

GCSE (9-1)

Examiners' report

ENGLISH LANGUAGE

J351

For first teaching in 2015

J351/03/04 November 2018 series

Moderated component

Version 1

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Introduction

The Spoken Language endorsement is a compulsory component of GCSE English Language. The endorsement is reported as a separate grade (Pass, Merit, Distinction or Not Classified) and does not contribute to the result of the overall GCSE English Language qualification.

Candidates must undertake a prepared spoken presentation on a specific topic following which they must listen to and respond appropriately to questions and feedback. Presentations must be formal but may take a wide variety of forms.

The Spoken Language endorsement is assessed holistically as a grade, using competency-based marking criteria. Competency means that a candidate must meet all the criteria in a grade to achieve it. If they only meet some of the criteria, they cannot be credited that grade.

Centres are responsible for internal standardisation of assessments. This should take place as far as possible before moderation begins where possible.

General overview

Comments about general good/poor practice that apply to the spoken language endorsement. Likely to include:

- planning of presentations and use of notes
- effective use of assessment criteria
- effective organisation and presentation of sample
- importance of internal standardisation

There was a small entry for this November session with most centres entering one or two candidates. Centres were required to submit recorded evidence of the assessments to allow the centres' grading to be monitored. Recordings of assessments on all three grades, distinction, merit and pass, were required where appropriate. Some centres chose to upload their recordings onto the OCR repository, others sent their recordings to the monitor on USB sticks or DVDs.

Monitors reported that the vast majority of centres submitted their recordings by the deadline and the USB sticks/DVDs were clearly and helpfully labelled with candidate numbers, names and the grade awarded. A small number of centres did not label them fully and had to be contacted to provide more details, usually the grade awarded to individual candidates.

The filming was mostly very helpful, although some centres did not provide a recording of the whole assessment, including the questions. Centres are reminded that the whole assessment must be filmed with the candidate clearly in view. At times, the sound quality on the recording was poor, sometimes due to extraneous noise in the background. It is crucial that monitors can hear every word of a presentation and the questions for effective monitoring to take place. It is also fairer to candidates if background noise and disturbances are kept to a minimum during these assessments. Some films were difficult to access where they were too large for monitors to upload or saved in an unusual format. Centres should check their submissions carefully to ensure that they can be accessed easily.

As the marking criteria for the Spoken Language component is competency-based, candidates must fulfil all the criteria in the appropriate grade descriptor to achieve that grade. Most centres applied accurately the assessment criteria, and the awarded grades could be confirmed by the monitor.

Additional comments

These should describe how centres met the assessment criteria and effective use of evidence. Other suitable content includes:

- common misconceptions
- how candidates can access higher mark bands
- if bad practice is occurring, a description of this, why it is bad practice (which should clearly relate to the assessment criteria) and how centres can avoid this in future (especially when this might be treated as malpractice)
- signposting onto further resources (produced by OCR, or others) where this will support centres further

Monitors reported seeing a great deal of good practice, where candidates had planned their presentation carefully and used a wide variety of presentational skills and rhetorical devices to engage their audience. Centres are reminded that candidates should not have full scripts in front of them when doing these assessments; short notes or concise PowerPoint slides lead to a much higher standard of work and develop the skills being assessed in this component much more effectively.

The presentations and questions should last 8 – 10 minutes. Monitors reported that in this session most candidates adhered to this timing. The questions asked should enable candidates to extend their talk rather than repeat information. Monitors reported seeing effective questioning which enabled candidates to extend their talks.

The topics chosen varied, and it was clear in the majority of centres that candidates had made choices, which were judiciously guided by the teacher allowing for personal engagement with the subject-matter as well as an appropriate level of complexity for the grade awarded.

Working on oracy skills throughout the course to enable candidates to develop effective strategies for this final assessment is essential, as it was clear that many candidates were not aware of the need to engage with their audience using gesture, eye-contact and body language. Monitors reported seeing some successful presentations where the candidates were enthusiastic about their subject and fully engaged the audience.

Further guidance, including a scheme of work for the Spoken Language component, is available of the OCR English Language website pages.

Supporting you

For further details of this qualification please visit the subject webpage.

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