

Please check the examination details below before entering your candidate information

Candidate surname		Other names	
Centre Number		Candidate Number	

Pearson Edexcel International GCSE (9–1)

Thursday 21 May 2026

Morning (Time: 3 hours)

Paper reference **4EB1/01R**

English Language B

PAPER 1

You must have:
Source Booklet (enclosed)

Total Marks

Instructions

- Use **black** ink or ball-point pen.
- **Fill in the boxes** at the top of this page with your name, centre number and candidate number.
- Answer **all** questions in Section A, the question in Section B and **one** question in Section C.
- Answer the questions in the spaces provided
– *there may be more space than you need.*
- Plan your answers in the lined spaces provided. Plans will not be marked unless no other response is provided.

Information

- The total mark for this paper is 100.
- The marks for **each** question are shown in brackets
– *use this as a guide as to how much time to spend on each question.*
- Dictionaries may **not** be used in this examination.

Advice

- Read each question carefully before you start to answer it.
- Check your answers if you have time at the end.
- You are reminded of the importance of clear English and careful presentation in your answers.

Turn over ►

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SECTION A

Reading

Answer ALL questions in this section.

You should spend 1 hour on this section.

Read Text One in the Source Booklet, adapted from an article called *My Handwriting Crisis Today: Is Technology Killing Our Writing Skills?*

- 1 In lines 1–4, the writer describes how he used to enjoy writing with a pen.

Identify **one** point he makes.

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(Total for Question 1 = 1 mark)

- 2 Using lines 28–33, state **one** thing the writer says about his handwriting.

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(Total for Question 2 = 1 mark)

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(Total for Question 3 = 10 marks)



Read Text Two in the Source Booklet, adapted from an article called *We know there are many benefits to writing by hand – in a digital world we risk losing them.*

- 4 Using the first paragraph, state **one** thing the writer says about the letter from her mother.

.....

.....

(Total for Question 4 = 1 mark)

- 5 In lines 31–39, the writer describes the year 6 boy's writing.
Identify **two** points she makes.

1

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(Total for Question 5 = 2 marks)



6 Explain how the writer presents her ideas about the importance of handwriting.

You should support your answer with close reference to the passage, including **brief** quotations.

(10)

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(Total for Question 6 = 10 marks)



Refer to BOTH Text One and Text Two to answer the following question.

- 7** Compare how the writers present their ideas and perspectives about handwriting.

Support your answer with examples from **both** texts.

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(Total for Question 7 = 15 marks)

TOTAL FOR SECTION A = 40 MARKS



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(Total for Question 8 = 30 marks)

TOTAL FOR SECTION B = 30 MARKS



SECTION C**Writing**

Answer ONE question from this section.

You should spend 1 hour on your chosen question.

Do not re-tell events from Text One or Text Two in the Source Booklet.

Write approximately 400 words on one of the following:

EITHER

- 9** 'We rely on modern technology too much.' To what extent do you agree with this statement?

(Total for Question 9 = 30 marks)

OR

- 10** Write a story (true or imaginary) entitled 'The Box.'

(Total for Question 10 = 30 marks)

OR

- 11** Describe an object that has memories for you.

(Total for Question 11 = 30 marks)

Indicate which question you are answering by marking a cross in the box ☐. If you change your mind, put a line through the box ☒ and then indicate your new question with a cross ☐.

Chosen question number: **Question 9** ☐ **Question 10** ☒ **Question 11** ☐

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TOTAL FOR SECTION C = 30 MARKS
TOTAL FOR PAPER = 100 MARKS



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reference

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English Language B
PAPER 1



Source Booklet

Do not return this Booklet with the question paper.

Turn over ►

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Text One

My Handwriting Crisis Today: Is Technology Killing Our Writing Skills?

adapted from an article by Mangeni Wycliffe Obwoya

In this passage, the writer presents ideas about how writing using a keyboard has affected his handwriting.



I used to love writing with a pen—genuinely loved it. The sound of the nib scratching or sliding across paper was music to my ears, and the smell of ink from a trusty pen added to the charm. My handwriting, while not the immaculate, typewritten-like script that the girls in my class seemed to effortlessly produce, was still clean, legible, and distinctly mine.

But that was then—back in the ‘prehistoric’ days before computers took over our lives.

5

Everything changed in January 2012 when I discovered my first computer, a gift from my elder brother David. It was an old, bulky Toshiba Satellite. It had faulty speakers, a dead battery, a slow hard drive, low memory and weighed as much as a medium-sized rock, but it was a marvel to me. That machine marked the beginning of a shift, not just in how I worked but in how I communicated. The keyboard quickly replaced the pen as my primary tool for expressing ideas.

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And so, over the years, my once-coherent, somewhat artistic handwriting changed. From neat lines and carefully curved letters, it turned into an unrecognizable mess—a chaotic scrawl that even I struggle to decipher. It’s no longer writing; it’s a visual representation of chaos, like a mother duck and her ducklings had performed an ink-soaked tap dance across the page.

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The realization hit hard, and it’s what jolted me into writing this. My handwriting crisis isn’t just about losing a skill; it’s a reminder of how much our relationship with writing has changed in the age of technology.

Today, I faced a crisis so absurd I still can't believe it happened. Imagine this: a grown man, educated, supposedly intelligent, someone who easily waxes lyrical¹, yet completely unable to write legibly on a piece of paper with a pen of all things. That man, dear reader, was me. An absolute clown before an unsuspecting audience. 20

It started with a meeting. Because there was no electricity, I was handed a pen and paper and told to write my notes—just a couple of pages. The secretary would type them up and print them later. Easy, right? I mean, I've written thousands of words in my life, maybe even metric tons of words if you count the digital ones. 25

Feeling confident, I grabbed the pen like a pro. But the moment I started writing, disaster struck. My handwriting wasn't just bad—it was a crime committed in HD, with Dolby Surround Sound for dramatic effect. My words looked like a drunk mother duck and her ducklings had waddled through ink and tap danced across the white page. Sentences refused to align; some stretched diagonally, others spiraled downward like they were skydiving. It was chaos, pure and simple. 30

As I scribbled my incomprehensible masterpiece, the person waiting for my notes leaned over for a peek—and froze. Slowly, he turned to me, disbelief etched all over his face. He stared, inspected me from head to toe, then back to my face, like I was some strange species that had escaped from a lab. Finally, he dropped his glasses, slammed the table, and demanded: 35

'Young man, did you go to school?'

I nodded. 'Yes, I did!' 40

But he wasn't done. His eyes narrowed, burning with colorful tongues of flame, his voice thundered like a rogue storm:

'Then why can't you write?'

In that moment, I had no answer. None whatsoever. What could I tell him? That my life now revolves around typing on keyboards and sending voice or video notes? That the only thing I write by hand is my signature—and even that looks like a toddler's scribble on a bad day? 45

As I sat there, sweating and wishing the ground would swallow me whole, my mind wandered to Charles Darwin and his theories on evolution. I thought of snakes—proud creatures that once had legs but abandoned them for the efficiency of slithering. Maybe I'm becoming the modern version of that. A human who once wrote neatly but now survives by typing. 50

For now, I've learned one thing: I need to practice writing again. What happened today was a public humiliation, not just for me but for my teachers, my schools, and possibly my ancestors. That man, with fire in his eyes, now sees me as an illiterate fool who can't write. 55

Maybe I'm overreacting, but the thought stings. Next time I'm asked to write, I need to be ready. Otherwise, I risk dishonoring my ancestors again. But as I type this story on my phone—my true comfort zone—I can't help but laugh. Evolution really is no joke.

Glossary

¹*waxes lyrical* – writes with great enthusiasm and detail

Text Two

We know there are many benefits to writing by hand – in a digital world we risk losing them

adapted from an article by Nova Weetman

In this passage, the writer presents her ideas about why handwriting is important.



Recently, I found a letter my mum had written me years ago when she was on holiday in Vietnam. The paper is thin and ratty on the edges, but the handwriting and the turn of phrase is unforgettably hers. In looping, cursive black ink, she has described pages and pages of wondrous observations about her travels, immediately transporting me to another place and another time. If this had been sent as an email, it might have been lost in the endless updating of laptops and operating systems. But because it was a letter, I added it to a box in the cupboard some years ago, knowing I would want to read it again and again and again.

5

Knowing that the person held a pen to write the words elevates the correspondence far beyond something sent via phone or computer. But it is not just the words they write or the expressions they use; it is also the very particular form their lettering takes. I can recognise the bulbous, slightly rounded N that my mum always used, remembering all those times I tried to forge her signature and failed dismally. Her handwriting, like that of my dad's and of my grandparents', was distinctive, as much their signature as their name.

10

I rarely receive letters these days, and write them even less. I write almost entirely on a laptop and am lucky if I scribble out a barely legible shopping list (and even they are often typed on my phone these days). But when I was at school, in an era predating digital technology, we wrote everything by hand. We sat for our pen licence¹ and, if we failed, we had to keep using pencils until we could form our letters legibly and on the line. Now many children are spending much of their day on computers, and much of their learning is being done not with a pencil but with a keyboard.

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It may be easier for students to write on a keyboard, and many enjoy being able to correct their work immediately and learn from spelling and grammar apps when their sentences do not take the suggested form, but I fear we may be losing something. When I am not working as a writer, I run writing workshops in schools. It used to be that students would panic if they made a mistake when handwriting and then use whiteout² to make changes as they went, and I would try to encourage them just to cross it out and keep going, telling them it was their first draft. Now, in most of the workshops I run, many students are working directly onto computers, unless I give them planning sheets that they have to do by hand.

I met a year 6 boy whose writing was as neat as a typeset page. He told me that at the country primary school he had gone to before he moved, the students all had to sit for their pen licence¹, and that most days they spent hours writing by hand. What struck me about this, aside from the fact that I was more drawn to his story because I could read it easily, was that in comparison to so many students typing on a keyboard, I could see where he had crossed out mistakes and fixed them. And most importantly his sentences were not in the dictated form of a grammar app but, rather, an expression of his own. Imperfect, incomplete, rambling and sometimes lyrical³. Amazingly, he had found his own voice, and that was almost impossible to teach in a creative writing exercise.

We know there are many benefits to writing by hand. We know that it aids and shapes creativity. We know that it improves memory. We know that taking notes by hand rather than on a computer allows us to process the information more deeply. And we know that handwriting is a tool to represent personality. My own is messy and scribbled, a sort of shorthand that can't be scrawled fast enough sometimes when my head is full of ideas.

If we continue on this path of primarily using keyboards to write, I also wonder how we will archive our lives for the future. Perhaps others are more organised than I am, but sadly I haven't kept precious emails sent to me from parents, friends, and lovers, but letters are treasured in my house. From the notes passed back and forth in high school to the first attempts at declarations of love, to the sweet cards my children made me when they were young, I can trace my history through the handwriting of others and remember moments in my life that I had long forgotten.

Glossary

¹*pen licence* – a certificate awarded in schools for consistently good handwriting, giving permission to write in pen rather than pencil

²*whiteout* – correcting fluid

³*lyrical* – poetic

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Sources taken/adapted from:

Text One: <https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/my-handwriting-crisis-today-technology-killing-our-wycliffe-obwoya-es9pf>
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Photograph: © Fresh Splash / Getty Images

Text Two: <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2024/may/03/we-know-there-are-many-benefits-to-writing-by-hand-in-a-digital-world-we-risk-losing-them>

Photograph: © Hispanolistic / Getty Images

