



Examiners' Report
Principal Examiner Feedback
June 2025

Pearson Edexcel International Advanced
Subsidiary in English Language (WEN01)
Unit 1: Language: Context and Identity

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WEN01 introduces students to how language is used in data from a range of sources. Students explore how the contexts of production and reception affect language choices in spoken and written texts. Students also explore how language reflects and constructs the identity or identities of the user and varies depending on the contexts of production and reception. Students apply appropriate methods of language analysis to a range of written, spoken or multimodal data taken from 20th and 21st century sources using the key language frameworks and levels. They also demonstrate their understanding through the creation of a new text for a specified audience, purpose and context.

In the June 2025 examination, Text A was taken from the personal story of Oluwamayowa Salu, known as Mayowa, on the charity website of Malaria No More. In the text, Mayowa describes his experience of living with malaria and his decision to found a non-profit organisation to cater to malaria issues in Nigeria.

Text B develops the identity of Dr Akpaka Kalu, the WHO team leader for malaria in Africa. During the interview he identifies the causes and treatment for malaria, as well as describing the progress made in combatting the disease in Africa.

Question 1 asked candidates to analyse and compare how the language of both texts conveyed personal identity. Three bullet points offered additional prompts and guidance directly linked to the Assessment Objectives (and the mark scheme) for this component and reminding candidates of the specific areas of study they should apply to the task:

- relevant language frameworks and levels
- concepts and issues such as social, cultural and gender factors
- contextual factors such as mode, field, function and audience

Centres are advised that the format and focus of the question will be consistent across the lifetime of the specification. Actual wording may, inevitably, change depending on the nature and content of the two unseen texts presented. However, the focus of assessment is clearly stated in the question stem with its prompt to consider and compare how personal identity is constructed and presented in the source materials. The bullet points remind candidates of the areas of study they should apply to this comparative exploration and are linked directly to the Assessment Objectives applied by examiners to their responses. The mark scheme contains indicative content and may well provide centres with a useful resource when preparing their students for subsequent examinations.

The texts were clearly linked by the issue of malaria in Africa. There was much opportunity for candidates to explore the links and contrasts between them. A key focus of the question was the construction and presentation of personal identity, and the ability of candidates to incorporate this into their analysis proved something of a discriminator, with a significant minority struggling with this concept. Those that framed their analysis through this central focus were rewarded.

In June 2025, responses to Section A covered a full range of achievement. Most candidates offered consideration of the genre and context of both texts and were able to draw links between them based on their central focus on the issue of malaria and its impact on people in Africa. They were also able to offer comparative consideration of the differing audience and context of each text and shape these – with varying success – through the differing perspectives and circumstances of the writers/speakers.

The source texts proved to be accessible to most candidates and the majority offered a balanced consideration of both and the theme that linked them. Most candidates could differentiate context well and most responses across the range could point to more complex aspects of each. These included the multiple functions of both texts. When exploring Text A most commented on the personal nature of Mayowa's story and how malaria has impacted every aspect of his life. Many referenced the appeal of his emotive story to readers throughout Africa and a wider, international audience viewing it online. For Text B, candidates were able to comment on the interview genre and Dr Kalu's professional, authoritative voice, demonstrating well-informed understanding of the issues. Successful responses often developed insightful contrasts between the experiences of the voices/identities within the two texts. There were also some competent explorations of the personal issues surrounding malaria and the impact on families, education and income in Text A, and the scientific causes of and medical interventions for malaria described in Text B.

It was pleasing to see that many centres had made use of the support afforded by the Examiner Report and the indicative content in the mark scheme produced in previous series. This enabled many to meet more of the specific requirements of the Assessment Objectives but centres should be aware that this has potential pitfalls. Many used these documents as a framework for their responses which ensured coverage and structure in the mid-bands of achievement, but which sometimes led to repetition at the lower levels and, in some, less frequent, cases, restricted responses at the mid to upper levels. In these instances, candidates sometimes looked for direct points of comparison across frameworks that were not really evident in the texts themselves, and the subsequent analysis was somewhat strained/forced as a result. Those that used the mark scheme framework to provide 'subheadings' sometimes generated repetitive and/or undeveloped responses, with significant negative impact on the crucial analysis (at word and sentence level) central to performance at AO1 and AO2. Centres are advised that the mark scheme offers indicative content – it is not prescriptive, and given the nature of the specific frameworks considered, there is considerable overlap. Candidates need to be selective and only apply frameworks that relate directly to the task and which can be exemplified directly from the source materials. They should also consider language choices and techniques at every opportunity and integrate these into the body of their response.

AO4 requires candidates to explore connections and contrasts between the source texts. Comparative work was usually helpful in lifting responses into Level 4 (at least)

enabling candidates to demonstrate a more discriminating approach to the data. There continues to be a pleasing increase in responses approaching this comparison in an integrated manner. Others, however, lacked confidence to deal with the texts in an integrated comparative approach and dealt with them in separate sections and this negatively impacted on the potential for reward. The most successful responses seized the many opportunities for comparison and contrast. Many explored the purpose of the texts and developed links through the informative and persuasive function of each. Many picked up on the fact that both texts were clearly linked by the issue of malaria but were differentiated by the experiences of the writers/speakers and their potential audiences, and the genres of the texts.

Successful investigations of Text A were controlled and insightful, focusing on the presentation of identity and foregrounding this in integrated exploration of a wider range of language features and concepts. Responses that were placed in the highest bands of achievement supported comment and assertion with evidence directly drawn from the text which was used to explore the specific language choices made, applying terminology in good range and across frameworks. These linked comment to the concept of 'voice'/persona as constructed by Mayowa, through consideration of his anecdotal and emotive description of living with malaria from childhood. It is this link between form and function/effect that signals a successful response. These answers looked the conventions of storytelling and the types of material shared on charitable websites to highlight key social issues to audiences. Higher level responses also found more to explore in the subtle nature of pragmatics such as how audience response would be affected by language devices rather than just noticing them. They were able to comment on the language choices made in order to fulfil both the informative/persuasive function and to enable the development and presentation of voice and identity of Mayowa.

Even in less successful responses, candidates were able to describe method and effect but many at the mid-lower levels of achievement struggled to apply specific language terms to their consideration of how – and why – these effects were produced. A more systematic approach, whereby comments are supported by evidence drawn directly from the source materials would have provided candidates with the opportunity to explore the language from which this evidence was comprised (applying concepts, terms and frameworks) and would have enabled them to reach the requirement for the higher levels of achievement at AO1 and AO2 provided in the mark scheme. Some responses used a range of impressive language terms to describe language features but did not go beyond a descriptive/feature spotting approach and marks had to be restricted because of failure to link to context/purposes. A list-like approach/feature spotting is not a successful way to tackle this question. Some responses in the lower levels of achievement tended to rely on a framework that was not always helpful to them, with an over-focus on graphology and basic language observations rather than analysis of these. Some general listing of features with limited explanation was also

seen without any link to function. Often examples were missing so the comments were not given the opportunity to expand and demonstrate understanding.

Some offered generalised comments on context, whilst those that were more developed commented not only on the background context of the texts but also on key aspects of production and reception of each (including key generic conventions) and were rewarded accordingly.

Successful investigations of Text B recognised Dr Kalu's profession and role within the WHO, and how this informs his voice. They detected the mixed mode of the text and identified the role played by the Q&A interview format in developing the identity of the interviewee.

As with Text A, successful answers were able to offer specific analytical comment on the crafting of the interview to further the multiple functions of the text. These supported comment and assertion with evidence directly drawn from the text which was used to explore the specific language choices made, applying terminology in good range and across frameworks. This link between form and function/effect again signalling a successful response.

Less successful responses offered generalised comment on the context of the interview and adopted a very descriptive approach to its content. Those that offered limited exemplification and limited specific analysis of the language used were anchored in the mid/ lower bands of achievement. Limited consideration the construction and presentation of the personal identity of Dr Kalu, negatively impacted on the success of the responses. These tended to outline the links and contrasts between the two texts but failed to develop any but the more obvious or to explore the language which evidenced these. Such responses were characterised by an essentially descriptive approach. A significant number of candidates took a summary approach to the content of the texts which is not a useful approach to achieve marks. This proves reading ability but not an ability to analyse language features in use.

It should be noted that there were some incorrect assumptions made about the gender of Dr Kalu in Text B, leading to some irrelevant comparison based on gender theory in a number of responses. As outlined above, the analysis of the linguistic frameworks, with detailed explanation of effect and linked to context, is usually a much richer source of discussion for this unit than the application of theory. Unless the theorist is entirely relevant and specific to a particular point the candidate needs to make, for Unit 1 it is not necessary to overload responses with every linguistic theorist in their revision notes!

Q2 (Section B) of the examination is assessed against AO5:

‘Demonstrate expertise and creativity in the use of English to communicate in different ways’.

As such the task assesses both the fluency and accuracy of written expression and the ability to generate an original and (hopefully) engaging text.

In June 2025 candidates were asked to produce the text for an article to be published on a school/college website. Their article would be used to encourage students to raise funds to support research into the treatment and prevention of malaria in Africa.

The second part of the question:

‘In addition to your own ideas you must refer to material from at least one of the texts in the Source Booklet’

is standard and thus affords comparability year on year. It highlights a key requirement of the task, that is the need to adapt some material from one (or both) of the source texts into the article.

The format of the question is relatively constant, but wording will, inevitably, change according to the nature of the creative task set. As this is a creative response, examiners will accept any approach that concedes to the prompts provided. However, the wording of the question will always specify generic form – in this paper an article; broader context - here a school/college website; audience - here the article is aimed at students; function - in this paper to inform and to persuade readers to raise money for malaria research.

There seemed a slight improvement in responses to Q2 this year. This reflects the ongoing trend for the paper. Candidates appeared to enjoy this section and there were many heartfelt responses – often successfully drawing on the source texts.

Successful responses effectively applied the generic conventions of an article with some skill. These produced clear, well-structured responses and demonstrated an understanding of writing for an audience, experimenting with register. They demonstrated clear awareness of audience and purpose, conceding clearly to the persuasive/informative function of the task and to the underlying charitable agenda. The best adapted the source material fluidly to produce viable articles that fully conceded to the audience, purpose and context highlighted in the question stem. The best reshaped the sources fluidly and many shaped their article specifically to the situation in Africa, at times focussing on a specific country or region – these generally scored well. Higher level responses really addressed the audience and purpose of this specific task – addressing young people and encouraging them to get involved in a particular charitable campaign.

Some candidates had clearly failed to read the full requirements of the task, producing generic, if engaging, essays about malaria that were not convincing as articles, and/or

did not address the appropriate youth audience, and/or did not have the end goal of encouraging the audience to raise charitable funds. Such responses were inevitably self-limiting.

A key requirement of this creative task is that it **MUST** draw on, and reshape, the material from at least one of the source texts – there were some very engaging responses that failed to do this and were essentially self-penalising.

Many, in the mid-range of achievement could adopt a tone or ‘voice’ which was convincing even if the technical accuracy in written English was lacking.

Less successful responses were often very brief which severely restricted links to the source materials or the ability to fully engage the reader. Others appeared to be rushed and undeveloped, suggesting that some candidates did not manage their time effectively. In less successful answers there was evidence of lifting of source material rather than reworking of this was also seen in weaker responses.

Finally, it should be noted that there is a wide range of effective and interesting rhetorical and linguistic devices available to candidates when producing journalistic writing. For some candidates, aside from using a headline at the start of the response or the use of some rhetorical questions, there was little evidence to suggest that they had studied or practised articles as a genre. They are encouraged to be more deliberate in the shaping of their own writing and in the methods they employ.

