature or speech. In 1993 30% of the marks in English were allocated to responses to literary texts and a (separate) assessment of oral skills was introduced and by 1994 speaking and listening were examined alongside response to literature and contributed to an overall grade in English. If the curriculum is wider it may make more demands upon the teaching time available. And if candidates are being asked to show a broader range of skills should we not, in fairness, expect them to be rather less capable in each area than hitherto?

What of the ways in which question papers themselves extend the syllabus? In 1980 the stimulus materials appeared dry, historical and rather lacking in human interest and relevance to the experience of 16+ pupils. The style of the 1993 papers represented a dramatic change by comparison, including much more extensive stimulus material designed to relate more closely to students' own experiences (although not everyone would agree they succeeded). For 1994 the style of the question papers developed along similar lines to 1993, in a continued effort to make the examination accessible to the widest possible range of pupils. The quantity of reading is itself an issue, although it is difficult to argue that an increase in the stimuli available to support writing might lead us to expect anything but improved quality. We should remember too that pupils are given some of the materials to digest well before the day of the examination. There seems no reason why more recent question papers, designed to be more accessible, were likely to make candidates write less well on the whole - although we have already discussed how they may have influenced what is written and how.

The range of writing and the issues which must be handled in different years could be an important issue. Today's teachers of English might well argue that contemporary syllabuses place greater stress than those of 1980 on writing for a range of purposes, contexts and audiences and that work in the classroom reflects this and is also assessed - via coursework. They might further claim that they have spent valuable classroom time discussing and writing about contentious issues. But a representative from 1980 might argue that "twas ever thus" and that syllabus changes only made existing practice explicit. Indeed he or she could even argue that a reverse effect was more likely. The 1980 examination paper asked pupils to tackle materials, issues and styles of communication clearly outside their personal range of experience, whereas more recent

papers avoided them to maximise accessibility and relevance. Moreover it is difficult to be sure of the range of coursework in every school. In 1994, coursework writing counted for only 10% of total marks - not a very powerful incentive to teachers to emphasise it.

What of the influence of the national curriculum? On balance, any changes in emphasis wrought by this would seem likely to favour writing as examined at 16+ and reinforce the criteria for comparisons we have used, including spelling, handwriting, presentation and Standard English. It is difficult to imagine how it might have made 1994's pupils less well prepared for the tasks forming the basis for our analyses and so biased comparisons against them.

But has so much changed after all? Even literature and speaking and listening may be red herrings. English teachers have always taught literature alongside language and most pupils taking GCE in 1980 would have been examined in English Literature as well as English Language. Arguably (if unlikely), some GCSE pupils examined in 1993 and 1994 may have spent less time addressing set texts than their predecessors taking GCE and so had more available in which to hone their writing skills as the national curriculum suggests they should. In 1980 teachers were free of the burdens inherent in assessing speaking but did the English classrooms of those days neglect the development of speech - or did teachers (like Robson, *op.cit.*) always regard it as a skill to be encouraged and acquired naturally and alongside others? Perhaps syllabus revision's influence should not be over-estimated. Caperon (*op.cit.*) argued that English is 'what happens when teachers and pupils meet for what the school timetable calls English; and, what goes on is determined more by the outlook of the teacher, the resources and the response of the pupils, than by any single influence external to the encounter'. His view was that GCSE 'encourages the view that our best work will be enhanced and some of our more idiosyncratic weaknesses will be curbed'. The average English classroom may thus have changed less over these years than some might suggest.

We should also see English at 16+ in its wider context. It follows eleven years of schooling throughout which the quality of pupils' writing has been a central focus. The English teachers responsible for a few hours of weekly preparation during a two year GCSE course can have made only a minor contribution to the quality of their pupils' prose, whatever their curricular emphases - even though they may well carry the can if things go badly! GCSE syllabus changes loom less large on this broader canvas.

Our view is that our comparisons of writing in different years may not be entirely unfair. On balance, changes in the curriculum and assessment seem to us to provide no good reason why we should expect pupils to write less accurately than they used to. But others may disagree; perhaps arguing that today's pupils have spent more of their time developing other qualities in their writing (or other aspects of English) which may both cause and compensate for reduced accuracy. Such conflicting views cannot be resolved with any certainty.

Conclusions

Methodology

This study goes some way towards establishing the feasibility of some quantitative approaches to the analysis of atomistic writing samples (taken from the work of substantial numbers of pupils) from English examinations set in different years. Accuracy and other features of writing provided a means of informing comparisons of grading standards. The analyses discriminated between groups of pupils who achieved different grades, and between those examined in different years, in ways which are consistent and interpretable and so encourage confidence in the methods used. The various criteria provided a joint basis for comparisons, which must therefore weigh and balance the different strands of the evidence. The approach developed could be applied to other aspects of comparability; notably comparisons between standards set in different syllabuses or across examining groups.

But the method's limitations must be acknowledged. Deconstructing writing in this way leads to comparisons which are very different from the judgements which examiners would make and cannot accommodate the ways in which the whole can sometimes be so much more than the sum of its parts. Our comparisons are largely limited to accuracy, together with some limited insights into differences in style, although there are many other important determinants of good writing: structure, sense of audience and content for instance. The examiner's rounded judgements must encompass and balance all these and more.

Suitable archives of scripts from past years would be a pre-requisite for work of this wider nature but even if these were available such judgements would remain bedevilled by changes in the curriculum and in our value systems, which will be likely to have greater effects as the time interval investigated increases.

The examples of these inherent difficulties in longitudinal comparisons this study provides are a further strand of methodological interest. It amply illustrates the difficulty of making comparisons when curriculum change has altered the relative emphasis on aspects of achievement in a subject over the years. The range of courses of study and the emphasis teachers place on particular topics or skills varies over time, as do the extent to which they are 'valued' in assessment, schools and our culture. These three syllabuses reflect the path of curriculum change in English at 16+ between 1980 and 1994. If such factors complicate longitudinal comparisons in English they are likely to be an even greater obstacle in many other subjects; especially where key features of candidates' responses are largely determined by the content of the questions asked and/or there have been fundamental changes of approach within a discipline.

Gender

Exploring differences between the writing of boys and girls was not our prime aim but the data proved interesting. Boys and girls were matched for grade in our sample and should therefore be of approximately equal ability, but there are various ways in which the girls and boys awarded any given grade could achieve the same overall.

- Boys tended to use a slightly richer vocabulary than girls in all three years and were marginally more ambitious in their use of grammatical structures, being a little more likely to use complex or multiple forms rather than simple or compound sentences.

- The sexes were equally likely to have used their chosen grammatical forms correctly
- Girls were less likely to have made spelling mistakes than boys. They were also less likely than boys to have committed run-on errors by failing to use a full stop when one was required or to make case errors, but were no better or worse where other forms of punctuation were concerned. Girls were also less prone than boys to use Non-Standard English forms.

Comparing 1980 with 1993/1994

Grade for grade comparisons between writing samples from different years suggested

- that the candidates of 1980 tended to use the most adventurous vocabulary and sentence structures.
- Despite this they were just as likely to be judged grammatically adequate as those of 1994 and made less than half the number of spelling mistakes.
- Abler candidates (graded A-C) in 1980 were also at least as good at punctuation as their counterparts in 1994 and those graded D-E in 1980 were much better.
- Using the numbers of sentences wholly free of errors as an overall criterion, confirmed that in 1980 abler candidates were consistently better than those awarded equivalent grades in 1993 and 1994 and that the gap between the years was greater still for candidates graded D or E.
- In some respects the candidates awarded D and E grades in 1980 seemed not unlike many of those reaching C and above in more recent years, but the choice between GCE and CSE entry available in 1980 may have given rise to selection effects which exaggerate differences between the years in these lower grades. In 1980 many pupils who did not enter the GCE examination would have achieved CSE grades 2 and 3, which were ostensibly equivalent to grades D and E. Pupils may have been selected for entry to GCE because they could write accurately and without equivalent data we have no means of knowing how CSE candidates in this grade range compared.
- Non-Standard English forms were found in only a small proportion of the writing but were much more common in 1993 and 1994 than in 1980.
- There are other objective indicators which also point to a substantial change in writing styles over the years studied. For instance the explosion in the use (and misuse) of the apostrophe in 1993 and 1994, especially for abbreviation, suggests that many of today's pupils used a less formal style than was common a decade earlier. Subjective impressions strongly confirm this. This feature of the writing samples may also contribute to the differences noted in vocabulary and sentence construction.
- The weight of evidence does suggest that candidates awarded a given GCE grade in 1980 were more capable of writing accurately than their counterparts in 1994. But there can be no assurance that this would also hold for the many (potentially compensating) qualities of writing which we were unable to assess in this study (eg content, structure and stylistic qualities).
- We therefore lack sufficient empirical evidence to conclude safely that, overall, writing in 1980 was better, grade for grade, or that grading standards (which involve further judgements about reading, speaking etc.) have changed.

Comparing 1993 with 1994

Comparisons between 1993 and 1994 are mixed.

- In some analyses the data for 1993 appear to occupy an intermediate position between that of 1980 and 1994 - for instance the quality of vocabulary and spelling; grammatical structures; and the incidence of Non-Standard English. Abler candidates (grades A-C) in 1993 were perhaps rather more like those of 1980 than 1994 in these respects, although this was not true of candidates graded D or E.
- However 1993's candidates appeared relatively weak at some aspects of punctuation, including all stops; which may largely explain why their grammar was least likely to be judged adequate. The picture here was not wholly consistent. Weaker candidates from 1993 were much less likely to make case errors than their equivalents in 1994 and whilst they used the apostrophe about as often (reflecting the same shift towards informality), they were more likely to use it correctly. Abler candidates avoided the apostrophe in 1993, much as they did in 1980.
- Some differences between 1993 and 1994 merit special attention. Spelling and case errors in particular were markedly worse in 1994 than for equivalent grades in MEG's examination option in 1993. But we have noted that Scheme 1's examination candidates were an untypical minority in 1993 and suggested that the inclusion of schools which formerly used the 100% coursework option might explain the change in patterns observed. Because of the weight of numbers formerly assessed via coursework, the experience of many 1994 examiners may also have been grounded in this approach, perhaps making them less sensitive to some of the differences we have detected.
- Even acknowledging such important differences, these empirical comparisons do not allow us to conclude that grading standards varied between the examination option in 1993 and the 1994 examination (or between examination and coursework options in 1993 - regarding which we have no evidence), for two reasons. Some features of our 1994 writing samples compared favourably with those of 1993, so that overall, even though some important features of 1994's writing samples compared badly, the number of wholly correct sentences were much the same in both years. And even if we could agree that writing was less accurate in 1994, grade for grade, it remains possible that other qualities of writing or other aspects of candidates work in English could have compensated for the differences observed. What is emphasised and valued by teachers and examiners can, quite legitimately, include some variety. Examiners have always allowed for such compensation in individual cases and systematic variation between groups of pupils prepared for different assessment regimes in different years seems not unlikely.

Are these comparisons fair?

Differences between the three examinations, which reflect changing times, must be considered in any evaluation of grading standards because they could make direct comparisons of the quality of writing unfair. The key question is this: are 1994's candidates more likely than 1980's to have demonstrated other writing skills (e.g. imaginative content; structure; style; sense of audience) or to be better at other facets of English (e.g. reading or speaking) to compensate for their lower levels of accuracy?

We have reviewed the three syllabuses and considered various possible reasons why direct comparisons of writing might be biased. Changing styles of question papers, allied with pupils' perceptions of what teachers and examiners are likely to value, may well have had some influence on vocabulary and sentence structure and writing styles. If today's candidates have

learned to practise the virtues of simplicity it may explain why they write shorter sentences and use a plainer vocabulary than those of 1980, when candidates may have been more inclined to test the limits of their vocabulary and power of sentence construction.

But these factors cannot explain why candidates in 1994 are so much less accurate than their predecessors, especially in spelling. If anything their simpler prose ought to have given them an advantage in this respect, as should the quantity of stimulus materials available to them. Neither did 1994's candidates seem to have been forced (at least not in these examination tasks) into registers with which they were unfamiliar. Yet again, if there were any bias of this sort against any year in particular, it may have been 1980, when candidates were most likely to be writing outside their own experience. Evidence that more recent candidates are more capable over a range of writing purposes or styles or audiences, or more sensitive, or more balanced in their views, is thus hard to come by, but these possibilities cannot be excluded.

The inclusion of response to literature and speaking and listening in the syllabuses examined in 1993 and 1994 might at first seem to widen the demands on candidates' preparation time. But our conclusion is that this may be more apparent than real, especially when 16+ courses are set in the context of the development of language skills throughout a child's schooling. It is also very hard to see the national curriculum's influence on the 1994 examination as anything but reinforcing the importance of the aspects of writing skills we have focused upon. We find it difficult to see how our comparisons could be seen as biased against the more recent years, and so explain away the lower levels of accuracy and the variations in vocabulary, grammatical structures and other features of writing observed.

Should 16+ grades have improved since 1980?

Let us turn to a different question. Should we have expected the proportions of pupils entering and succeeding in examinations to have remained constant in recent years rather than increasing as they have? Murphy (1993) points out that the down turn in the birth rate during the late 1960's and 1970's was absent in families from social classes I and II. Consequently, by 1993 these formed an increasing proportion of school leavers. As such pupils tend to achieve relatively high school examination grades, Murphy suggests that the improved GCSE success rates between 1987 and 1993 may thus be justified by demographic changes as well as the 'broad and imaginative GCSE syllabuses' and the positive achievements of pupils and their teachers.

But Murphy's conclusions were reached without any recourse to evidence of the quality of pupils' work. On the other hand APU national monitoring studies amongst 15 year olds suggest that standards of spelling, writing or reading in schools remained largely unchanged between 1980 and the early 1990s. If standards of writing (and reading and spelling) in schools were stable, the improvement in grades which has taken place over the years in question means that the writing of pupils awarded a given grade is now likely to be worse, on average. This appears to be the case for many of the features we have investigated and our findings are thus consistent with the APU's suggestion that, overall, the quality of writing in secondary schools has changed little.

All in all

Whether grading standards in English have declined remains a matter for debate. Interpretations of our data are inevitably influenced by opinions about what these syllabuses and examinations demanded and what the examiners valued (or should have valued) most, as well as assertions about other (uninvestigated) qualities candidates from different years might have possessed.

Although we have identified important differences in the writing samples from 1993 and 1994 it would certainly be unsafe to conclude that grading standards declined in the course of the major curricular shift between these years. The longer term comparisons perhaps point towards lower grading standards in English at 16+ in 1994 than in 1980, but we lack the means to demonstrate this conclusively, as is likely to be the case in any investigation of longitudinal comparability. The scope of our evidence is limited and all other things may not be as equal as we must assume in reaching any such view. Any interested parties must decide for themselves what inferences they are willing to make on the basis of evidence like this.

Looking forwards

Here we move beyond the conclusions we can justify from our data to consider the likelihood that some of the challenges English examiners have recently faced may well recur. The prevailing social/ educational culture will surely continue to change and English examiners (and others) will again face divergent views on the qualities they should value. Can we find ways to develop consensus and steer examiners without suppressing freedom of discussion or development?

Examiners work in a political climate, which currently appears to demand that levels of achievement in schools must rise. In recent years GCSE was presented as the means by which the curriculum would be made more relevant and appealing, then the national curriculum was introduced to lever up achievement levels further. Would there not have been an outcry if results had failed to improve as they have? Examination results involve high stakes for those who make educational policy as well as pupils and teachers and will inevitably continue to attract controversy. Could the responsible bodies be more proactive and so inhibit overstated reactions from all camps? More public admission of the inherent difficulties (and imprecision) in setting standards, by examining bodies and government agencies alike, might help make small annual fluctuations become something only to be expected. For the sake of all concerned (not least the pupils) government and examining bodies must forge an alliance to share information, to educate expectations in all quarters and to manage the certification of achievement as equitably as possible.

Overt centralisation may not be the best course. The major reforms imposed centrally in 1988 and 1994 created major discontinuities for pupils, teachers and examining boards. They caused large numbers of schools to migrate between syllabuses and examining bodies, so that examiners were asked to compare the outcomes from different schools/pupils doing different things from previous years. Major discontinuities will always make it harder to carry standards forward. But if the critical and problematic nature of standards fixing were better appreciated by policy makers, planning, information sharing and co-ordination should make it feasible to do so even in a pluralistic system like GCSE. Incremental change would make it easier and should be recognised as a strength of our 'traditional' approach to curricular reform and school examinations, even if it does not provide the quick fix and/or publicity politics often demands.

Other aspects of examining practice could be improved. We currently focus mainly on grading standards from one year to the next. One promising avenue might be to supplement this with more systematic 'medium-term' referencing back within the awarding process, across periods short enough for it to be meaningful. The planned five year revision cycle for the national curriculum may not be far out, although the first examination for any new syllabus must be a key reference point. Recent cross-moderation studies investigating standards at GCE Advanced level (Fowles, 1995; Quinlan, 1995) have demonstrated that such medium-term judgemental

comparisons are often feasible. They also reveal that archives of scripts are now being retained on a systematic basis by the Examining Groups and in the fullness of time these could provide a basis for longer term research too.

'Criterion-referenced' assessment has recently become fashionable and the precedence of examiners' judgements over statistical information was accepted and built into SCAA's Mandatory Code of Practice for GCSE awarding, first introduced in 1994. But examiners' judgements are imprecise, as examiners are well aware. Most will prefer to err on the candidates' side. Procedures which give more room to consider and integrate all available sources of empirical information which may help to maintain standards are desirable - which is not at all the same as advocating a normative approach. Minimising further procedural changes should also be a priority, as these too introduce small discontinuities which can have a cumulative effect over time. But mandatory procedures should allow flexibility to reach the decisions judged best in all the circumstances.

Even if it were widely accepted that there has been a shift in grading standards it may be that few would now wish to see it reversed. GCSE examinations have proved an effective curricular focus and means of certifying achievements for almost all 16 year olds, with only pupils with substantial learning difficulties now outside their scope. Whose purposes would be served if more candidates received low grades and fewer obtained high ones? However we label them, the same 16+ pupils must still be recruited by our expanded Further/Higher Education sector and a labour market searching for recruits of the right quality. Any sudden reversal in grading trends now might create more problems than it solves.

Whether we believe that future teaching and assessment should stress some aspects of language use more or less than they do at present necessarily remains a difficult choice between competing values. These and many other matters must be discussed widely and explicitly, so as to promote consensus amongst stakeholders about the criteria required to govern grading standards in English in years to come. We hope that this research into the changes observed over these 14 years informs the debate about where we go from here.

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Appendix The Examination Papers

Oxford Local Examinations GCE Ordinary Level English language (01), June 1980

Midland Examining Group GCSE English - Syllabus B (1501), June 1993

Midland Examining Group GCSE English (1510), June 1994

OXFORD LOCAL EXAMINATIONS

General Certificate of Education

Ordinary Level

Summer Examination, 1980

O 1—I

Tuesday, 3 June

ENGLISH LANGUAGE

Time allowed: 1½ hours

PAPER I

Maximum mark 100

Each candidate must be given:

- (1) one copy of this question paper, O 1—I;
- (2) ruled writing paper.

Item (2) is sent with the stationery parcel.

Write the number of the paper, O 1—I, on the left at the head of each sheet of your answers in the space provided.

There are two exercises. You are advised to write first on your chosen subject in Part I, and then to answer Part II.

Remember to pay attention all through the paper to spelling, punctuation, and the construction of sentences.

PART I

Write a composition on one of the following subjects. You should cover about two sides of the writing paper and **not more than three**. [70]

Either, (a) 'Just look at that damage! Vandals should be treated more severely.'

'No, that's unfair. Vandalism is the fault of our society.'

What do *you* think about the causes and cures of vandalism?

Or, (b) Early in the evening.

Or, (c) Write about any social service which you have undertaken.

Or, (d) What part has luck, good or bad, played in your life?

Or, (e) 'The Challenge.' Write a story suited to this title.

PART II

You should understand that this question is designed to test your accuracy in the writing of English and in your use of the material provided. You are advised not to cover more than about **one side** of the writing paper. [30]

Write a report, suitable for inclusion in a school magazine or similar periodical, about a recent expedition to part of Hadrian's Wall. Make use of some of the following facts which you have noted:

Tribe of the Brigantes in Northern England and tribes in Southern Scotland gave difficulties to the Romans.

Emperor Hadrian visited Britain in A.D. 122 and commanded this artificial frontier against raiding parties to be built.

From Wallsend (East of Newcastle) across to Bowness: 75 miles long; width varies; height about 20 feet.

Over a million cubic yards of stone quarried, carried to wall, and positioned. Ditch: 27 feet wide and 9 feet deep, sited on Northern side.

Small forts built every Roman mile (with signalling towers between), garrisoned until about A.D. 400.

Visit finished at large military camp at Chesters, beside North Tyne and astride the Wall. The best example in Britain of a Roman headquarters' building. Spectacular scenery.

OXFORD LOCAL EXAMINATIONS

General Certificate of Education

Ordinary Level

Summer Examination, 1980

O 1—II

Tuesday, 3 June

ENGLISH LANGUAGE

Time allowed: 1³/₄ hours

PAPER II

Maximum mark 100

Each candidate must be given:

- (1) one copy of this question paper, O 1—II;
- (2) ruled writing paper.

Item (2) is sent with the stationery parcel.

Write the number of the paper, O 1—II, on the left at the head of each sheet of your answers in the space provided.

Answer both questions.

This paper tests your ability to read with understanding and to think about what you have read. Do not hurry. You have two fairly long passages in front of you, but plenty of time for reading them. You will be wise to get to know each passage well before attempting to answer any of the questions set on it.

Remember that this is an examination in English Language. It is important not only to answer the questions correctly but also to write your answers in clear, careful English, with proper attention to spelling and punctuation.

1. Read carefully the following passage, and answer the questions set on it.

In 1945 the United Nations decided to set up the Food and Agriculture Organisation in Rome, with John Boyd-Orr as its first Director-General. Its task was to stimulate food production throughout the world, and especially in what were then called the under-developed countries, or the Third World. This latter term embraced all those countries which were not firmly bound, politically or economically, to either the capitalist or the communist blocs. Support for the FAO came, naturally, from the under-developed countries themselves. They saw it as a valuable means of lifting their people out of the poverty in which the vast majority of them had always lived; and until this was done they could never attain the full potential of which they were capable. 5

Support also came from the highly developed countries. In the West there were some who had for long been uneasy at the thought that there still was, in the 20th century, poverty in the midst of plenty. It could not be right, they felt, that millions suffered from lack of food while others ate all they desired, that food was grown but could not be sold, so had to be destroyed, and that large areas of land were left uncultivated. These idealists were now supported by those, equally kind-hearted but of more restricted vision, who until the war had never given a thought to hunger or shortages of food. Now, because of blockade and rationing, and because of the undoubted threat of famine on their very doorsteps in prosperous Europe itself, they realised that hunger did in fact exist, and affect human beings like themselves. 10 15

In addition to such people, motivated by idealism, two further categories appeared as allies. The first were business men, who saw that only well-fed and relatively prosperous people could buy the products of their factories, and who therefore wanted to see the inhabitants of the poorer countries of the world with sufficient money to buy the goods manufactured in the West. If all these people had more money in their pockets the demand, and hence the profit would be enormous. Unemployment and bankruptcies would vanish, and the war years would be followed by an indefinite period of expansion and prosperity. 20

Finally there were those who supported the idea on political grounds. Although the capitalist and communist countries had fought as allies against Nazi-ism, there was still enmity and conflict between them. The war against Hitler was followed by the Cold War between East and West, each side trying to gain advantage and allies against the other. The Third World was a vast area where this Cold War could be fought. The West would be at a great disadvantage if it reverted to its prosperous and well-fed life as soon as the war was over, leaving the Third World in the same poverty and hunger that it had experienced before the war. 25 30

Just as the seeds of the French and Russian revolutions had been sown by the contrast between the luxury of the aristocracy and the poverty of the peasants, between the ostentation of life in the great house and the poverty in the cottages at its gates, so a revolution on a world-wide scale would become inevitable if the contrast between the West and the Third World remained at existing levels. Something must be done to reduce this difference, to bridge the gap between rich and poor on a world-wide basis. The Food and Agriculture Organisation was the means by which this could be achieved. 35

So, with a strange combination of motives, this great international agency came into being.

(LORD WALSTON, *Dealing with Hunger*)

- (a) (i) What do you understand by the under-developed countries (line 3)?
(ii) Why did those countries particularly welcome the setting up of the Food and Agriculture Organisation in 1945? [6]
- (b) The Second World War (1939-1945) had brought home to people in Europe, through blockade and rationing, the fact that hunger did in fact exist (lines 14-16).
Explain (i) *blockade*; (ii) *rationing*. [6]
- (c) Give briefly the meaning of
(i) *idealists* (line 13);
(ii) *those of more restricted vision* (lines 13-14). [6]
- (d) What is meant by the Cold War (line 27)? [2]
- (e) In some 80-100 words summarize the author's arguments as developed in the second, third, and fourth paragraphs (lines 9-31) of the passage. [15]
- (f) *So, with a strange combination of motives, this great international agency come into being* (line 38). What was the 'combination of motives' here referred to, and why do you think the author sees it as 'strange'? [5]

2. Read carefully the following passage, and answer the questions set on it.

With quick precision Sarah opened her letters, cutting the envelopes neatly, sorting their contents—business, receipts, bills, estimates and the rest of them—letters from parents or staff about school vacancies—personal communications. She received fewer and fewer of this third category. She had become increasingly absorbed in her professional affairs. She neglected her friends. The school, the school, the school filled her deliberate mind. “You’re becoming a monomaniac,” Pattie had told her. 5

There was one envelope addressed in a slanting scholarly hand which was familiar. Sarah unfolded the thin blue paper and read:

“26a Canning Terrace,
Tunbridge Wells,
March 13th, 1934. 10

“MY DEAR MISS BURTON,”

It was from Miss Sigglesthwaite. A wave of nausea rocked in Sarah’s mind. She still felt that she has treated Miss Sigglesthwaite shabbily. She had given her rope to hang herself, longing to replace her. She had sacrificed her and secured her efficient Miss Vane, fresh from Cambridge. She had let her become the victim of bad mass-bullying, and had left unpunished the ringleader of her tormentors. 15

With stern self-discipline Sarah compelled herself to read the letter.

“MY DEAR MISS BURTON,

“You may doubtless be wondering why you have not heard from me. I apologise for any lack of courtesy, but knowing your kind thoughts for me I waited till I had cheerful news to send.

“I can now report that my own health has already shown great improvement, and that I have found another post. 20

“I am now installed as daily companion to an elderly lady living here who is almost blind. I conduct her correspondence for her, read to her, and wheel her out when it is fine in a bath chair. You would be amused at her literary tastes, and so am I. I shall soon become an expert in the works of Ruby M. Ayres, Pamela Wynne and Ursula Bloom. Do you know any of these novelists? I assure you that they have opened up a new world to me. My salary is not princely, but as I can live at home, we have been able to give up our maid and my sister does the housework while I relieve her at night, by looking after our poor mother, so I think with care we shall be able to manage if we can both retain our health. 25

“And now, my dear Miss Burton, may I at last be allowed to thank you, not only for your extreme kindness to me after my breakdown, but for your more than generous and heartening letter which arrived last week? Please believe me that I shall never forget your patience with my shortcomings; and your sympathy when they proved at last too much for me. I realise that I should have retired earlier, but you know my circumstances, and I am more than grateful that you never uttered one word of reproach. 30

“I shall always watch from afar your career in the world of teaching with the warmest interest, remembering how in your youth and vigour you found generosity to show kindness to my stupidity and failure. I feel sure that you will go far and I shall always rejoice in your well-deserved success. 35

“Believe me, yours gratefully and sincerely,

“AGNES SIGGLESTHWAITE”

Sarah laid the letter on her desk, and sat staring out to the sea. A fishing smack with a brown sail dipped and tossed there and sometimes disappeared. Sarah held her breath till it re-emerged, but she was not really thinking of it. She was picturing the tall lank woman pushing her employer about in a bath chair through the streets of Tunbridge Wells, her hair pins tinkling behind her to the pavement, her skirt unbuttoned, her jumper gaping above her waist belt, her mild chin quivering below her sensitive mouth. She could hear her cultured voice pronouncing with its habitual precision the declaration of love, the luxurious descriptions of feminine underwear, the conflicts of vice with virtue, so frequently encountered in her employer’s favourite literature. 40 45

“So there goes the most distinguished scientist we have ever had on our staff—or ever will have,” she thought, and her heart rebuked her.

The simple generosity and goodness of Agnes Sigglesthwaite were too much for her. She had become morbidly self-reproachful for her part in that affair. She had lain awake telling herself that she had sacrificed the science mistress for Miss Carne, that it was Midge whom she should have sent away, that the child was hysterical, vain, a centre of exaggerated emotion, and unhealthy influence in the school. 50

She forgot the weeks when she had sheltered Miss Sigglesthwaite in her own house, sitting with her at night and reading to her, pouring into her exhausted mind the optimism and resilience of her own unstaled philosophy. She forgot her unstinted efforts to beat the sickness and sorrow of the over- 55

burdened woman. She only remembered that her kindness had been mingled with impatience, her benevolence soured by her planning mind.

"A companion to a blind lady who lives here." And it's my fault, she groaned in spirit. She put the letter in the basket marked "to be answered", and picked up the next one.

But the telephone rang, and when she lifted the receiver she heard her friend Joe Astell calling to her in his hoarse and breathless voice. 60

It brought some comfort to her. The knowledge of his sympathy and support had meant much to her during the past difficult weeks. She knew that he liked and respected her, and his appreciation helped her to retain a modicum of her own self-respect.

(WINIFRED HOLTBY, *South Riding*)

(a) Miss Sarah Burton is employed at the Kiplington High School for Girls. What is her position there? [3]

(b) We find Miss Burton sorting through her morning post *With quick precision* (line 1). What does this tell us about her? [3]

(c) Her sister has told her that she is a monomaniac (line 5). What does this mean? [3]

(d) Miss Burton opens a letter from a Miss Siggleshwaite who is now employed as daily companion to an old lady in Tunbridge Wells (line 22).

(i) In the letter Miss Siggleshwaite says 'My salary is not princely'. Explain *not princely*.

(ii) One of her duties is to read aloud from the novels of Rudy M. Ayres, Pamela Wynne and Ursula Bloom. What do we learn from this passage about the subject-matter of these novels? What attitude towards them is conveyed:

(e) Turn to lines 53-57. Give briefly and accurately the meaning, as here used, of the following words:

(i) *resilience*;

(ii) *unstated*;

(iii) *unstinted*.

(f) *her planning mind* (line 57). What was it that Miss Burton's mind was always planning? [3]

(g) We learn that Miss Siggleshwaite had previously been a teacher at the High School. How good a teacher was she, and why did she resign? What had Midge Carne to do with it? (Answer in some 40-60 words.) [10]

(h) In lines 12-13 we read that Miss Burton *still felt that she had treated Miss Siggleshwaite shabbily*. From your reading of the passage, including Miss Siggleshwaite's letter, say how far you think Miss Burton has cause to blame herself, and how far you can find excuses for her. (Answer in some 15-20 lines, i.e., about 120-150 words.) [20]

MIDLAND EXAMINING GROUP
General Certificate of Secondary Education
ENGLISH — SYLLABUS B

1501/1

PAPER 1 ARGUMENTATIVE AND INFORMATIVE WRITING

Tuesday

25 MAY 1993

Afternoon

2 hours

Additional materials:
Answer paper as required.

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TIME 2 hours

INSTRUCTIONS TO CANDIDATES

Write your name, centre number and candidate number in the spaces provided on each booklet or sheet of answer paper.

Answer **all** the questions.

Read all the information carefully before you begin to plan your answers. Remember that the marks are awarded for the way your ideas are expressed and presented and for the ways in which you make use of the information provided.

INFORMATION FOR CANDIDATES

The number of marks available is shown in brackets at the end of each question or part question.

The total for this paper is 70 marks.

You may **not** use a dictionary.

East Midland Regional Examinations Board
Oxford and Cambridge Schools Examination Board
The West Midlands Examinations Board
University of Cambridge Local Examinations Syndicate

This question paper consists of 6 printed pages and 2 blank pages.

© MEG 1993

[Turn over



100% RECYCLED PAPER

In this paper, you are asked to imagine that you are a prospective management trainee for Bestbuy Universal Stores. Read the various items, and attempt all the tasks which are set on them.

The marks for each task give a guide to the proportion of your time you should spend on each of them.

You read the following advertisement in a newspaper ...

Item A

BESTBUY UNIVERSAL STORES is seeking to attract ambitious young persons to train as **STORE MANAGERS** in their establishments throughout the country. Applicants should have a proven record of success in their school careers including 5 GCSE's at grade C or above, but we shall be looking even more for personal qualities of trustworthiness, leadership, enthusiasm and the readiness to take initiatives.

BUS believes in bottom-up training, so you will be required to work in all departments of retailing to gain experience of its many-sided operations. During this time we shall be looking for your ability to work alongside others and to gain their respect, and we shall expect you to demonstrate enthusiasm, drive and commitment.

We are proud of our reputation in the High Street for Value, Quality and Good Customer Relations. This hard-earned reputation depends on the performance of our Store Managers, so we pay them generously according to the results they produce and give them many additional benefits such as company cars, re-location grants, store discounts, 4 weeks' annual leave etc.

If you think you may be the young woman or man we are looking for, write, in the first instance, to June Reynolds, Head of Recruitment, Dept 101, BUS House, Welland Way, Birmingham B4 8BY.

Tell us about yourself and why you want to join us and convince us that you are worth talking to.

Then we'll take it from there — together.

TASK 1 Write your letter of application:

- * write about 200—300 words (about 1—1½ sides).
- * set it out correctly as a formal letter.
- * as this is a 'make believe' situation you may, if you wish, invent details about yourself.

[15]

You will be pleased to know that BUS liked your letter and wrote you a letter inviting you for interview (Item B) and enclosing a job description (Item C). Meanwhile, at school you were shown a video about 'How to succeed at interview' from which you took some notes (Item D). Read these three items carefully and then attempt Task 2.

Item B Extract from the **letter inviting you for interview:**

.... Can you please come for a talk with us on Friday, August 20th at 2.00 pm. This will be an opportunity for us to have a look at you and for you to find out more about us. If we both like what we see, you will be invited to attend a 2-day residential selection procedure at our Training Headquarters in Etchley, Warwickshire. Here we shall look in depth at the skills you have to offer and how you get on with other people both during formal training sessions and socially.

I look forward to meeting you.

Yours sincerely,

June Reynolds

Head of Recruitment BUS

Item C The Job description:

 *Bestbuy Universal Stores* 
BUS Store Manager Job Description

Store Managers are the lynchpins of our business. They are responsible — directly or through their under-managers — for everything that happens in their stores: purchasing, sales, staff recruitment and training, personnel management, staff welfare, customer relations, stock control, security, maintenance of buildings, safety regulations, local advertising, forward planning ...

Although BUS has a recognized national identity we believe in giving our store managers maximum freedom within this corporate image to stamp their own personalities upon their individual stores. Thus, while benefiting from BUS national advertising they can, within their own budgets, organize their own local style of advertising. While purchasing and sales patterns are largely standardised in BUS, Store Managers will be expected to ascertain local needs and maximise the opportunities they provide.

Nothing stands still in our business. Mobility is essential. Successful managers will be promoted to larger stores where turn-over related salaries may well reach six figures.

Training starts on the shop floor — and in the stock rooms and offices behind it. Trainees will spend periods in every department to gain experience of all aspects of the retail business — hands-on experience from shelf-filling to accountancy, personnel to publicity. They must be smart in appearance, alert at all times, and unswervingly loyal to the Company — which means they should not be afraid to question its policies and practices with a view to improving them. We want 'can-do' and 'will-do' people, but not 'yes' people.

It takes five to ten years to produce store managers. But long before they have total responsibility for a store, managers have worked as under-managers with direct responsibility for one of the many aspects of the business. They also attend regular training courses at Etchley and are expected to study for relevant qualifications in retailing.

BUS offers its store managers a job for life, excellent salary prospects reflecting their performance and many additional benefits. In return, BUS expects loyalty and 100% commitment to the job.

Item D Your notes on 'How to Succeed at Interview'

- Beforehand:*
- *re-read your application letter — could be taken up on statements made and asked to enlarge on what you said.*
 - *note reasons you gave for applying and be prepared to answer questions.*
 - *study job description carefully and have questions ready.*
 - *find out how to get there — be in good time — dress reasonably formally (Jeans and trainers out!).*
- The Interview*
- *don't be too modest — they've invited you to talk to them so they must think you've got something to offer.*
 - *but don't be over-confident and pushy (why not if that's what you are?!).*
 - *keep eye-contact and show interest in what interviewer is saying.*
 - *speak clearly and fully but don't go on (no one-word answers, no speeches).*
 - *be prepared for anything (interviewers may try to rattle you to see how you react under pressure — or whether you can 'think on your feet').*
 - *the interviewer has comments made by your referee(s) — be prepared for some unexpected questions.*
 - *remember a sense of humour helps — in the right place.*
 - *have some questions ready — even if you know the answers.*
 - *you probably will be asked if you would accept the position if offered and you may ask for time to consider (but then again they might expect whole-hearted eagerness!!).*

TASK 2 Write a transcript of all or part of the interview between yourself and Miss Reynolds:

* Make full use of items B, C and D.

* Set out the interview like a playscript. If you wish you may use the following opening:

June Reynolds: Good afternoon, Miss/Mr Do sit down.

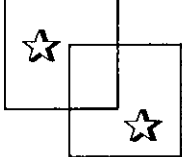
Me: Thank you.

JR: I see you managed to find us all right.

[30]

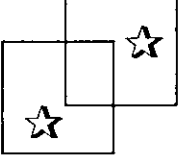
As a result of your interview with Miss Reynolds you were asked to attend the 2-day residential selection procedure. The following item is the detailed timetable/brochure for that final stage in the selection of candidates. Look at Task 3 on page 6 and then use this item as the basis for your answer.

Item E



THE MANOR — ETCHLEY —

WARWICKSHIRE



The Company bought this Victorian-Tudor stately home in 1965 and converted it into a 30 bedroom conference and training centre complete with lecture room, seminar rooms, audio-visual resources, dining and recreational facilities (including a snooker room, indoor pool and sauna, lounge, library and TV room). All rooms are en suite, have tea and coffee-making facilities, TV-radio, and are furnished to the highest standards. The rambling, half-timbered building is set in extensive grounds with formal gardens, a tennis court, lawns, a 9-hole golf course and a woodland area. There is ample parking space. Visitors travelling by train should arrange — if possible in advance — to be collected by our courtesy car from the station, which is ten miles from the Manor.

Timetable of two-day selection procedure

Wednesday	5.00 pm	Register	
	6.30 pm	Introductory talk by Roger Staines, Director of Training	
	7.30 pm	Dinner	
Thursday	8.00 am	Breakfast	
	9.00—11.00 am	Basic Skill Tests	Candidates complete a number of timed written tasks to ascertain their skill levels in calculation and communication.
	11.00 am	Coffee	
	11.30 am	Presentations	Candidates are given a task to study and then required to present it to their group. (For example, a plan for a special promotion on kitchen ware, or a proposal to restructure staff work-shifts). In this session they discuss presentation skills and prepare their talk.
	1.00 pm	Lunch	
	2.15 pm	Presentations	In this session, the candidates present their prepared talks to their group and their performance is discussed.
Friday	3.30 pm	Tea	
	3.45 pm to 5.00 pm	Role-Play	Candidates are asked to adopt roles to demonstrate their ability to cope with challenging situations. (For example, dealing with dissatisfied customer, interviewing employee made redundant, questioning a suspected shop-lifter).
	8.00 am	Breakfast	
	9.00 am	In Committee	Candidates take part in committee meetings at which potential issues typical of the retail trade are discussed and action plans formulated. Each in turn will be asked to take the chair.
	11.00 am	Coffee	
	11.30 am	'BUS: Past-Present -Future'	Roger Staines presents a video on the history of Bestbuy Universal Stores, describes its future plans and answers questions about the Company.
	1.00 pm	Lunch	
	2.15 pm	Interviews	Individual interviews with members of the training staff at which your performance will be discussed and final impressions formed — on both sides.
	3.30 pm	Tea	
	3.45 pm	'The Wait'	During this time, final selection of candidates is made by Roger and his team of training staff.
	5.00 pm (approx)	The Result	All candidates are interviewed briefly by Roger. Unsuccessful candidates will be advised how they can improve their performance.

[Turn over

You attended the selection procedure and passed. In addition to getting a place on the Company's training scheme, as the candidate who did best you were asked to write an account of your experience at Etchley to be published in 'BUS-STOP', the in-house magazine circulated among all employees of the Company.

TASK 3 Write your account of the selection procedure.

- * Write about 200–300 words.
- * Remember a mere summary of the programme would probably not make a very interesting article.
- * Use the timetable and what you have gathered about the Company from the other items as the basis for your account.
- * Make your article
 - informative
 - lively
 - possibly amusing
 - certainly the impression of someone who has recently joined the Company.

[25]

MIDLAND EXAMINING GROUP

1501/2

General Certificate of Secondary Education

ENGLISH – SYLLABUS B

PAPER 2 PERSONAL AND EXPRESSIVE WRITING

Tuesday

8 JUNE 1993

Morning

2 hours

Additional materials:

Answer paper as required.

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TIME 2 hours

INSTRUCTIONS TO CANDIDATES

Write your name, centre number and candidate number in the spaces provided on each booklet or sheet of answer paper.

SECTION A

Answer **all** the questions.

SECTION B

Answer **one** question only.

INFORMATION FOR CANDIDATES

The number of marks available is shown in brackets at the end of each question or part question.

The total for this paper is 70 marks.

You may **not** use a dictionary.

East Midland Regional Examinations Board
Oxford and Cambridge Schools Examination Board
The West Midlands Examinations Board
University of Cambridge Local Examinations Syndicate

This question paper consists of 5 printed pages and 3 blank pages.

SECTION A

Answer **BOTH** questions.

Read the poem and the description and attempt the task set on each of them. Then choose **ONE** of the subjects for writing in Section B.

THE PACKAGE

by Brian Patten

At dinner, long-faced and miserable,
They cast sly glances at the other guests,
The pink-kneed husband and his wife
Sitting with their five-year-old, complaining pest.
5 Still they blamed each other for the clouds
And ever since arriving they had rowed.

After dinner, the child put to bed,
They bickered beneath the hotel's vine,
And the ghosts of false what-might-have-beens
10 Surfaced with each extra glass of wine.
Theirs was a package holiday all right:
A package stuffed
With years of rootless longings and regrets.
Their bickering done, they sat mutely and both grieved
15 For what neither might have anyway achieved.

The next day they'd gone. They'd cut
Their holiday short, and carried back with them
A failure of another sort.
It was a failure to understand how all
20 Their arguments revolved around
An earlier package that they'd bought —
One promoted by both Church and State, one written
In the same tempting style; one in which
A watery sun had shone the same short while.

(Taken from 'Storm Damage' by B Patten published by Harper Collins.)

TASK 1 Write 200–300 words about this poem in which you

- give an account of what actually happens in it;
- show how the poem makes you feel how uncomfortable the couple felt at dinner;
- describe, **in your own words**, their thoughts in verse 2 and what Brian Patten feels about these;
- explain what the two 'packages' mentioned in lines 11 and 21 are and how, according to the author, they are alike;
- include your own reactions to '**The Package**'.

Write your answer carefully in paragraphs and remember to put quotation marks round any words you have quoted from the poem to illustrate what you have to say about it.

[20 marks]

A FIRST DAY IN SCHOOL

(The following extract describes Edward Blishen's experience as a student teacher 'observing' a day in school for the first time. It happened in 1949 — long before comprehensive schools replaced the old secondary modern and grammar schools ...)

... And so I found myself at Green Rise Secondary Modern. I suppose this suburban corner had at one time been that gentle thing, a rise, and green with it. Now it was a grey mess of small houses and shops growing up a slope. The school was at the top. It, too, was very grey.

5 The Head had forgotten we were coming. 'Ah, yes,' he said. 'Well, we'll fix something.' Green Rise seemed a brisk school. Enter a classroom, and the children would leap up and stand by their desks till told to sit. I spent the morning with one of the oldest members of the staff, who'd been there since 1913. Flat, mild, running on some low tension battery that kept him murmuring along, he maintained
10 perfect order without ever raising his voice or ruffling a fibre of his mild, flat, efficient being. It made me wonder at that briskness. Where did the life of the children go, in Mr Butcher's classroom? And why did it disappear, so obediently, in Mr Butcher's presence? There was no sign of the sanctions he, surely, held in reserve. Did his simply being so terribly at home in the classroom suggest, to
15 the children, the existence of punishments that had never to be made visible?

By lunchtime I was deeply depressed. Sitting in the corner of the room, ignored by Mr Butcher with a sort of blank politeness, I had warmed to certain children. There was a boy with bright eyes who, from time to time, seemed to be winking at me. There was another, who, under the flat docility of the classroom's atmosphere,
20 suggested all sorts of interesting wickedness held not very much in reserve.

The afternoon might have been designed as an expedition to opposite poles of teaching. In the first half I saw a man totally at a loss. He dashed at his teaching like someone plunging into a thick and hostile crowd in search of something he had dropped. Driven back by muttering amazement and a chaos of elbows, he stood
25 on the edge of it, his voice squeaking on tiptoe. 'Don't behave like this!' he cried. Then, to me: 'I just don't know what has got into them!' I smiled miserably. Then he was in among them again, making what sounded like wild allegations about the division of fractions. 'Turn the divisor upside down and multiply,' he urged, and the class seethed with noisy puzzlement. 'I've told you this hundreds of times'.
30 Two boys tried to engage me, quite courteously, in conversation. 'What are you doing here, then?' I gave them an awkward smile. 'Interested in football are you?' I wriggled. 'If you want to see a good game, come up the park on Sundays.' The teacher dashed among us. 'Who's talking, then?' I resisted the temptation to announce my own innocence. 'You are,' said one of the boys, nodding amiably
35 at the teacher. 'You've only got to remember to turn it upside down,' he raved. 'And shut up! Shut up! Turn it upside down and shut up!'

After break I was handed over to a young man with an amused, cool face and very large teeth. 'I like the Socratic method,' he told me. 'Anything can be taught by asking the right questions.' The attentiveness in his room was startling after
40 that other lesson. He was talking about trade unions, but carefully didn't begin by saying so. Instead, he drew from the class such knowledge as they had of social and industrial conditions in the early nineteenth century. Then he shot questions at them that drove them, as it were, to invent for themselves the need for unions. I wondered at it. This was not a method I could use: you wanted a patient, not
45 an excitable nature. But how good it was to watch! How eager the boys were to earn his nod, to avoid the comically unhappy face he made when a wrong answer was given, a step missed in the argument! Questions of discipline seemed not to exist when we were all, everyone in the room, trying to locate the forward movement of the argument, trying to keep up with the play of logic.

[Turn over

50 But how dingy the school was! How dingy the district! When I made my way
 out through the homegoing school hall, I found myself faced by a noticeboard.
 It was quartered, and in each quarter were the notices addressed to one of the
 school houses. Clive House, Nelson House, Wellington House, Marlborough House.
 55 The headmaster was addressing a hangdog group of boys. 'You know perfectly
 well that you must bring plimsolls on the days when you have P.T. What's come
 over you Grimes? Sapshead? Spriggs?'

Well, names are accidents. All the same, it was curious that the imperial creatures
 after whom the Green Rise houses were named seemed always to have avoided
 60 being called Grimes, or Sapshead, or Spriggs. Spriggs, the victor of Waterloo?
 Sapshead's Column? Grimes of India?

Boys I'd observed in the classrooms dashed past me, their disciplined Green Rise
 faces suddenly wild and bright with life that Green Rise, I guessed, knew nothing
 of. If this was education, what a sad container it seemed for all that secret young
 life. I had a vague, unhappy feeling about my day that might have been expressed
 65 by saying that certain stale pretensions, called education, had been crowded together
 most queerly with some of the dowdier facts of our social system ...

(Taken from 'A Nest of Teachers' by E Blishen published by Hamish Hamilton.)

TASK 2 What are your thoughts about this account? Include some
 comments on the following points:

- what the teachers and their lessons were like.
- how the education the children received compares with that
 which you experience.
- your thoughts about what Edward Blishen has to say about
 the district of Green Rise and its 'social system'.
- what you find amusing in the account.

Write your answer carefully, using paragraphs, in about 200—300
 words. Use your **own words to express your ideas.**

[20 marks]

SECTION B

Choose **ONE** of the following and write 350–600 words.

You are now going to use what you have read about in the poem or Edward Blishen's description to look at them from another viewpoint. The Examiner wants to see that you have understood what you have read, and can use your imagination to extend and develop either the poem or the description.

EITHER

- 3** Imagine the dinner described in the poem was on the third night of the family's holiday. Describe their holiday up to that moment, showing how the package had failed to live up to expectations.

OR

- 4** Imagine you used to be a pupil at Green Rise Secondary Modern School. Describe to a friend what it was like to live in Green Rise and go to school there.

[30 marks]

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MIDLAND EXAMINING GROUP

1510/1

General Certificate of Secondary Education

ENGLISH

PAPER 1 Non-Literary and Media Texts (Standard Tier)

Wednesday

8 JUNE 1994

Afternoon

2 hours

Additional materials:

Answer paper is required

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TIME

2 hours

INSTRUCTIONS TO CANDIDATES

Write your name, Centre number and candidate number in the spaces provided on each booklet or sheet of answer paper.

SECTION A

Attempt **both** tasks.

SECTION B

Attempt **one** task only.

Write your answers on the separate answer paper provided.

INFORMATION FOR CANDIDATES

This examination paper tests how well you can read, write and present information. The tasks in Section A ask you to show that you can find information by careful reading and then use the same information in your writing. The tasks in Section B ask you to write more generally about the same or related topics.

The number of marks available is shown in brackets at the end of each task.

The total for Section A is 40 marks and for Section B 30 marks. There are 10 extra marks available for spelling, handwriting and presentation.

This question paper consists of 3 printed pages and one blank page.

Crime has been very much in the news recently. Read the survey, the letter and the table which are given on the separate insert. Before you do so, look at the tasks you have to do. Think about these tasks as you read the three items. You may, if you wish, make notes alongside them and underline anything that helps you plan your answers.

SECTION A

Attempt *BOTH* tasks.

You should spend about one and a quarter hours on Section A.

- 1 Summarise what the survey has to say about:
- the background of the young people interviewed
 - the offences they admitted to
 - the reasons they gave for juvenile crimes
 - their suggestions for solving the problem of juvenile crimes
 - their relationship with their parents.

Write your answers in paragraphs using your own words as far as possible. [20]

- 2 The pensioner's letter was published in the Redfield Advertiser.

Write a letter to the editor in which you:

- refer in some detail to her complaints
- use the information in the survey and table
- include your own views on juvenile crime.

Set out your letter with your address at the top.

The address of the newspaper is

The Redfield Advertiser, Gigg Lane, Redfield, RF18 2EU. [20]

SECTION B

Attempt ONE task only.

You should spend about 45 minutes on Section B.

You should write 350-500 words. Allow yourself sufficient time to read through and correct what you have written.

EITHER**3 THE GENERATION GAP**

Write a story or a true account of a friendship which brought together people of different generations.

You may if you wish write about a friendship with somebody like the pensioner who wrote the letter. [30]

OR**4 NOT GUILTY!**

People often take the blame when they are innocent.

Write a story or a true account of an incident when an innocent person took the blame. [30]

OR**5 IF I COULD CHANGE THE LAW**

Imagine that you could change one or more laws to benefit society.

Write a talk to a teenage audience in which you explain which laws you would change and why. [30]

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MIDLAND EXAMINING GROUP 1510/1/INSERT

General Certificate of Secondary Education

ENGLISH

PAPER 1 Non-Literary and Media Texts (Standard Tier)

Wednesday

8 JUNE 1994

Afternoon

2 hours

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INSTRUCTIONS TO CANDIDATES

This insert to be used with Paper 1 Section A.

This insert consists of 3 printed pages and one blank page

Out of the mouths of babes

In a new survey young people describe their experiences of crime and suggest possible causes and solutions.

YOUNG people are just as worried as their parents by the cases reported in the media and by crime which they suffer themselves, according to a new survey by criminologists. In fact, youngsters could be said to have more reason to fear violent crime because they are its most common victims.

A team of researchers carried out the survey on two large estates near Birmingham. They questioned 307 youngsters who were aged between thirteen and seventeen about crime, its causes and possible solutions.

Their findings contradict the view of some public figures that juvenile crime is increasing. The findings show that very few teenagers are involved in stealing cars, burglary, robbery and assaults.

The 148 boys and 159 girls questioned were from families with high levels of unemployment. A high percentage had single parents and most were still at school.

Two out of every five boys and girls had played truant from school, a quarter regularly smoked and about seven out of ten had drunk alcohol. Roughly a fifth said they had taken money from home and a smaller percentage had shoplifted.

33 per cent of the boys, and 26 per cent of the girls, said they had hit and injured somebody in a public place. Only one per cent had broken into a house or shop. Three per cent, girls as well as boys, had taken a vehicle and driven it away. Seven per cent had used a weapon in a fight, but twice as many carried weapons for protection.

But what came through most strongly was the large number of youngsters who had also been the victims of crime or the threat of crime. Fifteen per cent had been stopped by male drivers they

did not know and asked to get into their cars. Similar numbers had been followed by a stranger in a car or on foot. A fifth said they had been assaulted in the street.

When asked why youngsters they knew committed crimes, 79 per cent cited boredom and 58 per cent said the offenders had no sense of right and wrong. A lack of leisure facilities was blamed by half and 44 per cent blamed parental neglect.

More police officers on foot patrol was the most popular solution for reducing juvenile crime, and was suggested by nearly seven out of ten. 65 per cent said there should be more discipline and supervision by parents.

In fact, the majority of those surveyed revealed the presence of caring parents. Seven out of ten were taken out by parents and 61 per cent said their parents wanted to know where they were and what they were doing at all times. 85 per cent said they could talk to their mother or father about anything that troubled them.

Three-quarters had never been hit by either parent but were shouted at or threatened for wrongdoing, whereas sixteen per cent were hit sometimes or often. 69 per cent said their parents explained to them why certain things were wrong.

The findings still need proper analysis and will not be published for another year. But we can already see that there is agreement among young people and adults about strategies for preventing crime and why young people offend.

Are our kids out of control? The answer is no, but there is a substantial minority of children who are neglected. You can deduce from that that those children are more likely to get involved in crime if there is nobody checking up on them.

In the past, eighteen-to-twenty-one-year-old working-class kids got jobs and got married. The best antidote to crime is a steady job and a steady relationship.

(Adapted from the Guardian, March 1993.)

A Letter from a Pensioner

Dear Sir,

I am writing this letter to your newspaper because I just can't think of anything else to do. My life consists of little other than fear and misery. I am a 73 year old widow and because of the behaviour of young people on the council estate where I live, I am too frightened to go out.

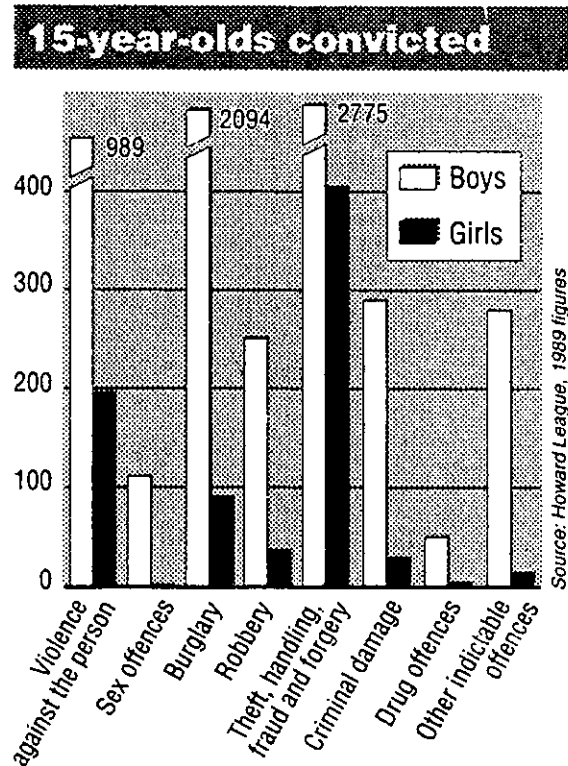
Why do children have no respect for people or property any more? Every spare wall is covered in graffiti and telephone boxes have been vandalised. Last month our local primary school was broken into; furniture was smashed and paint thrown on walls, causing hundreds of pounds of damage. The police caught the culprits, whose average age was seven. Because the age of criminal responsibility is ten, they cannot be punished. Can this situation be correct?

When I was a child we had a sense of community. Doors were never locked — if your neighbour was out and her pint of milk had been left in the sun, you put it in her kitchen for her. Now all my friends who can afford it have had to install burglar alarms; six houses in my street were burgled last year. I am told that unemployed youths round here even steal items to order for people they contact in public houses.

Theft of property is bad enough, but muggings and assaults on old people are far worse. An elderly lady who lives next door to me was followed home last week after collecting her pension from the post office. Two young men pushed her in through her own front door, beat her around the head and stole her money. She is at present recovering in hospital.

Please print this letter as I know I speak for a lot of old people, but do not publish my name and address as I am frightened of what might happen. The young people of today have no respect even for teachers or policemen. What can be done to control them?

Name and address supplied.



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MIDLAND EXAMINING GROUP

1510/2/RB

General Certificate of Secondary Education

ENGLISH

PAPER 2 Literature (Standard Tier)

Reading Booklet

Extracts for study prior to the 1994 examination.

To be given to candidates on receipt by the Centre.

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INSTRUCTIONS TO CANDIDATES

Some of the tasks in Paper 2 will be based on these passages.

You have been given them in advance so that you can study them before the examination.

You may do any preparatory work which your teacher or you think is appropriate, and you may make notes on this copy if you wish.

You will not be allowed to take this copy or any notes or other prepared material into the examination room.

The passages will be printed again on the paper so that you can refer to them in the examination.

This reading booklet consists of 4 printed pages

The following passage is taken from 'An Old Woman and her Cat' by Doris Lessing.

Lonely in her tiny flat, she was there as little as possible, always preferring the lively streets. But she had after all to spend some time in her room, and one day she saw a kitten lost and trembling in a dirty corner, and brought it home to the block of flats. She was on a fifth floor. While the kitten was growing into a large strong tom, he ranged about that conglomeration of staircases and lifts and many dozens of flats, as if the building were a town. Pets were not actively persecuted by the authorities, only forbidden and then tolerated. Hetty's life from the coming of the cat became more sociable, for the beast was always making friends with somebody in the cliff that was the block of flats across the court, or not coming home for nights at a time so that she had to go and look for him and knock on doors and ask, or returning home kicked and limping, or bleeding after a fight with his kind. She made scenes with the kickers, or the owners of the enemy cats, exchanged cat lore with cat-lovers, was always having to bandage and nurse her poor Tibby. The cat was soon a scarred warrior with fleas, a torn ear, and a ragged look to him. He was a multicoloured cat and his eyes were small and yellow. He was a long way down the scale from the delicately coloured, elegantly shaped pedigree cats. But he was independent, and often caught himself pigeons when he could no longer stand the tinned cat food, or the bread and packet gravy Hetty fed him, and he purred and nestled when she grabbed him to her bosom at those times she suffered loneliness. This happened less and less. Once she realised that her children were hoping that she would leave them alone because the old rag-trader was an embarrassment to them, she accepted it, and a bitterness that always had wild humour in it welled up only at times like Christmas. She sang or chanted to the cat: 'You nasty old beast, filthy old cat, nobody wants you, do they Tibby, no, you're just an alley tom, just an old stealing cat, hey Tibs, Tibs, Tibs.'

The building teemed with cats. There were even a couple of dogs. They all fought up and down the grey cement corridors. There were sometimes dog and cat messes which someone had to clear up, but which might be left for days and weeks as part of neighbourly wars and feuds. There were many complaints. Finally an official came from the Council to say that the ruling about keeping animals was going to be enforced. Hetty, like the others, would have to have her cat destroyed. This crisis coincided with a time of bad luck for her. She had had flu; had not been able to earn money; had found it hard to get out for her pension; had run into debt. She owed a lot of back rent, too. A television set she had hired and was not paying for attracted the visits of a television representative. The neighbours were gossiping that Hetty had 'gone savage'. This was because the cat had brought up the stairs and along the passageways a pigeon he had caught, shedding feathers and blood all the way; a woman coming in to complain found Hetty plucking the pigeon to stew it, as she had done with others, sharing the meal with Tibby.

'You're filthy,' she would say to him, setting the stew down to cool in his dish. 'Filthy old thing. Eating that dirty old pigeon. What do you think you are, a wild cat? Decent cats don't eat dirty birds. Only those old gipsies eat wild birds.'

One night she begged help from a neighbour who had a car, and put into the car herself, the television set, the cat, bundles of clothes, and the pram. She was driven across London to a room in a street that was a slum because it was waiting to be done up. The neighbour made a second trip to bring her bed and her mattress, which were tied to the roof of the car, a chest of drawers, an old trunk, saucepans. It was in this way that she left the street in which she had lived for thirty years, nearly half her life.

She set up house again in one room. She was frightened to go near 'them' to re-establish pension rights and her identity, because of the arrears of rent she had left behind, and because of the stolen television set. She started trading again, and the little room was soon spread, like her last, with a rainbow of colours and textures and lace and sequins. She cooked on a single gas ring and washed in the sink. There was no hot water unless it was boiled in saucepans. There were several old ladies and a family of five children in the house, which was condemned.

She was in the ground-floor back, with a window which opened onto a derelict garden, and her cat was happy in a hunting ground that was a mile around this house where his mistress was so splendidly living. A canal ran close by, and in the dirty city-water were islands which a cat could reach by leaping from moored boat to boat. On the islands were rats and birds. There were pavements full of fat London pigeons. The cat was a fine hunter. He soon had his place in the hierarchies of the local cat population and did not have to fight much to keep it. He was a strong male cat, and fathered many litters of kittens.

Continued on opposite page

In that place Hetty and he lived for five happy years. She was trading well, for there were rich people close by to shed what the poor needed to buy cheaply. She was not lonely for she made a quarelling but satisfying friendship with a woman on the top floor, a widow like herself who did not see her children either. Hetty was sharp with the five children, complaining about their noise and mess, but she slipped them bits of money and sweets after telling their mother that 'she was a fool to put herself out for them, because they wouldn't appreciate it.' She was living well, even without her pension. She sold the television set and gave herself and her friend upstairs some day-trips to the coast, and bought a small radio. She never read books or magazines. The truth was that she could not write or read, or only so badly it was no pleasure to her. Her cat was all reward and no cost, for he fed himself, and continued to bring pigeons for her to cook and eat, for which in return he claimed milk.

'Greedy Tibby, you greedy *thing*, don't think I don't know, oh yes I do, you'll get sick eating those old pigeons, I do keep telling you that, don't I?'

DECOMPOSITION

I have a picture I took in Bombay
of a beggar asleep on the pavement:
grey-haired, wearing shorts and a dirty shirt,
his shadow thrown aside like a blanket.

His arms and legs could be cracks in the stone,
routes for the ants' journeys, the flies' descents.
Brain-washed by the sun into exhaustion,
he lies veined into stone, a fossil man.

Behind him, there is a crowd passingly
bemused by a pavement trickster and quite
indifferent to this very common sight
of an old man asleep on the pavement.

I thought it then a good composition
and glibly called it *The Man in the Street*,
remarking how typical it was of
India that the man in the street lived there.

His head in the posture of one weeping
into a pillow chides me now for my
presumption at attempting to compose
art out of his hunger and solitude.

Zulfikar Ghose

MIDLAND EXAMINING GROUP
General Certificate of Secondary Education
ENGLISH

1510/2

PAPER 2 Literature (Standard Tier)

Monday **13 JUNE 1994** Morning 2 hours

Additional materials:
Answer paper as required.

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TIME 2 hours

INSTRUCTIONS TO CANDIDATES

Write your name, Centre number and candidate number in the spaces provided on each booklet or sheet of answer paper.

SECTION A

Attempt **both** tasks.

SECTION B

Attempt **one** task only.

Write your answers on the separate answer paper provided.

INFORMATION FOR CANDIDATES

This examination paper tests your ability to respond to reading by writing about what you have read. The tasks in Section A ask you to show that you can comment on a range of reading material. The tasks in Section B ask you to write in other ways about what you have read.

The number of marks available is shown in brackets at the end of each task.

The total for Section A is 40 marks and for Section B 30 marks. There are 10 extra marks available for spelling, handwriting and presentation.

This question paper consists of 7 printed pages and 1 blank page

These passages were given to you to study before the examination. They are reproduced here so that you can refer to them in your answers.

The following passage is taken from 'An Old Woman and her Cat' by Doris Lessing.

Lonely in her tiny flat, she was there as little as possible, always preferring the lively streets. But she had after all to spend some time in her room, and one day she saw a kitten lost and trembling in a dirty corner, and brought it home to the block of flats. She was on a fifth floor. While the kitten was growing into a large strong tom, he ranged about that conglomeration of staircases and lifts and many dozens of flats, as if the building were a town. Pets were not actively persecuted by the authorities, only forbidden and then tolerated. Hetty's life from the coming of the cat became more sociable, for the beast was always making friends with somebody in the cliff that was the block of flats across the court, or not coming home for nights at a time so that she had to go and look for him and knock on doors and ask, or returning home kicked and limping, or bleeding after a fight with his kind. She made scenes with the kickers, or the owners of the enemy cats, exchanged cat lore with cat-lovers, was always having to bandage and nurse her poor Tibby. The cat was soon a scarred warrior with fleas, a torn ear, and a ragged look to him. He was a multicoloured cat and his eyes were small and yellow. He was a long way down the scale from the delicately coloured, elegantly shaped pedigree cats. But he was independent, and often caught himself pigeons when he could no longer stand the tinned cat food, or the bread and packet gravy Hetty fed him, and he purred and nestled when she grabbed him to her bosom at those times she suffered loneliness. This happened less and less. Once she realised that her children were hoping that she would leave them alone because the old rag-trader was an embarrassment to them, she accepted it, and a bitterness that always had wild humour in it welled up only at times like Christmas. She sang or chanted to the cat: 'You nasty old beast, filthy old cat, nobody wants you, do they Tibby, no, you're just an alley tom, just an old stealing cat, hey Tibs, Tibs, Tibs.'

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of a beggar asleep on the pavement:
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Behind him, there is a crowd passingly
bemused by a pavement trickster and quite
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remarking how typical it was of
India that the man in the street lived there.

His head in the posture of one weeping
into a pillow chides me now for my
presumption at attempting to compose
art out of his hunger and solitude.

Zulfikar Ghose

Now read the following passage, which describes the writer's concern about a beggar woman.

One of the town's beggars is a very old woman: at least she looks very old, but this may be due to her life of deprivation. She doesn't ask for money, but when she is hungry she stands there with her hand stretched out. I never see her talk to anyone. Although she stays in the town, she does not seem to have a permanent pitch anywhere. Sometimes I see her by the royal tombs, sometimes in the bazaar or the alleys around it. She shuffles about in her rags, and when she is tired she squats or lies wherever she happens to be and people passing have to walk around her.

For the past few days, however, I have been seeing her in the same place. There is an alley behind our house where our washerman lives. A few days ago I took some clothes to him, and I can't be sure of this but I think she may have been lying there at the time. The trouble is, one is so used to her that one tends not to see her. But I definitely noticed her when I went back to fetch the clothes. There was something about the way she was lying there that drew my attention. The lane ends in a piece of land where a man lives in a shed with two buffaloes. Just outside his shed the municipality have put up a concrete refuse dump, but most people see no point in throwing their refuse within the concrete enclosure so that it lies littered around it, forming a little mound. The reason why I noticed the beggar woman was because she was lying on the outskirts of this mound of refuse. I thought at first she was dead but realised this could not be since no one else in the lane seemed concerned. The animals snuffling around in the refuse also paid no attention to her. Only the flies hovered above her in a cone.

The washerman was not at home and his wife was very busy with her household chores. When I mentioned the presence of the beggar woman, she had no time to listen to me. Neither had the coalman who lives in an opening in the adjoining wall, nor the man with the buffaloes. They murmured vaguely when I asked how long she had been there. It struck me that perhaps she was dead and it was no one's business to take her away.

Later I wondered what had happened to me — that I had not even bothered to go close to see whether she was alive or dead. I decided I had to see.

I went up to the refuse dump, I stood over the beggar woman: her eyes were open, she was groaning, she was alive. There was a terrible smell and a cluster of flies. I walked away, and when I passed the coal merchant, I said, "She is ill." He assented vaguely. The washerman could be seen through the arched doorway eating his food in his courtyard. I could not disturb him. In fact, I felt I could not disturb or go near anyone. I went home and bathed rigorously, rinsing myself over and over again. I was afraid. Pollution — infection — seemed everywhere; those flies could easily have carried it from her to me.

Later I went to the local hospital, an old, grim stone building. I went straight into the Medical Superintendent's room. Dr. Gopal, a good-looking man in a white coat and an oiled moustache, was very polite, even gallant, and got up from behind his desk to greet me and seat me in the chair facing him. He was very sympathetic to my story and said, if I would bring her in, they would see what could be done. When I asked whether it would be possible to have her brought in an ambulance, he said that unfortunately the ambulance was under repair and in any case it was only meant for cases of emergency.

"But she is an emergency."

(Adapted from 'Heat and Dust' by Ruth Praver Jhabvala published by John Murray Ltd.)

SECTION A

Attempt **both** tasks.

You should spend about one and a quarter hours on Section A.

Write your answers carefully in paragraphs. You should refer frequently to the passages, but remember to put quotation marks round words or phrases you have quoted from them to illustrate what you have to say about them.

- 1 In one way, Hetty's and Tibby's lives may be said to have gone from bad to worse, and yet they are happier at the end of the story than at the beginning.

Compare the lives they led before and after the move across London, and explain why you think they were happier in their new home.

[20]

- 2 Make a comparison between the poem and the passage on page 5 about the beggar woman.

You should consider:

- the way the beggars are described
- other people's attitudes to the beggars (including those of the writers)
- how the two writers use language to bring to life what they see and how they feel about the beggars.

[20]

SECTION B

Attempt **one** task only.

You should spend about 45 minutes on Section B.

Write 350-500 words.

You are now going to use what you have read about in the passages.

The examiner wants to see that you have understood them, and can use your imagination to extend and develop what you have read.

EITHER

3 Imagine you are one of Hetty's children. You feel guilty about your mother and decide to pay her a visit.

Describe your visit from the moment you arrive in the district where she lives and begin to look for her house. [30]

OR

4 You feel very strongly about the problem of poverty in the world today. You decide to do something about it and so become a voluntary aid worker. You are sent to work among the beggars of India, in a similar situation to those you have read about. Imagine that you have been there a couple of weeks.

Write a letter home to a friend or your parents describing your experiences. [30]

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MIDLAND EXAMINING GROUP

1510/3

General Certificate of Secondary Education

ENGLISH

PAPER 3 Non-Literary and Media Texts (Higher Tier)

Wednesday

8 JUNE 1994

Afternoon

2 hours

Additional materials:

Answer paper as required.

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TIME 2 hours

INSTRUCTIONS TO CANDIDATES

Write your name, Centre number and candidate number in the spaces provided on each booklet or sheet of answer paper.

SECTION A

Attempt **both** tasks.

SECTION B

Attempt **one** task only.

Write your answers on the separate answer paper provided.

INFORMATION FOR CANDIDATES

This examination paper tests your ability to respond to reading by writing about what you have read. The tasks in Section A ask you to show that you can comment on a range of reading material. The tasks in Section B ask you to write more generally about the same or related topics.

The number of marks available is shown in brackets at the end of each task.

The total for Section A is 40 marks and for Section B 30 marks. There are 10 extra marks available for spelling, handwriting and presentation.

This question paper consists of 4 printed pages.

This question paper is based on two articles about keeping two very different kinds of pet. The first is printed below; the other is on the separate insert.

Before you read them, look on page 3 at the tasks you have to do in Section A. Think about these tasks as you read the articles. You may, if you wish, make notes alongside them and underline anything that helps you plan your answers.

The following article appeared in 'The Pet Lover'.

A PRE-CHRISTMAS MESSAGE TO FUTURE PET OWNERS

- Many of you will be receiving a dog for Christmas, so here are some useful tips. Follow them, and you will be responsible to yourself, your pet and your neighbours.
- Prevention of disease in your pet is important — have your puppy inoculated and register him with a veterinary surgeon. Occasionally diseases in pets spread to humans, but if you isolate a sick animal and use sensible and hygienic methods then this should not happen. The first priority for dog owners is the house-training of puppies; this is best accomplished by putting the dog outside after every feed. Once the puppy has been wormed, vaccinated and been introduced to his collar and lead, he should be taken to a specially selected area to relieve himself. Always obey local byelaws; these may require you to remove any mess which your pet has created.
- Give your dog his own dinner service: feeding bowl and water bowl. Use sterilised canned food whenever possible, and never feed him rabbit, chicken, chops or fish bones. Do not feed dogs between meals — dogs have died through being overweight. Keep your dog clean by regular grooming; this is neither arduous nor difficult. Long haired dogs need daily brushing but short haired varieties such as Boxers need grooming only once or twice a week. Use a proper shampoo to bath your pet, and never employ carbolic, detergents or disinfectants. Always dry your dog with his own towel, and keep it apart from your own family's.
- If you wish your dog to become a congenial member of the family, then his basic training must not be neglected. He must be taught to respond to his name, and associate this with reward and pleasure. The second most important word is "No!" Anti-social habits such as jumping up at people must be discouraged, even though this is usually an expression of affection.
- Noisy dogs are a nuisance, but barking at strangers is a natural reflex. If you demonstrate to your pet that the visitor is not a stranger then this problem should diminish. Love and affection will calm a nervous pet; companionship is vital, as a dog is a natural pack animal and needs human company. All dogs also need exercise, the amount depending on the breed and size. An active dog is a happy dog.
- The most important element in pet owning is respect for the individual animal. Your dog has its own personality and it is your duty to preserve your pet's dignity. Adults do not make their children perform tricks before they are given food, so please do not train your pets to make embarrassing exhibitions of themselves. The special relationship between human beings and animals demands mutual acknowledgement of their reciprocal needs.
- Enjoy your pet this Christmas, and discharge your responsibility to him, your family and yourself.

SECTION A

Attempt BOTH tasks.

You should spend about one and a quarter hours on Section A.

- 1 According to the two articles, owners of dogs and pet pigs have a considerable number of responsibilities to their pets, to themselves, and to other people.

Write a summary of these responsibilities.

Write in paragraphs. You should write 200-300 words.

[20]

- 2 How effective do you consider the article on Vietnamese pot-bellied pigs to be as a humorous piece of journalism?

You may wish to comment on the following:

- Layout
- The presentation of the characters of Colin and Hilary and of their owners
- The use of language in the article.

[20]

SECTION B

Attempt ONE task only.

You should spend about 45 minutes on Section B.

You should write 350-500 words.

EITHER**3 You are not bringing that into my house!**

Write about an occasion, real or imaginary, when you brought home an object, pet or person which did not meet with adult approval.

- How did you find it?
- How did the adult(s) react?
- What happened next?

[30]

OR**4 The British Devotion to Pets**

Write a talk to a teenage audience in which you describe your feelings on the subject and try to persuade others to your point of view.

- Can you explain this fondness for pets?
- Do you share it or do you consider our attitude to pets ridiculous?

[30]

OR**5 'It's a Dog's Life'**

Write a story or give your thoughts on this quotation. You may interpret it in any way you like.

[30]

MIDLAND EXAMINING GROUP **1510/3/Insert**
General Certificate of Secondary Education
ENGLISH
PAPER 3 Non-Literary and Media Texts (Higher Tier)
Wednesday **8 JUNE 1994** Afternoon 2 hours

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INSTRUCTIONS TO CANDIDATES

This insert is for use with Paper 3

This insert consists of 3 printed pages and one blank page.

Meet Colin, male chauvinist pig

National Pig Day is nigh. Susan de Muth tells the cautionary tale of a couple whose pet enthusiasm changed their lives

AS HE swaggers across the lounge, shouldering Hilary out of his way, it is clear that Colin is a male chauvinist pig. Those who share this Essex semi-detached house with him confirm the worst: he is selfish, greedy, destructive, even violent. His emotional life is lost to him and he meets Hilary's loyal gaze with eyes of flint, stretching out on the sofa with a grunt. Colin has no concept of a sharing relationship, no notion of equality, and the only time he pays his partner any attention is when he wants to satisfy his own needs.

"He was so sweet when he was little," say Colin's owners, Kay and Geoff Stewart. "The problems with his personality really started when Hilary arrived. He sulked under the sofa for days. He was definitely jealous."

There is no way Colin, or Hilary, would fit under the sofa now.

The Ministry of Agriculture estimates that more than 200 Vietnamese pot-bellies are kept as domestic pets in houses and flats. Although they are widely advertised as a miniature breed, many owners soon discover they have taken on more than they bargained for. As big as rottweilers, with vast double chins and bristly bags of pendulous fat reaching the carpet, Colin and Hilary take up most of the available floor space in the Stewarts' sitting room when they relax on the fawn carpet in front of the television. Geoff, an antique-map restorer, confesses that there is a very little he can do about it if they refuse to budge; he can't pick them up any more and "If you push them they just push back."

"We still love Colin," says Kay, like the disappointed parent of a teenage delinquent, "but I did expect

him to turn out a little differently." Nine months ago, when Kay and Geoff bought Colin for £175, he was the same size as their toy poodle, Dennis. He used to play with Dennis, skipping round the lawn on his little black hooves. He was house-trained within three days, could be taken for walks on a lead and slept indoors in a basket; he was cheerful, entertaining and amenable. Seven-year-old Zoe used to cuddle Colin on her lap in the evenings and the parrot began to snort. Kay and Geoff, great animal lovers, congratulated themselves on having found the perfect family pet and bought Hilary three weeks later.

'We still love Colin,' says Kay, like the parent of a teenage delinquent, 'but I did expect him to turn out a little differently'

"That was definitely a mistake," Kay recalls. "It upset Colin and, to be frank, Hilary didn't have much to offer. She was always well, piggy. We house-trained her and she lived indoors but all she was interested in was food." Whereas Colin's "blue" hue lends him a certain mystique, Hilary's pink flesh shows every red scab and scale.

Kay and Geoff pinpoint the arrival of Hilary as a psychological crisis point for the young Colin. When he finally came out from under the sofa, he had changed. "He had turned against us in some way," Geoff says. "A part of him was lost to us forever. He used to like a game of football or

a romp in the garden with me, but now he mostly hangs around the house looking moody and resentful. As a piglet he was very obedient but recently he does exactly as he pleases: he can open the garden gate and if he fancies a walk he just takes off; he helps himself to our sweets when we're watching television. If you thwart him he can turn quite nasty — we had a new kitchen fitted the other day and Colin came in to have a nose in the cupboards; when we told him to get out he took the edge of the new lino in his mouth, looked up at us with a very sinister expression, and then tore off a big strip. He was affectionate before, he used to kiss us with his snout — not any more. The only living thing he seems to care for is the rabbit. Colin's very gentle with her; she sometimes jumps up on his back and he carries her around."

Colin has never displayed any such tenderness for Hilary. "He's horrible to her," says Kay, "but she's devoted to him — she follows him everywhere, even down the road when he gets out. He butts her aside if she gets in his way, but most of the time he just ignores her."

Colin's tiny eyes are lost in the furrows of frowning ridges over his brow and his hair is a coarse brush when I stroke him. He is chewing my shoe laces but I feel it would be unwise to protest. There is nothing "cute" about this mature boar. It is at this stage that many owners give up their erstwhile pets: "Free to a good home, adult Vietnamese pot-bellied pigs. No time wasters." reads an advertisement in *Adscene*, a Kent local paper. Zoos and show farms are frequently asked if they can take in an unacceptably large pot-bellied hog. For Geoff, however, Colin's

"grotesque beauty" remains a source of fascination.

Changes have been necessary in the home to accommodate Colin and Hilary.

An area in the hallway was commandeered by Colin as his sleeping space; anything placed in it by human hands is torn to shreds. Though generally moody, the pigs occasionally have a burst of high spirits sometimes with disastrous consequences. "If they're feeling merry they bounce about a bit," says Geoff, "and crash into things." Geoff has constructed a small brick wall along one side of the sitting room where the china cabinet has been placed out of

'He turned against us in some way,' Geoff says. 'As a piglet he was very obedient, but recently he does exactly as he pleases'

reach, along with the stereo and other fragile items.

Outside the French windows, a vista of churned mud is all that remains of the bright green lawn. The pigs' hooves have destroyed all the grass. "It would be better all round if they spent more time outside," says Kay, "but they refuse to stay there. People say pigs are dirty but these aren't — they hate mud. They go out to the toilet but then they're squealing and knocking at the door to come back in. They're in the sitting room most of the time," she adds with a brave smile.

Because they are a relatively new pet in Britain, there is some concern

that keepers of Vietnamese pot-bellied pigs are not as informed as they should be. The Ministry of Agriculture warns prospective owners that they should be fully aware of all the pig's needs before they buy one. They need routine maintenance (hooves and tusks must be regularly trimmed) and, above all, exercise. Some breeders warn customers that their pig will grow to a size where a large garden is a necessity, others do not. They can be walked on a leash like dogs, but in July last year the Movement of Sows and Pigs Order was amended to include "pet" pigs, requiring owners to obtain a licence before taking them for walks on specified routes where there could be no risk of their carrying disease to commercial stock. The National Farmers' Union is still concerned that pigs bought and sold as domestic pets are not easily monitored and more legal restrictions on keeping them may be imposed.

Despite their problems, Kay and Geoff intend to persevere with Colin and Hilary and hope, before long, to hear the patter of tiny hooves. They are discovering ways round most tricky situations and nowadays, when Colin looks as though he's on the brink of shouting, "Four legs good! Two legs bad!", Geoff usually finds he can placate him with a bowl of strong brown ale.

(From The Independent)



Photograph: Craig Easton

And these little pigs grew much bigger than expected: Colin and Hilary, Vietnamese pot-bellied pigs, on home ground (the sitting room) with Kay Stewart, their owner.

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MIDLAND EXAMINING GROUP
General Certificate of Secondary Education
ENGLISH

1510/4/RB

PAPER 4 Literature (Higher Tier)

Reading Booklet

Extracts for study prior to the 1994 examination.

To be given to candidates on receipt by the Centre.

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INSTRUCTIONS TO CANDIDATES

Some of the tasks in Paper 4 will be based on these passages.

You have been given them in advance so that you can study them before the examination.

You may do any preparatory work which your teacher or you think is appropriate, and you may make notes on this copy if you wish.

You will **not** be allowed to take this copy or any notes or prepared material into the examination room.

The passages will be printed again on the paper so that you can refer to them in the examination.

This reading booklet consists of 4 printed pages

The Road Home

Sylvia Fair

A solid bulge appeared on the skyline of Penwan Hill and a sheep glanced up, chewing. The heavy thud of rubber footsteps pounded closer and the sheep trotted delicately away, then stopped again, to turn and watch.

Above the approaching wellingtons heaved a mountain of grey, and above that a small round cairn, reflecting two spots of sunlight in jagged flashes. The sheep turned away to graze.

'Oy!'

The sheep looked up. The voice was not unlike that of a nearby ewe that had just coughed, but it came from the black-topped cairn.

'Oy! Say 'ulow to Rosie.'

The eyes stared pleadingly at the sheep through cracked lenses. The fat grey coat was tied round the middle with a blue cloth belt, not buckled, though the buckle was as good as new. Rosie pinched the rim of her black beret, then patted it, as though plumping up a cushion for visitors. But the sheep chose to look elsewhere. With a podgy middle finger Rosie gave the bridge of her glasses a little uphill poke so that the lenses flattened like windows against her eyes. Then she pulled her beret down round her ears, as though to stop the beret, and her ears, blowing off.

At last the wellingtons began to lift, one after the other, carting Rosie's great bulk so caringly that they might have borrowed her brain from her beret. They squelched though the mud, but deftly avoided obstacles that were sharp with shadows, stumbling only over hazier roots and stones.

Faithfully they took her where she knew she wanted to go: across the bridge over the river, beneath the railway arch and out onto the road that headed towards town. Each time her eyes saw movement, her mouth gave a sheep-like grunt, whether or not anyone was close enough to bleat a reply, and her wellingtons braked sharply each time a vehicle passed, her mouth half open, like a door waiting to be kicked shut. Drawing close to the town, she was overtaken by a long string of pony-trekkers and her wellingtons remained stationary for a very long time, and almost forgot their destination. Maybe her beret had reclaimed the brain for a while, to watch, to listen, to smell, to think.

It was market day in town, and the pavements were spilling over with people. But it made no difference to Rosie, for she only ever saw the town on a market day. Her wellingtons cleverly wove a path for her in and out of the crowds until they at last reached the police station. With little rubbery gulps they plodded up the steps; then, to Rosie's bewilderment, they stuck outside one of the big doors, as though weighed down with rocks.

'Going in, Rosie?'

She looked round, cautiously. It didn't sound like her own voice, though it might have been.

'Aye!' Her head nodded itself twice, enclosing the grunt. Then her voice took hold properly. 'I be goin' to complain about them boys.'

A hand tucked itself under her elbow, and she felt a trickle of kindness flow into her arm.

'Not that door, Rosie love,' the voice said. 'Come on. I'll show you where to go.'

Suddenly she was in a room. A cold kind of room. Her eyes stared right ahead and fixed themselves on the face of a man that hovered above a wide-open book. He had a pen in his hand. A policeman, very likely, thought Rosie, cunningly. They didn't always wear hats.

'Hello, Rosie,' he said. 'What can we do for you today?' She frowned, perplexed at his question. But at last her voice began to ripple off the words she had been saving for him. 'They do pull ole Rosie about terrible,' it said. 'Pinch and pull me about. *I want you to stop 'em!*'

Frightened by her own boldness she stopped. One of her ears thought he said something in response, but the other wasn't sure.

'Them big boys,' she went on eagerly, 'they do jump out at me, an' pull at me, an' poke. Up there by Foxy's Gate. Every Wednesday when I go 'ome.'

Her voice, suddenly empty of content, came to a halt. In the panic her ears took charge, but they couldn't sort out what was being said, which worried her, because it sounded important. The policeman's instructions fell to pieces somewhere over that book, so that only small particles channelled through to Rosie's ears and went into storage under her beret. One bit fell through to her wellingtons and prompted her to take an unnecessary step forward. She felt clumsy.

So she told the policeman about the boys again, and as she did so her beret filled with dark figures that sprang out from Foxy's shadowy gateway, laughing and jeering, knocking her over, hiding her wellingtons in the hedge, fingers everywhere, poking and prodding as if she were some old sow that didn't know the difference between laughing and crying. They left her at last, when their own laughing had died, lying in the grass like a spilt trifle, all frothy and shivery and messy. She found her glasses in the mud and, though she washed them many times in the ditch, they were still broken. Her wellingtons she had failed to find until daylight came. They were buried behind the brambles, and her beret was hugging the top of the gatepost.

Continued on the opposite page

'I want you to stop 'em,' she bleated. 'They're rough, them big boys. They get worser every time I pass.'

There seemed to be other voices now, all talking at her, so that she never knew which was which, and their words shot out too fast to catch, so her beret scooped up nothing at all. She raised the rim of it up over her good ear, but a sudden drift of cold air made her forget why she had raised it. So she pulled it down again and ran a finger round inside the rim, making two full circuits before she felt satisfied that it was snug. Words still catapulted though the air, and anxiously she lay in wait, but her head was beginning to solidify, and soon there was no room for words or pictures.

Then one of the voices began to talk very, very slowly, one small drop at a time, and gradually pictures began to seep into Rosie's beret. She smiled. The pictures were sharp and clear.

'It's up to you, Rosie love. You've got to charge those boys yourself,' the voice was telling her. 'We won't let you come to any harm. We'll be there, watching and waiting. You understand, don't you, Rosie?'

Rosie sipped at the fluid picture in her beret. It was Tommy, her father's tup, as clear as clear. Old Tommy knew a thing or two about charging. Her beret bulged with pleasure and her head nodded so many times her neck felt loose.

The policeman looked pleased and relieved. 'Good girl, Rosie.'

Between nods and grunts she purred, pleased they were pleased with her.

It was dark when Rosie left town. Her wellingtons would never allow her to leave the market until the last sheep had been sold, and refused to leave the main street until the last bag of fish and chips had been served. Feeling thoroughly in command of her whole being, Rosie took herself up the police-station steps and put her head through the right door.

'Rosie's off 'ome now, boys,' she heard her own voice announce with triumph.

She trudged back down the steps, sideways so that her wellingtons fitted, then went down the hill to the bottom end of town and beyond the very last streetlight.

Foxy's Gate was at the top of Bryn Pitch. It was a sneaky gateway, so overhung with foliage that no one could tell it was there; a good place for a gang of boys to hide, waiting. Her beret nursed the instructions tenderly. She kept them cradled there by frowning hard. It made the rim tighten round her head, so nothing precious could escape.

She faltered, but only momentarily. A light like that of a glow-worm pricked the darkness near Foxy's Gateway, but it vanished, so she walked on. Her eyes could see shadows now, moving, and her nostrils caught the sharpness of cigarette smoke. Fear blazed inside her.

Suddenly she was down on the ground, leapt at from behind. Her wellingtons were being twisted off her feet and her coat and skirt had shrunk to her waist. She kicked and swore like never before, but she kept her wits under her beret. She knew what she must do. Rosie must be a good girl, and do everything right. She tried to wrench herself to her feet but someone was already treading her wrists flat into the mud, and others had started pulling and poking.

Next moment she was free, and upright, standing there in bare feet. She didn't waste a second. Acquiring the violence of the old tup Tommy, she hurled herself at the moving shadows, bowling them flat one after the other. She barely heard the yells of alarm or the pained gasp of a winded stomach, such was her frenzy. She backed herself away and flung forward again. Her eyes were reeling and the inside of her beret spiralled as though horns were already sprouting. Then something caught at her wrists, and as though on elastic she could only bounce so far before swinging round in a useless curve. Strong hands grabbed, held her more stiffly, and now she couldn't move a muscle for all her struggles. Inside her coat a heavy stone was hammering to get out, and her nose was running, coldly. She sniffed.

'All right, Rosie. Calm down.'

It was the kind, slow-talking policeman who was holding her, so firm. She beamed at him, and he relaxed his grip.

'I done it!' Her voice scraped against her throat, she was so breathless, 'Juss like you tolc me. I done it.'

'No, no, Rosie. We told you to charge them. Official, like.' He snapped his tongue, as though she was stupid.

She was dazed. She wanted him to say, 'Good girl, Rosie,' over and over and over. But he wasn't pleased with her. He thought she was stupid.

There were torches, and the beams confounded her eyes. Shapes hovered, and voices made her ears jerk nervously, even the quiet one. Then a car drew up and her ears could no longer fix on the words she was supposed to hear, because her eyes needed to watch the car. They would take her home by car, they were saying, if she'd be a good girl and do as they told her. Why were they still nagging at her?

Inside her beret a schoolroom appeared, cold and cruel, right round her. A teacher was nagging at Rosie, telling her over and over again that she wasn't trying hard enough. Little Rosie squeezed the pencil between her fingers and pressed as hard as she could, so hard that the point broke and the paper tore. And still the teacher nagged her to try harder.

Rosie backed away from the policeman, or the teacher — she didn't know which for they seemed to be sharing a voice. She shrank herself into a huddle, her eyes only brave enough to look slantwise at things. Blackness fell from the sky and swallowed her whole.

'Goin' 'ome,' she sulked.

She elbowed them away and escaped into the darkness, her eyes trickling like two little brooks, and her beret splitting with aches. She'd done what they'd said. She'd charged those boys. With vengeance borrowed from the old tup Tommy she had charged. And the kind policeman didn't believe her. Didn't understand, even though he had promised to keep watch.

Rosie never carried a torch. She was no more afraid of the darkness than of the light, and anyway her wellingtons didn't need to see their way home. Faithfully they took her under the railway arch and across the river to the safety of the bare, black mountain.

OLD MAN, OLD MAN

He lives in a world of small recalcitrant
Things in bottles, with tacky labels. He was always
A man who did-it-himself.

Now his hands shamble among clues
He left for himself when he saw better,
And small things distress: *I've lost the hammer.*

Lifelong adjuster of environments,
Lord once of shed, garage and garden,
Each with its proper complement of tackle.

World authority on twelve different
Sorts of glue, connoisseur of nuts
And bolts, not good with daughters

But a dab hand with the Black and Decker.
Self-demoted in your nineties to washing-up
After supper, and missing crusted streaks

Of food on plates; have you forgotten
The jokes you no longer tell, as you forget
If you've smoked your timetabled cigarette?

Now television has no power to arouse
Your surliness; your wife could replace on the walls
Those pictures of disinherited children,

And you wouldn't know. Now you ramble
In your talk around London districts, fretting
At how to find your way from Holborn to Soho.

And where is Drury Lane? Old man, old man,
So obdurate in your contracted world,
Living in almost-dark. *I can see you,*

You said to me, *but only as a cloud.*
When I left, you tried not to cry. I love
Your helplessness, you who hate being helpless.

Let me find your hammer. Let me
Walk with you to Drury Lane. I am only a cloud.

MIDLAND EXAMINING GROUP

1510/4

General Certificate of Secondary Education

ENGLISH

PAPER 4 Literature (Higher Tier)

Monday

13 JUNE 1994

Morning

2 hours

Additional materials:

Answer paper as required.

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TIME 2 hours

INSTRUCTIONS TO CANDIDATES

Write your name, Centre number and candidate number in the spaces provided on each booklet or sheet of answer paper.

SECTION A

Attempt **both** tasks.

SECTION B

Attempt **one** task only.

Write your answers on the separate answer paper provided.

INFORMATION FOR CANDIDATES

This examination paper tests your ability to respond to reading by writing about what you have read. The tasks in Section A ask you to show that you can comment on a range of reading material. The tasks in Section B ask you to write in other ways about what you have read.

The number of marks available is shown in brackets at the end of each task.

The total for Section A is 40 marks and for Section B 30 marks. There are 10 extra marks available for spelling, handwriting and presentation.

This question paper consists of 8 printed pages

The following extracts were given to you to study before the examination. They are reproduced here so that you can refer to them in your answers.

The Road Home

Sylvia Fair

A solid bulge appeared on the skyline of Penwan Hill and a sheep glanced up, chewing. The heavy thud of rubber footsteps pounded closer and the sheep trotted delicately away, then stopped again, to turn and watch.

Above the approaching wellingtons heaved a mountain of grey, and above that a small round cairn, reflecting two spots of sunlight in jagged flashes. The sheep turned away, to graze.

'Oy!'

The sheep looked up. The voice was not unlike that of a nearby ewe that had just coughed, but it came from the black-topped cairn.

'Oy! Say 'ulow to Rosie.'

The eyes stared pleadingly at the sheep through cracked lenses. The fat grey coat was tied round the middle with a blue cloth belt, not buckled, though the buckle was as good as new. Rosie pinched the rim of her black beret, then patted it, as though plumping up a cushion for visitors. But the sheep chose to look elsewhere. With a podgy middle finger Rosie gave the bridge of her glasses a little uphill poke so that the lenses flattened like windows against her eyes. Then she pulled her beret down round her ears, as though to stop the beret, and her ears, blowing off.

At last the wellingtons began to lift, one after the other, carting Rosie's great bulk so caringly that they might have borrowed her brain from her beret. They squelched through the mud, but deftly avoided obstacles that were sharp with shadows, stumbling only over hazier roots and stones.

Faithfully they took her where she knew she wanted to go: across the bridge over the river, beneath the railway arch and out onto the road that headed towards town. Each time her eyes saw movement, her mouth gave a sheep-like grunt, whether or not anyone was close enough to bleat a reply, and her wellingtons braked sharply each time a vehicle passed, her mouth half open, like a door waiting to be kicked shut. Drawing close to the town, she was overtaken by a long string of pony-trekkers and her wellingtons remained stationary for a very long time, and almost forgot their destination. Maybe her beret had reclaimed the brain for a while, to watch, to listen, to smell, to think.

It was market day in town, and the pavements were spilling over with people. But it made no difference to Rosie, for she only ever saw the town on a market day. Her wellingtons cleverly wove a path for her in and out of the crowds until they at last reached the police station. With little rubbery gulps they plodded up the steps; then, to Rosie's bewilderment, they stuck outside one of the big doors, as though weighed down with rocks.

'Going in, Rosie?'

She looked round, cautiously. It didn't sound like her own voice, though it might have been.

'Aye!' Her head nodded itself twice, enclosing the grunt. Then her voice took hold properly. 'I be goin' to complain about them boys.'

A hand tucked itself under her elbow, and she felt a trickle of kindness flow into her arm.

'Not that door, Rosie love,' the voice said. 'Come on. I'll show you where to go.'

Suddenly she was in a room. A cold kind of room. Her eyes stared right ahead and fixed themselves on the face of a man that hovered above a wide-open book. He had a pen in his hand. A policeman, very likely, thought Rosie, cunningly. They didn't always wear hats.

'Hello, Rosie,' he said. 'What can we do for you today?' She frowned, perplexed at his question. But at last her voice began to ripple off the words she had been saving for him. 'They do pull ole Rosie about terrible,' it said. 'Pinch and pull me about. *I want you to stop 'em!*'

Frightened by her own boldness she stopped. One of her ears thought he said something in response, but the other wasn't sure.

'Them big boys,' she went on eagerly, 'they do jump out at me, an' pull at me, an' poke. Up there by Foxy's Gate. Every Wednesday when I go 'ome.'

Her voice, suddenly empty of content, came to a halt. In the panic her ears took charge, but they couldn't sort out what was being said, which worried her, because it sounded important. The policeman's instructions fell to pieces somewhere over that book, so that only small particles channelled through to Rosie's ears and went into storage under her beret. One bit fell through to her wellingtons and prompted her to take an unnecessary step forward. She felt clumsy.

Continued on the opposite page

So she told the policeman about the boys again, and as she did so her beret filled with dark figures that sprang out from Foxy's shadowy gateway, laughing and jeering, knocking her over, hiding her wellingtons in the hedge, fingers everywhere, poking and prodding as if she were some old sow that didn't know the difference between laughing and crying. They left her at last, when their own laughing had died, lying in the grass like a spilt trifle, all frothy and shivery and messy. She found her glasses in the mud and, though she washed them many times in the ditch, they were still broken. Her wellingtons she had failed to find until daylight came. They were buried behind the brambles, and her beret was hugging the top of the gatepost.

'I want you to stop 'em,' she bleated. 'They're rough, them big boys. They get worser every time I pass.'

There seemed to be other voices now, all talking at her, so that she never knew which was which, and their words shot out too fast to catch, so her beret scooped up nothing at all. She raised the rim of it up over her good ear, but a sudden drift of cold air made her forget why she had raised it. So she pulled it down again and ran a finger round inside the rim, making two full circuits before she felt satisfied that it was snug. Words still catapulted though the air, and anxiously she lay in wait, but her head was beginning to solidify, and soon there was no room for words or pictures.

Then one of the voices began to talk very, very slowly, one small drop at a time, and gradually pictures began to seep into Rosie's beret. She smiled. The pictures were sharp and clear.

'It's up to you, Rosie love. You've got to charge those boys yourself,' the voice was telling her. 'We won't let you come to any harm. We'll be there, watching and waiting. You understand, don't you, Rosie?'

Rosie sipped at the fluid picture in her beret. It was Tommy, her father's tup, as clear as clear. Old Tommy knew a thing or two about charging. Her beret bulged with pleasure and her head nodded so many times her neck felt loose.

The policeman looked pleased and relieved. 'Good girl, Rosie.'

Between nods and grunts she purred, pleased they were pleased with her.

It was dark when Rosie left town. Her wellingtons would never allow her to leave the market until the last sheep had been sold, and refused to leave the main street until the last bag of fish and chips had been served. Feeling thoroughly in command of her whole being, Rosie took herself up the police-station steps and put her head through the right door.

'Rosie's off 'ome now, boys,' she heard her own voice announce with triumph.

She trudged back down the steps, sideways so that her wellingtons fitted, then went down the hill to the bottom end of town and beyond the very last streetlight.

Foxy's Gate was at the top of Bryn Pitch. It was a sneaky gateway, so overhung with foliage that no one could tell it was there; a good place for a gang of boys to hide, waiting. Her beret nursed the instructions tenderly. She kept them cradled there by frowning hard. It made the rim tighten round her head, so nothing precious could escape.

She faltered, but only momentarily. A light like that of a glow-worm pricked the darkness near Foxy's Gateway, but it vanished, so she walked on. Her eyes could see shadows now, moving, and her nostrils caught the sharpness of cigarette smoke. Fear blazed inside her.

Suddenly she was down on the ground, leapt at from behind. Her wellingtons were being twisted off her feet and her coat and skirt had shrunk to her waist. She kicked and swore like never before, but she kept her wits under her beret. She knew what she must do. Rosie must be a good girl, and do everything right. She tried to wrench herself to her feet but someone was already treading her wrists flat into the mud, and others had started pulling and poking.

Next moment she was free, and upright, standing there in bare feet. She didn't waste a second. Acquiring the violence of the old tup Tommy, she hurled herself at the moving shadows, bowling them flat one after the other. She barely heard the yells of alarm or the pained gasp of a winded stomach, such was her frenzy. She backed herself away and flung forward again. Her eyes were reeling and the inside of her beret spiralled as though horns were already sprouting. Then something caught at her wrists, and as though on elastic she could only bounce so far before swinging round in a useless curve. Strong hands grabbed, held her more stiffly, and now she couldn't move a muscle for all her struggles. Inside her coat a heavy stone was hammering to get out, and her nose was running, coldly. She sniffed.

'All right, Rosie. Calm down.'

It was the kind, slow-talking policeman who was holding her, so firm. She beamed at him, and he relaxed his grip.

'I done it!' Her voice scraped against her throat, she was so breathless, 'Juss like you tole me. I done it.'

'No, no, Rosie. We told you to charge them. Official, like.' He snapped his tongue, as though she was stupid.

She was dazed. She wanted him to say, 'Good girl, Rosie,' over and over and over. But he wasn't pleased with her. He thought she was stupid.

There were torches, and the beams confounded her eyes. Shapes hovered, and voices made her ears jerk nervously, even the quiet one. Then a car drew up and her ears could no longer fix on the words she was supposed to hear, because her eyes needed to watch the car. They would take her home by car, they were saying, if she'd be a good girl and do as they told her. Why were they still nagging at her?

Inside her beret a schoolroom appeared, cold and cruel, right round her. A teacher was nagging at Rosie, telling her over and over again that she wasn't trying hard enough. Little Rosie squeezed the pencil between her fingers and pressed as hard as she could, so hard that the point broke and the paper tore. And still the teacher nagged her to try harder.

Rosie backed away from the policeman, or the teacher — she didn't know which for they seemed to be sharing a voice. She shrank herself into a huddle, her eyes only brave enough to look slantwise at things. Blackness fell from the sky and swallowed her whole.

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When I left, you tried not to cry. I love
Your helplessness, you who hate being helpless.

Let me find your hammer. Let me
Walk with you to Drury Lane. I am only a cloud.

U. A. Fanthorpe

Read this poem, in which the poet talks of visiting his father with Ada, his wife, and his baby son.

IT WAS RIGHT FOR US

It was right for us,
that square, its flaking dignity
sealed from the rest of Islington, with Em
just round the corner, and home
near enough to drop in,
too far away
for stopping.

And when we did call, and saw the old girl
slommocking in curlers, and dad
remote with illness, stuck forever
in his armchair by the fire,
his fine face
drawn with his fight for breath, silent
with the disgrace

of what he'd let things come to, and kids
and slovenly neighbours
hanging about as if the place was theirs —
I sat miserable, with Ada tense,
fussing over the kid,
brushing them off him, irritable,
wanting to be rid

of their snotty noses, their yowled
words, their itching heads, as if
he'd catch not only fleas from them, but
the manners of them, the voices, clothes, the
stunted, sad
adulthood of tough, neglected kids.
I was glad

to be there once; we'd found
my father only, propped by the fire,
a heap of sticks just within reach, some stout
in a cup in the grate. His old
and natural charm
flowered in the peace we brought him.
He raised an arm
and Ada gave the kid. We sat and watched
the old man with our cradled baby
as the tarred wood flared and bubbled.
And then he talked — dry voiced, the breath
halting his words —
to the baby, not to us. He told
of great seabirds

that followed clippers in the China seas
and never budged a wing, and of the fogs
around Newfoundland, that a sailor could
carve with a knife, or cork in bottles,
and of monstrous whales,
and ice on rigging you could play like bells —
all of the tales

I'd heard in the magic dark
or in gaslight fluttering
from a broken mantle — a sailor's world
he'd lost forever. And now again,
and finally,
he tried to give what wealth he'd gained —
those hints of possibility

that goad young blood, and dissolve the walls
of sick-rooms. Gently we took away
our son, forgotten now
as the old boy muttered, and
left him there
before she came back, with half the neighbourhood
and his nightly beer.

Brian Jones

SECTION A

Attempt **both** tasks.

You should spend about one and a quarter hours on Section A.

Write your answers carefully in paragraphs. You should refer frequently to the story and the poems, but remember to put quotation marks round any words or phrases you have quoted from them to illustrate what you have to say about them.

- 1 Write about the impressions you have formed of Rosie in the story "The Road Home" and say how successfully you think the writer has described what it is like to be her.
- These questions may help you to develop your ideas:
- What does Rosie think and feel?
 - How does the way the story is written help you to understand what is happening inside her head?
 - What are the consequences of her disabilities?
 - How does she react to people and to animals?
 - What are your own feelings about her and what happens to her in the story? [20]
- 2 Compare the poems "Old Man, Old Man" and "It was Right for Us".
- You should consider what the two poems tell you:
- about the old men when they were younger
 - about them now
 - about the relationship between them and their children.
- Include in your writing your own feelings and thoughts about the two poems. [20]

SECTION B

Attempt **ONE** task only.

You should spend about 45 minutes on Section B.

Write 350 - 500 words.

You are now going to use what you have read about in the story or the poems to look at them from another viewpoint. The examiner wants to see that you have understood what you have read, and can use your imagination to extend and develop either the story or one of the poems.

EITHER

- 3** Imagine that you are the kindly policeman in the story. Another officer has recently joined the local force and you are talking to him or her about Rosie. Write what you would tell the officer about her. Describe this particular incident and explain what you feel about her and how you would like the officer to treat her. [30]

OR

- 4** Write a story about Rosie when she was a child. [30]

OR

- 5** Imagine that you are the writer of 'Old Man, Old Man' or 'It was Right for Us'. Write about your life at home when you were a child.

OR

- Write a story about a previous occasion when you visited your father. [30]

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