



GCE EXAMINERS' REPORTS

**GCE
ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND
LITERATURE
AS/Advanced**

SUMMER 2022

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Annual Statistical Report

The annual Statistical Report (issued in the second half of the Autumn Term) gives overall outcomes of all examinations administered by WJEC.

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ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE

General Certificate of Education

Summer 2022

Advanced Subsidiary/Advanced

UNIT 1: COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS AND CREATIVE WRITING

General Comments

In Unit 1, Candidates have two questions to answer: a comparative analysis of a poem and an unseen text and creative writing, which has three strands to it. Effective planning of time is essential to a successful response to this unit. Most candidates answered every question on the exam paper and, in some cases, easily met the rubric instruction to write approximately 400 words for 2(iii). In a few cases this summer, candidates did not plan their time effectively and did not complete, or in some cases attempt, the comparison of their own writing, which is no doubt a result of a relative lack of timed experience in examination conditions for some in this cohort. Technical accuracy and the quality of written expression is assessed in AO1 for Questions 1 and 2(iii) and in AO5 for Question 2(i) and (ii). Candidates are reminded on the exam paper that assessment will take into account the quality of written communication used in their answers. However, in many responses this year, written expression contained lapses, not only in key spellings but in sentence construction, punctuation use and sometimes in clarity of meaning. Similarly, handwriting was more of an issue this year than in previous examination series and it is vital that candidates are reminded of the importance of presentation and legibility. It is vital that candidates are equipped with a wide-ranging set of technical terms before attempting this exam, in particular for Questions 1 and 2(iii). The range of terms used from integrated study was generally narrower this summer; the best responses used a range of technical terms confidently (AO1), explored approaches meaningfully (AO2), addressed the influence of contextual factors (AO3) and made thorough comparisons and contrasts between the texts (AO4). Weaker responses often struggled to use technical terms, with many using just one or two basic terms and instead taking a descriptive approach to the poem's meanings. Another characteristic of weaker responses was a difficulty in linking the approaches identified to the meanings in the texts for Question 1 or in their own writing for Question 2(iii). These candidates also failed to compare and contrast effectively. There are online CPD resources available on the WJEC website to assist with the teaching of terminology as well as frameworks for supporting comparative responses. It is vital that centres make full use of the resources on offer to best serve the interests of their candidates.

Comments on individual questions/sections

Section A

Candidates had to write about the poem 'To Autumn' by John Keats, taken from their anthology, and had a choice of unseen text; they could write either about an extract from a 'The Morville Hours' by Kathryn Swift or a transcribed extract from the BBC's Autumnwatch. All three dealt with the presentation of seasons and candidates were asked to compare and contrast how they had been presented in the poem and one of the unseen texts. Most candidates chose to write about the prose extract, with few choosing the spoken transcript to compare to Keats' poem. This perhaps reflects a growing reluctance amongst candidates to choose to discuss spoken language. Centres could remind candidates that the spoken transcript often offers a chance for them to engage with a wide range of terminology related to phonology and prosodics and can provide some rich contrasts to the anthology poem.

Candidates on the whole wrote well about 'The Morville Hours', considering some of the similarities in tone with which Keats and Swift present Autumn as having its own gifts. Many were able to compare the abundance of rich imagery related to nature in both. On the whole, candidates also handled the analysis of the poem well, identifying some key linguistic and literary features, with most choosing to focus on the feelings of the poet at the beginning and end of the poem, his sense of melancholy and ultimate praise of Autumn. There was some misreading, some were unsure of Keats's attitude to Autumn, some misunderstood references in the poem to 'clammy cells' and the 'wailful choir'. There was plenty of opportunity for candidates to embed context and offer contextual readings of the poem, the most successful responses offered a range of contextual factors which moved beyond biographical sketches of Keats' life and discussed the Romantic movement too. There was an increase this year in candidates using critical material as context, offering critical interpretations of the reception of the poem. It is possible to access the full range of marks for AO3 without using critical material, but where this was done well, it did often illuminate the ways in which meaning can be received by readers. The consideration of contextual factors was most effective when factors were accurate and precise; there was a rise this year in the number of erroneous contextual references and there were some candidates who did not any contextual reading at all. Most candidates securely identified tone and attitude in the poem and demonstrated understanding of some of the subtler ideas in the poem. Similarly, on the whole candidates handled comparisons well, identifying some key connections between the texts. Those candidates who chose the spoken transcript securely identified the audience and purpose for this spoken text and better responses made reference to its dramatic aspects for entertainment. Errors in the identification of terms was sometimes an issue here, as in Question 2(iii). There was some problem identifying word classes in all three texts, in particular a tendency to struggle with narrative voice and confusion over nouns and pronouns. 'Fruitfulness' in particular was a problematic start for some. Some candidates dealt very well with some challenging aspects of syntax in unseen texts, particularly noun phrases and modification in Text B, and this was pleasing to see, as they had obviously been very well prepared for the examination.

Section B: Creative Writing and Commentary

- Q.2** (i) Write an extract from a speech entitled 'How to be inspired by Autumn!' conveying enthusiasm and why it is creatively inspiring.
- (ii) Write an extract from a promotional leaflet for a woodland nature reserve, describing scenery and activities, which visitors could appreciate during Autumn half-term.

As previous reports have stated, the key to doing well on this section relies on effective time management and planning in order that enough links and connections are embedded in the two written pieces so that pertinent connections can be made in 2(iii) at relative speed. Candidates needed to pay careful attention to genre, audience and purpose in the written tasks and should have made sure that they were producing the text type that they have been set. It would be useful for centres to reinforce to candidates that examiners are, for AO5, looking for evidence of awareness of genre, audience and purpose, as well as register and voice. Quality of written expression is also assessed under AO5.

Question 2(i) asked candidates to write in a genre, writing a spoken piece, and register with which hopefully they were familiar. We read a range of secure and engaging responses, from those with plenty of descriptions of Autumnal scenes and reasons why it would be creatively inspiring for artists and photographers. There were plenty of descriptions of colour, nature and enthusiasm was effectively conveyed in most responses with most concluding with a motivational prompt to 'pick up your paintbrush!' Many used Keats' descriptions as a starting point for their own. Most contained a secure sense of audience and purpose and candidates showed themselves to be familiar with speech writing, the more successful of which confidently crafted descriptions with original imagery and thoughtful angles on creative inspiration. Less successful were those whose responses contained many technical errors, responses where subject and verb disagreed, some which slipped unsuccessfully between past and present tense, and those where a second person voice became third person and struggled with even tone; equally, there were some candidates who failed to move beyond simply outlining some very general descriptions of what Autumn looked like. Some did not fully respond to the task and did not consider the creative aspect and instead just described Autumn in a general manner. Overall, the leaflet task was much more problematic, with many candidates struggling to find the appropriate tenor and register for the written piece. This is a problem which has been noted in previous reports, and I would encourage candidates to practise a range of text types to make sure they understand what is required of different genres. Some candidates struggled with tenor and register and offered a subjective, personal – almost speech-like – description of activities, using the first person narrative voice and too many colloquialisms for the piece to be a credible printed leaflet. Some energy and enthusiasm through slang and non-standard features was useful, but some candidates went too far and their leaflets did not seem to properly address audience and genre. The more successful responses were able to use elements of form and grammar to craft and shape the leaflet and engage the audience with a lively, energetic tone (entertaining bored children was a common feature), and some were genuinely imaginative in their use of what constituted 'activities', with rollercoasters, river rapid rides and – in one case – helicopter trips all being on offer in the woodland nature reserve. As I have stated, many candidates struggled with the leaflet genre, and misread the question, writing a personal guide rather than a formal leaflet, so produced pieces very similar to their 2(i) response.

(iii) An analytical commentary

It was in responses to this question that candidates who had not managed their time effectively struggled. This is always a problem with this unit but this year, we saw an increase in the number of candidates who struggled with this particular question. Often, over-long poetry responses and/or creative pieces tended to result in students not completing or, in some cases, even starting this question. The key to success here was in the strength of the links made between the two written pieces, and it is sensible to suggest to students that they should prepare and plan for these links by including similar and different features in their two pieces. Some were lost for what to compare and offered very general comments, often venturing into evaluation of what was and what was not successful in their written pieces, which is not necessary. Whilst there are a range of approaches that could be taken in this question, those who opted to analyse linguistic and literary features of both pieces concurrently did well, as did those who used the frameworks of language loosely to structure their connections, but who moved beyond it in order to improve the quality of their links. Whilst terminology (AO1) is worth only 5 marks here, it seems the use of a range of terms is crucial to their analysis of language choice and impacts too (AO2, 10 marks), which in turn has an impact on the quality of links (AO4, 15 marks). There is a need for candidates to get straight to linguistic and literary analysis in their commentary. Long introductions evaluating their general choices, outlining where the rest of their novel would go, or considering intended audiences for their vlog with no textual analysis, will fail to hit the assessment objectives soon enough.

Summary of key points

Section A

Successful responses:

- avoided lengthy introductions which rewrote the examiner's rubric or gave unnecessary details about intended audience and purpose
- used a range of terms from across the language framework accurately and applied them sensitively in order to comment on meanings
- used the question 'how seasons are presented' as a focus throughout the response, dividing different aspects of their presentation between paragraphs
- embedded references to contextual factors throughout their response, making these references relevant and central to readings of the poem and moved beyond just biography
- adopted a comparative approach, either moving between the two texts throughout the response, or dealing with the poem first before moving on to the unseen text and then making connections
- ensured even coverage of the poem (and the unseen text of choice), considering material from the whole text, rather than solely focusing on openings and endings.

Areas for improvement:

- Avoid long opening paragraphs which establish general audience and purpose of texts. A brief introduction is best, outlining key attitudes to the topic in hand (in this case the presentation of seasons) and then candidates should move on to close textual analysis, avoiding often spurious comments on intended audiences.
- Keep track of the use of a range of terminology from integrated study. To demonstrate 'clear evidence' of terminology, candidates need to make sure that they aren't using the same few terms time and time again.
- Explore connections between texts in a range of ways; compare the presentation of seasons through content, through technical terms and features.
- Offer nuanced and detailed connections which consider that whilst two texts might be broadly similar in their presentation, there are still key differences in tone and attitude.

Section B

Successful responses:

- demonstrated a secure awareness of genre, audience and purpose in 2i and 2ii
- built in a range of features in both creative tasks in order to compare them in the commentary 2iii
- wrote with a high degree of technical accuracy in all three tasks, making sure that spellings, punctuation and organisation of material was secure
- read the task carefully, making sure that they respond to all elements of it

Areas for improvement:

- Section B, Question 2(iii) responses need to comment on and explore connections between written pieces thoughtfully and this is best done when candidates embed into and then comment on a range of linguistic and literary terms.
- Comparisons are key to Question 2(ii), and responses needed to do more than just comment on one written piece and then another.
- Length of responses to 2(i) and 2(ii). Exceeding suggested word length is self-penalising as it leads to timing problems with 2(iii).

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UNIT 2: DRAMA AND NON-LITERARY TEXTS

General Comments

In the first series of examinations following the Covid-19 pandemic it was pleasing to read a significant number of responses which engaged with the texts and questions, clearly identifying the ability of candidates to write about texts with maturity and accuracy. The range of questions available to candidates enabled them to answer with confidence and there were a number of excellent responses. In what is a time-pressured and content-heavy examination, it is always pleasing to be reminded of what many candidates are capable of producing. Many centres are to be congratulated in the way they have worked with candidates in preparing them for this examination, under very difficult circumstances.

In the previous years of this specification, we have commented on the improvement in use and range of terminology and of how candidates use context to inform their responses. Whether as a result of the pandemic, loss of teaching time, or for a myriad of other potential reasons, examiners commented that there had been a significant step backwards with these issues this year. In general, there was a lack of terminology across both sections of the examination and examiners were also aware that some candidates were simply guessing with terminology as there were glaring errors to some quite simple word class analysis. The lack of contextual discussion was also disappointing and was especially noticed in the part (ii) response for Section A, where it carries more marks than AO1 and AO2. This had a clear impact on the marks candidates received for this question. Occasionally, where there was discussion of context, it was vague and meaningless, for example “Everyone at this time ...”. Such comments do not gain reward as they do are superficial and rarely contribute to the analytical discussion. Candidates, where possible, should be encouraged to use contextual discussion with purpose and not include over-generalised references which are unhelpful. Examiners also commented on the perceived increase of slang and poor expression slipping into responses. Whilst there is no specific quality of written communication assessment in this unit, it does impact on AO1 and the overall impression of the response. There was also an increase in the number of incomplete scripts, or where candidates wrote very brief responses.

Some of the same messages apply from previous reports. Most notable still is the lack of range in linguistic and literary terminology which limits the marks candidates could be awarded for AO1. This is most in evidence in the responses to the extract question in Section A. Again, many candidates simply identify stage directions and sentence mood which is not going to help them move up the bands for each assessment objective. The extract question was part of the Advance Information but examiners saw no discernible difference in responses from previous years. There are also still candidates who do not specify the terminology in their discussion and seem to want examiners to go on the hunt to try to work out which word may be the said verb or noun in question. Unfortunately, there were a few candidates who had rubric infringements by discussing the extract in part (ii) of their Section A response. Another rubric infringement, new to this year, was where a minority of candidates answered on different pairs of questions in Section A.

Many of these issues can be explained by lost teaching time and a whole host of impacts following the pandemic. The majority of candidates were able to produce work which was engaging and demonstrated their abilities. However, there are some centres which have not fully prepared candidates for this examination, for example no terminology being used, and I would encourage them to look again at the specification and assessment objectives so that next year all candidates are able to thrive.

Comments on individual questions/sections

Section A: Post-1900 drama (open book)

The most popular text in this section by a long way was again *A Streetcar Named Desire*, followed by *Kindertransport*. There was also an increase in responses seen for *Shakespeare in Love*.

This section consists of a choice of two two-part questions which address a specified extract (AO1 and AO2), and then an issue from the extract elsewhere in the whole play (AO1, AO2 and AO3). In the Advance Information for this year, a 25% section of the play had been identified as potential extract choices. There was very little evidence of candidates wasting time discussing context in part (i) of the question, but there were still too many responses which were overlong. For this question, 2 pages of A4 is ample space for them to track through and discuss language in detail. With three essays to write in 2 hours, this unit is time-sensitive and candidates should spend time preparing themselves under timed conditions, writing to a specific length, even if they only try this at home.

As stated, some candidates still discuss the extract from part (i), as an aspect of their response to part (ii) of the question. The main concern this year, however, was the absence of context from part (ii) responses and some very brief responses. This area of the question carries more marks than the extract, so candidates are only self-penalising if they do not give it more time. As part of their preparation, candidates could create multiple essay plans on a range of characters/themes, based on different episodes from the play. This should help to ensure that they have a wide enough scope from which to draw when they sit the examination. This should help them to avoid limiting their response and ultimately their mark, in the examination. They do need to be warned again, however, about using pre-prepared essays which do not answer the set question. It was also worrying to see a number of responses to part (ii) questions which began paragraphs with quotations, without any introduction as to the speaker or internal context or even the point the candidate was trying to make. Candidates are rewarded under AO1 for their selection of episodes and they should be ones which highlight and exemplify how this theme or idea is presented elsewhere in the play.

(01/02) Tennessee Williams: *A Streetcar named Desire*

A Streetcar named Desire continues to be a text which candidates enjoy. Of the two questions available, more appeared to write about rejection, and many candidates wrote confidently about Blanche facing different forms of rejection, both in New Orleans and in Laurel. The very best responses to this pair of questions were able to identify Blanche's condescending nature in the extract and also discuss how she was perhaps her own worst enemy when discussing rejection. The question of survival allowed candidates to explore Blanche's attitude to ageing and fragility in the extract, whilst branching out to discuss different forms of survival elsewhere in the play, including some interesting discussions of Mitch struggling to survive in Stanley's hyper masculine world.

(03/04) Peter Shaffer: *Amadeus*

Both questions provided candidates with the opportunity to discuss the central protagonists in detail, with Question 3 being more popular, perhaps due to the idea of revenge in part (ii) of the question. Candidates made some interesting choices when discussing revenge elsewhere, and successfully identified that it is not simply Salieri who pursues this concept through the play. The second part of Question 4 proved a little more challenging and some candidates who attempted this failed to engage with context in sufficient detail.

(05/06) Marc Norman and Tom Stoppard: *Shakespeare in Love*

This text continues to be popular with centres, and candidates clearly enjoy studying this screenplay. Of the two questions, Question 6 was far more popular. There were some excellent responses on the extract, with many candidates addressing the changing emotions of both Will and Viola. When discussing obstacles to relationships between men and women elsewhere in the play, it was pleasing to see candidates branch out and discuss some minor characters, such as Rosaline and even the Queen's role in approving marriages. Where candidates did attempt Question 5 on the audience's sympathy for Will, there were some very impressive responses as some candidates were able to successfully discuss the use of humour and deprecation as a dramatic device.

(07/08) Edward Albee: *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?*

Very few responses were seen on this text.

(09/10) Diane Samuels: *Kindertransport*

Candidates were fairly evenly split in their responses to the questions. In Question 9, there was interesting discussion relating to dramatic tension and the role of the Ratcatcher. Some candidates were also able to successfully discuss the use of adjacency pairs in contributing to dramatic tension. They were also then able to successfully analyse different attitudes to the past, ranging across all of the characters. In Question 10, there were engaged responses which commented on the argument between Evelyn and Lil, with many noting Lil's calmness and mature attitude. When discussing family relationships, there was some very mature work on the relationships between mothers and daughters, with a few candidates commenting on the relative absence of fathers.

Section B: Non-Literary text study (open book)

In this section, *In Cold Blood* and *Once in a House on Fire* were the most popular texts, but responses were seen on all of the texts on the specification.

Candidates are required to select one essay question from a choice of two and in their response demonstrate knowledge of the whole text, whilst addressing AO1, AO2 and AO3. It is therefore essential, as with Section A part (ii), that context is an integral aspect of their discussion, and sweeping generalisations should be avoided. There is also a tendency in this section, for candidates to slip into narrative, or simple description of the events in the text which relate to the question. Again, unless discussion is grounded in analysis of language, candidates are self-penalising.

Candidates who perform well in this section tend to follow a fairly basic structure of overview, three to four episodes from the whole text followed by a brief conclusion, ensuring that they have integrated all of the AOs throughout their response. There were many examples of this approach. As mentioned in the report on previous occasions, context (AO3) is heavily weighted in this section and some candidates still struggle to integrate it throughout their responses in Section B. Once again, examiners noted a number of responses which tried to encompass the whole text in their answers. This prohibits candidates from discussing the language in any real detail and leads them into a descriptive response which does not answer the question. Candidates should be encouraged to select three to four well-chosen episodes from their text and spend some time considering *how* their selection helps them to answer the question. In order to reach the top bands for AO2, candidates need to demonstrate sustained and perceptive analysis of language. The very best responses internally contextualise the episodes they discuss. They then begin their analysis with topic sentences which clearly establish their point and enables them to relate their discussion to the question.

(11/12) Andrea Ashworth: *Once in a House on Fire*

This text continues to be popular with centres and candidates. Of the two questions on offer, more candidates responded to the presentation of violence (Question 12) rather than hope (Question 11). Responses to Question 12 saw candidates, unsurprisingly, predominantly discuss the violent actions of both Peter and Terry. They focused on the physical violence inflicted on Lorraine and Andrea and her sisters. Some also discussed the mental and verbal violence in evidence and were able to link this into engaging contextual discussion of gender. This is a text, however, where candidates can make sweeping generalisations regarding context. They should be reminded of the importance of being specific in future as not all men in the 1970s/80s were abusive. Those who responded to Question 11 frequently discussed the friendship between Andrea and her sisters and also commented on the main sources of hope coming from education and other women.

(13/14) Truman Capote: *In Cold Blood*

Candidates continue to produce highly impressive work on this text and it was again the most popular text on the paper. The majority of candidates opted to respond to Question 13 on criminal life and wrote with engagement and interest. There were many examples of considered discussion of both Perry and Dick and the influences on them, which possibly contributed to their criminal behaviour. More successful responses explored some other aspects as part of their response, including life on the run and the impact on Holcomb residents after the murders. There were many engaging responses to the question on loneliness and isolation, which mainly centred on Perry and his childhood/upbringing. Candidates were successfully able to explore his relationships with his family, time spent in orphanages and also the impact of isolation in prison and being secluded in a female cell. There was also thoughtful commentary on the companionship between Bobby and Susan following Nancy's murder, which allowed candidates to explore a different side of loneliness.

(15/16) Dave Eggers: *A Heartbreaking Work of Staggering Genius*

For this text, Question 15 was more popular than Question 16. The way Eggers changes over time allowed candidates to explore his growing maturity and how he adapts to situations in his relationship with Toph. Where candidates explored elsewhere, they commented on his relationships with friends and work at the magazine as examples of how he changes regarding the differing situations. A few candidates thoughtfully explored how he didn't change and successfully discussed his constant self-recrimination and doubt. There were very few responses seen to Question 16.

(17/18) Robert Minhinnick: *Watching the fire-eater*

Fewer responses were seen on this text this year. Of those, Question 17 on Welsh identity was far more popular and candidates mainly centred their discussion around tourism and its impacts, poverty and employment, along with the way Minhinnick explores the changing nature of the life he experiences in Wales. There was also some interesting discussion on the impact of modernisation and development on Wales.

(19/20) George Orwell: *Down and Out in Paris and London*

Candidates were asked to respond to either how Orwell presents suffering (Question 19) or the presentation of place in both Paris and London (Question 20). Responses to Question 19 relied heavily on work and living conditions in both cities, especially on the squalor of accommodation. There was engaged discussion of class differences and inequality and some candidates also linked the suffering endured due to the difficulties of establishing relationships, or even some friendships. Question 20 was less popular but candidates were able to comment on how Orwell creates a sense of place through the descriptions of accommodation, workplaces and political movements. A few candidates also discussed the struggles of survival and begging as aiding Orwell to establish a sense of place.

Summary of key points

Section A

- Only discuss the set extract in part (i).
- Avoid discussing the set extract in part (ii).
- Linguistic and literary terminology must go beyond identification of sentence mood.
- Part (ii) carries more marks than part (i) and this should dictate the amount of time spent on each essay.
- Context must be addressed in part (ii) responses and go beyond simple statements.
- Specify the terminology being discussed.

Section B

- Spend a short period of time selecting the three to four most effective episodes for discussion.
- Avoid narrating/describing the text, follow S/E/A and include at least one term for each quotation.
- Ensure that context is used in a meaningful and productive manner and is referenced throughout the response.
- Internally contextualise episodes and begin paragraphs with a topic sentence which establishes your point and answers the question.
- Aim for sufficient coverage of the whole text without feeling it necessary to discuss everything.

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UNIT 3: SHAKESPEARE

General Comments

Pages 7-10 were missing from this year's question paper. This affected some of the optional extract questions in Section A of the paper:

Page 7 – second page of extract for *Much Ado About Nothing*

Pages 8-9 – *Othello* extract

Page 10 – first part of extract for *The Tempest*

Extract questions for *Antony and Cleopatra* and *King Lear* along with all questions in Section B were unaffected.

The standard processes which are in place to account for such issues were followed to ensure that no candidate was disadvantaged. We would like to apologise again for the error, however, and the issues that it caused.

This unit requires candidates to respond to a given extract on the set Shakespeare play they have studied and to write one essay (from a choice of two) on the same Shakespeare play. All set texts were attempted, with *King Lear* being the most popular. Some centres had thoroughly prepared candidates for this examination and there were some perceptive responses elicited to the set questions. For both Section A and Section B, the strongest responses combined the evaluation of literary and linguistic features (AO1) with detailed analysis of how meaning was created (AO2). Many responses, however, lacked a range of terminology. For Section B the best responses saw contextual knowledge being *applied* meaningfully to the Shakespeare text. There was an increase in the use of 'bolt-on' context, which was often irrelevant and shoehorned into responses.

Given the AO1 weighting for both Section A and Section B on this paper, terminology needs to be at forefront of teaching this unit in preparation for the 2023 series. Candidates need to be reminded that discussion of **a range of literary and linguistic terminology** is essential in an integrated course. Very few candidates referred to spoken features within the text they had studied and this was clearly a lost opportunity.

Comments on individual questions/sections

Section A: Extract Analysis

For Section A, candidates are required to respond to an extract on the set text they have studied. This extract is printed on the paper itself. The advice is to spend 45 minutes responding to Section A. Responses were seen on all the texts on the specification, with *King Lear* being by far the most popular.

In order to prepare for this section, centres had been given Advance Information regarding the scene/scenes that the extract question would be based upon. It is questionable how useful this approach was in terms of benefitting candidates. In many cases, it led to candidates within a centre discussing the same quotations and making the same points about the citation. This resulted in a lack of originality in terms of the interpretation. It also appeared that some candidates had not been prepared on the scenes at all, as they simply treated the extract as an 'unseen' text, demonstrating very sketchy knowledge and being unable to internally contextualise the material.

It is worth reminding candidates of the importance of *reading the set question* and shaping *their response* to address the requirements of the question asked. Some candidates lost focus and drifted away from the extract itself. They provided irrelevant detail from elsewhere in the play at the expense of close, focused analysis of the set extract itself. The use of irrelevant contextual detail also proved an issue for many candidates and it is worth reminding learners that context (AO3) is not explicitly assessed in Section A. It is possible to credit contextual information *if* a candidate has used relevant detail to inform their reading (AO2) of the actual extract. However, examiners noted that far too many candidates included long-winded contextual paragraphs that were irrelevant to the content of the extract itself. Unfortunately, this was at the expense of close focused literary and linguistic analysis of the actual extract. Candidates must focus on discussing the specified extract if they wish to score well on this element of the paper.

Writing stamina was an issue this year and the length of candidates' responses varied greatly. For a 45-minute response, examiners expect to see a substantial amount of writing. Whilst candidates are free to select detail from within the extract itself, examiners also expect to see *coverage of the whole extract*. There was a noticeable increase in the number of under-developed responses that were a side to a side and half. These responses rarely scored well as they failed to cover the extract in sufficient depth. Even though some quality observations may have been made, work that is this brief, lacks the depth and breadth to access the higher bands. The best responses provided sustained analysis of the extract, covering *a range of points* and exploring language/meaning *in detail*.

Given the AO1 weighting for this question, *a range of literary and linguistic terms need to be correctly identified*. What was noticeable this year, was the limited knowledge that a number of candidates had. Several responses were seen where no terminology was used at all. Many candidates ended up with a Band 2 mark for AO1 as basic evidence was present – a considerable number of candidates used less than five terms within their response. The best responses saw a wide range of terminology being purposefully applied and *used to illuminate candidates' readings of the text*.

There was also an increase in vague use of terminology. Declaratives were misused in abundance with candidates citing part of the whole sentence as support. There were too many occasions where candidates cited a quotation without specifically identifying the term they were analysing (e.g. citing the whole sentence as a noun phrase, verb phrase or determiner). Errors in terminology were more noticeable this year. For example, soliloquy was used incorrectly when a character simply made an extended speech. There was misuse of the term vocative and clear confusion over noun/verb phrases. Candidates mixed up declaratives with imperative and syndetic/asyndetic listing. Weaker candidates resorted to feature spotting with little consideration of how language created meaning. Unhelpful comments like 'The sibilance creates a snake-like sound' scored very poorly. Candidates must be encouraged to accurately use specific terminology for each quotation they cite.

Another point worth highlighting is the use of introductions. Some candidates spent far too long writing a half page introduction full of irrelevant contextual information for which they picked up no marks. This was a waste of their valuable time. At most the introduction to Section A needs to be a sentence, briefly offering internal context on the given extract. For Section A, it is also acceptable to immediately begin addressing the question with no formal introduction. Candidates need to begin discussing quotations, applying terminology and interpreting meaning as quickly as possible as that is where they will pick up their marks.

Antony and Cleopatra

Very few responses were seen. Candidates offered relevant observations on Enobarbus' attitudes to Cleopatra. The best responses were selective in their choice of material and clearly focused on the question. Less successful responses tended to lapse into description rather than exploring how Enobarbus' attitudes were created and conveyed.

King Lear

There were some very insightful responses exploring how Shakespeare created dramatic tension through language/character/plot/staging. Less successful responses tended to lapse into description. Several candidates seemed unprepared and dealt with the extract as an unseen. There was also a basic lack of understanding in some cases with candidates muddling up Edgar/Edmund, misinterpreting Albany's reaction to Edmund's defeat and struggling to say anything meaningful about the relationship between Albany and Goneril. Some candidates also made some tenuous links to audience reaction without fully exploring how dramatic tension was created (e.g. 'This creates shock for the audience as the return of Edgar was not expected').

Much Ado About Nothing

Very few candidates attempted this question. There were some very insightful responses exploring how Shakespeare presented the characters and situation at this point in the play. Better responses had a clear overview of the extract and candidates were able to select relevant material to support their readings. Less successful responses tended to lapse into description and became narrative.

Othello

There were some very insightful responses exploring how Shakespeare created dramatic tension at this point in the play and the extract worked well in terms of eliciting meaningful responses. The very best responses explored how language/character/plot/staging were used to create dramatic tension. Less successful responses tended to lapse into description and became narrative. A few candidates ignored the question completely and focused upon the presentation of the characters.

The Tempest

Very few candidates attempted this question. There were some very insightful responses on how Shakespeare's created comedy at this point in the play. The very best responses explored how language/character/plot/staging were used to create comedy. Less successful responses tended to lapse into description and demonstrated only basic awareness of the elements within the scene was meant to be a source of humour and entertainment.

Section B: Essay

For Section B, candidates need to produce one essay from a choice of two on the same text that they used for Section A. In answering their chosen essay title, candidates are expected to show wider knowledge of the text as a whole. It is acceptable for candidates to refer to a selection of key episodes in detail as long as they place them within the context of the whole text and they are relevant to the actual response. The selection of examples to support their argument also addresses AO1, as this Assessment Objective considers their line of argument and the organisation of their response.

Candidates should be encouraged to plan their work before they begin writing and where this was evident, it seemed to have impacted positively on the candidate's performance. The best responses clearly constructed an argument which addressed their chosen question. There was a lack of coherence, however, seen in many essays where candidates did not answer the question or provided a 'pre-prepared essay'. For example, one of the *King Lear* questions asked candidates to discuss parent/child relationships. Several candidates chose to write about the relationship between Edgar and Edmund with little focus on the actual question itself. There was also an increase in descriptive/narrative approaches and these tended to score poorly across the AOs. Brevity was also an issue in Section B with far too many candidates producing essays of less than two pages. Writing stamina is an area of focus and should be built into teaching of this unit for the 2023 series.

AO1 carries a significant number of marks in Section B. In order to access AO1 candidates need to learn a sufficient number of relevant quotations and then apply a range of literary and linguistic terms to access the marks available. There was clear evidence of candidates being extremely well-prepared and some excellent responses were seen which incorporated a range of sophisticated terminology. However, there were many examples of students misquoting or making up quotations. The analysis of made-up quotations clearly could not be credited. Some candidates also spent a whole chunk of their essay discussing the extract which had been set for Section A, using the exact same terms and examples they had already discussed in Section A.

In a normal examination series, this would not have been credited. However, given the circumstances surrounding this paper, examiners were instructed to credit what they saw as it was possible that some candidates had written their essays before seeing the full extract. This leniency applied to the extracts affected by the misprint only. However, please note, that for 2023 candidates who re-use information from the extract in their essays will not be credited.

As with Section A, some candidates needed to be far more specific in identifying language precisely and the generic application of terminology was once again seen. Many students used little or no terminology at all in their response to Section B. Furthermore, some candidates provided very limited textual support and were unable to offer supporting quotations. This impacted on the marks that could be awarded for AO1 and AO2.

Context (AO3) is clearly important in Section B. Some candidates did attempt to apply context meaningfully to their set text and used it with some purpose to support their argument. Ironically, several examples were seen where candidates had used plenty of context in their response to Section A where it is not assessed and very little context in Section B. The very best responses confidently embedded contextual detail to provide thoughtful interpretations of the play.

Antony and Cleopatra

There were a limited number of centres studying this text. Question 6 required candidates to discuss how Shakespeare presented the significance of honour in both Roman and Egyptian society. This resulted in some insightful readings of the text with very high-level analysis from the best candidates. Less successful responses tended to use a character-based approach which led to more descriptive responses. Question 7 focused on women and the threat they posed to traditional masculine values. Candidates engaged meaningfully with the text and had ample to say in relation to this question.

King Lear

Question 8 – parent and child relationships – was a popular choice. Candidates selected a wide variety of detail from the play and those who constructed a clear argument provided competent responses. Some responses, however, tended to focus heavily on the extract set for Section A. These candidates merely repeated what they had already written and could not be credited. For candidates wishing to refer to Act 5 Scene 3 in their essay, there was a wealth of other material they could have selected. For example, better responses looked at Lear at the end of the scene. Question 9 – the Fool – was less popular but several insightful essays were seen. The best responses were able to consider the dramatic functions of the Fool. Weaker responses tended to be character driven and narrative.

Much Ado About Nothing

Question 10 asked candidates to consider Shakespeare's presentation of attitudes to marriage. The best responses shaped a clear argument and considered the relevant contextual factors. Some responses were character driven and largely narrative. However, there were some insightful responses which covered a range of valid points and effectively used context to shape the argument. No responses were seen on Question 11.

Othello

Question 12 asked candidates to consider Desdemona and how far she can be viewed as a tragic victim. This was a popular question and the best responses shaped a clear argument, embedding the relevant contextual factors. Question 13 – a play without a hero – elicited some very insightful readings of the play. There were some very perceptive essays seen where candidates had engaged meaningfully with the question and several original interpretations were evident. Some responses were character driven and there were some candidates who chose to focus on a single character which was an extremely narrow approach.

The Tempest

Very few responses were seen on this play. Question 14 asked candidates to explore the relationship between Prospero and Miranda. This was a popular choice. The better responses embedded relevant contextual factors meaningfully and had a clear overview of the relationship. Less successful responses were character/narrative driven. Very few responses were seen to Question 15 on reconciliation and forgiveness.

Summary of key points

Section A

- Read the question carefully and **answer the question that has been set**.
- **Terminology** must be **wide-ranging and applied accurately**.
- Candidates should **refer to at least one term per cited example** – this term should be specifically supported by the example.
- **Avoid description/narration** – candidates should be encouraged to adopt the SEA approach.
- Include a **brief introductory sentence** placing the extract in the context of the play or immediately begin addressing the question.
- Avoid **irrelevant contextual detail**.
- Candidates need to demonstrate clear understanding of **HOW** dramatic tension/comedy is created (if that is the set question).
- Candidates need to analyse **HOW** meaning is created.
- Provide candidates with **timed examination practice** to develop writing stamina.

Section B

- Answer the **set question**.
- Avoid using the extract set for Section A.
- Responses need to be shaped into a **coherent argument** – a brief plan would be helpful.
- **Terminology needs to be wide-ranging** and applied accurately.
- Candidates should refer to at least one term per cited example – this term should be specifically supported by the example.
- Candidates need to **learn a range of quotations** from the play and **cite them accurately**.
- **Avoid description/narration** – candidates should be encouraged to analyse how meaning is created and draw conclusions from their points.
- Candidates need to demonstrate understanding of the whole text – an **overview** is essential.
- Centres should prepare their candidates with a **wide and broad understanding of the social, political, historical and cultural context** of their chosen text.
- **Context should be meaningfully applied** and embedded into the candidate's response.
- Centres should also encourage candidates to consider how their chosen texts can be interpreted in contemporary and modern societies.
- Examination practice needs to be embedded across the year in order to build **writing stamina**.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE

General Certificate of Education

Summer 2022

Advanced Subsidiary/Advanced

UNIT 4: UNSEEN TEXTS AND PROSE STUDY

General Comments

It is encouraging to see that in many centres have acted on advice given in 2017-2019. There were very few examples of poor timing this year. There is clear evidence that in most centres candidates are thoroughly familiar with the Assessment Objectives. In a few centres, however, inadequate coverage of contextual factors to address the double weighted AO3 in Section B resulted in disappointing marks.

In most centres, candidates have been encouraged to develop their skills of planning and organisation. This involves reading carefully in Section A and selecting relevantly in Section B. Clear and accurate expression is another key to success and it is pleasing to see centres where this has been prioritised. There were, however, a few centres where more emphasis could have been placed on the benefits of planning, accuracy, clarity and even legibility.

Comments on individual questions/sections

Section A: Comparative analysis of unseen texts

The three texts proved accessible to candidates of all abilities. As the writers and speaker were all in favour of the Lake District, it was interesting to see the range of starting points chosen by candidates for comparative analysis. Careful and thorough reading resulted in a wide variety of thoughtful, accurate and well-supported links. However, when insufficient time was spent absorbing the texts there were flawed, superficial or simplified connections. It is strongly recommended that 10-15 minutes should be spent on reading, re-reading and annotation. Some wasted time at the end of Section A by conclusions which repeated the comparisons they had made.

AO1

Use integrated linguistic and literary approaches

Apply terminology purposefully

Organise and write coherently

Planning, shaping and organisation

Thankfully, few candidates now start by repeating the text descriptors. Some, however, failed to shape the response by including an introduction. The wording of the question suggests that a meaningful introduction will make some connection between the texts and indicate understanding of their treatment of the Lake District. Unfortunately, empty introductions still appear. Comments such as '*All three texts present the area in one way or another but describe it differently and have varying perspectives on the place.*' although true, could be made on any three texts about any location. Credit could be gained straight away for organisation (AO1), understanding (AO2) and connections (AO4) but linking must be based on what at least two of the texts have to say about the Lake District.

The strongest responses concluded with accurate comparisons between the three texts, offering insights gained by analysing them. A brief conclusion should be included to shape the response (AO1) but vague generalisations or repetition of earlier points are of no value.

Terminology and expression

Accuracy and clarity varied enormously between centres this year. Too many candidates mis-spelled names and titles from the question paper and popular terms such as 'simile'. Accounts of poetic form were frequently inaccurate. Most who noticed the rhyme scheme were able to identify it but the terms 'sestet' and 'tetrameter' were familiar to only a few. Those with thorough knowledge were able to discuss the effects of caesura, enjambement and inverted syntax; on the other hand, some made no reference to poetic form at all. This paper always features a poem. Revision of poetic form would be advantageous and past papers are useful for this. Terms to identify features of spoken delivery were generally well used. As Text C, the vlog, had been pre-released, some centres had clearly used the opportunity to revise spoken language effectively.

The most common errors

Juxtaposition, the close placing of two elements *within* a text, cannot be used to describe contrasts between different texts. A good example was Hunter Davies' placing of paired adjectives 'cosy and twee' next to 'scary and awesome'.

Connotations can only belong to words, to describe their associations beyond the literal meaning. There were perceptive comments on Wordsworth's use of 'golden' to pre-modify 'daffodils'.

Lexical sets were popular but widely misunderstood. They are connected by meaning not word class. Productive examples included Bridgewood's use of a lexical set of violence 'killer', 'brutal' and 'attacked' to convey the challenging terrain of the Lake District for cyclists.

AO2

Show understanding of meanings

Show awareness of how meanings are created

Explore linguistic and literary features

Some candidates who showed clear evidence of integrated study, using a range of accurate terms, failed to show their understanding of meanings beyond a basic level. Literal explanations cannot achieve higher than Band 2 marks when accurate. For example, having identified the simile 'lonely as a cloud', some observed only that Wordsworth was on his own, without exploring the choice of image. Unrealistic claims for the effect of linguistic choices cannot be rewarded. For example '*The first person pronoun 'I' is used to convey a sense of wonder and admiration.*' is clearly not valid.

There were some outstanding readings of the poem. Several were insightful and a few were also thorough, using a wide range of approaches and taking in the whole poem from the verb choice 'wandered' to the inverted syntax and rhyme in the final couplet. There were also careless and sketchy readings. Some failed to notice that Wordsworth's main focus was on daffodils and gave very vague accounts. Some misread the image of the stars and thought that he was admiring the night sky. Quite a few only referred to the first stanza.

Similarly on Text B, the opening paragraph drew much discussion but some made little or no reference to the remainder of the article. It was also surprising to see how few discussed the layout of Davies' favourites. Opportunities to show genre awareness, especially purpose and audience, were sometimes missed here. Many responses included clear understanding of Text C, especially its informal features. Those who understood that the vlog would be viewed rather than read, with coverage on screen, were able to make good sense of details such as deixis and pauses.

There were still some examples of excessive word-class labelling. This is time-consuming, difficult and can lead candidates to neglect other parts of the framework. Word-classing is most effective when the words are significant, with developed analysis of the meanings created by choosing them. For example there were convincing discussions of the collective nouns 'crowd' and 'host' used by Wordsworth to introduce the daffodils.

AO4

Explore connections across texts

Identify similarities and differences

Discuss reasons for these

In most centres, candidates have been encouraged to plan according to connections between the texts. Advice in previous reports has been to choose links based on meanings, using the attitudes, purposes and preoccupations of writers and speakers, rather than features. Once a clear connection has been established, material should then be chosen to support exploration of similarities and differences, enabling knowledge and understanding of a range of stylistic features to be shown.

The different genres provided useful starting points. Although understanding of contextual factors is not rewarded separately on Section A, genre, purpose and audience are important, gaining credit when embedded in comparisons. For example, considering audiences led to useful distinctions between the ways Davies and Bridgewood appealed to the intended readers and viewers of Texts B and C, encouraging them to share their enjoyment. Wordsworth, on the other hand, seems to be writing primarily to capture a personal experience. Those with sound knowledge of pronouns often used this to start their supporting analysis.

Choosing a feature-led approach, such as similes, in all three texts, usually makes it harder to develop meaningful linking. There were interesting observations from those who understood Hunter Davies' allusion (*as lonely as a daffodil, as free as a cloud*) to Wordsworth's opening line, an unusually direct connection. But those who only noticed that both used similar images struggled with Davies' meaning.

Candidates also need to be reminded to answer the question set. Some chose nature as a link between the texts. This was rather broad, with much material to choose from, leading a few to forget that the task was actually about the presentation of the Lake District. Most secure comparisons started with a clear understanding of content and attitudes. For example, some chose to discuss the focus of each text (daffodils, variety, cycling). Another successful idea was to consider the benefits of the area (spiritual inspiration, sight-seeing and souvenirs, challenge).

SECTION B: Prose Study (Open Book)

Overview

The 'open book' opportunity requires candidates to select textual evidence from relevant episodes. Those with a thorough knowledge of the novel are clearly at an advantage as they are able to select material quickly and effectively. It is also important that relevant material should not merely be quoted but should be analysed, using linguistic and literary terms and concepts. The most successful responses offered a convincing argument and detailed analysis of relevant episodes in response to the question chosen. However, a significant minority used unsuitable material, offered general outlines of characters and situations or drifted into storytelling.

Again, the range, relevance and integration of contextual understanding varied markedly between centres. Very few candidates overlooked contextual factors altogether but several offered vague, narrow or repetitive comment.

Texts and questions

The Color Purple was the most popular novel, followed by *The Handmaid's Tale*. A few centres had studied *Tess of the D'Urbervilles* and one had chosen *Great Expectations*.

The question on 'ideas about power and authority' was by far the most popular and produced many of the strongest responses on all of the novels. The 'causes and presentation of painful emotions' was also quite popular. There were several responses on 'loyalty and/or friendship', especially in *The Color Purple*.

Planning and Organisation

Many candidates had clearly practised planning and organising their responses on the novel. A strong introduction can gain credit for all AOs by showing understanding of the topic, involving key contextual factors and shaping the response by indicating a relevant argument. Some, however, do little more than re-state the question.

Starting at the beginning of the novel is not required and not always useful. In one centre, all the candidates included material from the first two pages of *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*, sometimes only tenuously linked with the question they had chosen. This occupied time which could have been more effectively used on relevant selection. The protagonist need not be central. Those who started with Celie's first letter sometimes succumbed to the temptation to tell her story and referred only to the early stages of the novel.

The very popular question on power and authority was broad and relevant episodes were ubiquitous in all the novels, offering enormous choice. Planning a relevant argument was essential. Chronological accounts, choosing relevant examples, could result in sensible discussion but the most successful responses took a more selective approach. Some planned to take an overview, covering different aspects of the theme such as race, domestic abuse and female empowerment in *The Color Purple*. This worked for those with thorough knowledge of the novel and careful time management but some over-ambitious responses were clearly unfinished. Other effective responses chose a more specific focus, such as Hardy's view of the church in *Tess of the D'Urbervilles* or state control in *The Handmaid's Tale*.

AO1 and AO2

Evidence of integrated linguistic and literary study varied enormously. A significant minority used little or no relevant terminology, even when they had shown ability to use some in Section A. Practising the analysis of key episodes should enable candidates to draw from a range of familiar material. Focus on choosing productive terms and approaches should also be encouraged. For example, Mr _____'s acquisition of Celie in *The Color Purple* was a popular choice in responses on power and authority. When he negotiates on horseback, it is of little interest that 'horse' is a noun but Walker's symbolism is certainly worth exploring. Literary concepts and readings were missing from several responses.

Some obvious opportunities to use linguistic analysis were overlooked by many. Key techniques such as Walker's use of dialect and Atwood's or Dickens' choice of names will have been studied as integral to the novels as a whole. Many who had studied *The Handmaid's Tale* noted the significance of Offred's name but only a few used relevant terms such as 'preposition' or 'portmanteau' to discuss its formation. A few successful responses also featured insights into the power of public ceremonies, informed by semantic analysis of their names. The best responses include a range of terminology, using literary as well as linguistic approaches, show clear awareness of the novelist's key techniques and feature detailed analysis of a manageable number of relevant quotations.

AO3

Many introductions refer to genre e.g. 'dystopian', 'epistolary' or 'Bildungsroman', but often these were merely labels without development on genre conventions. Some successful responses went further, notably in discussing genre links between *The Handmaid's Tale* and *1984*. The strongest responses introduced contextual factors in the introduction and integrated them relevantly throughout. In some centres a very wide range of contextual understanding was shown and independent study had clearly been encouraged. As well as social and historical background, candidates had a variety of critical opinions and biographical information to choose from. Some were also conversant with other work in the genre.

However, there were a few responses with little or no reference to context. In others there was a very narrow approach: several candidates in one centre referred only to totalitarian regimes in connection with *The Handmaid's Tale*. In another centre most of the responses featured the same contextual factors, usually in the same order, irrespective of the question chosen or the material under discussion.

Summary of key points

Section A

- Spend 10-15 minutes on reading, re-reading and annotation
- Plan links according to what the texts actually say about the topic in the question
- Introductions should start to answer the question
- Practise selecting from the whole text, not just the beginning
- Avoid repetitive conclusions

Section B

- Decide on a plan to address the question chosen
- Have a wide range of contextual factors to choose from. Learn dates, biography and critical opinions
- Include contextual factors in the introduction and throughout the answer
- Ensure that key episodes in the novel can be quickly located
- Practise using a range of linguistic and literary terminology

ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE

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UNIT 5: CRITICAL AND CREATIVE GENRE STUDY (NEA)

General Comments

This unit is internally assessed and externally moderated. It gives opportunities for learners to independently select an aspect of prose study that interests them and to study one text (chosen from a list in Appendix A) provided by WJEC within that genre. In addition, learners are given the opportunity to select wider reading to inform their studies in this unit and to reflect on the learning that has taken place. In reflecting on their studies, learners will then be required to produce original writing related to their chosen genre.

This unit has not been formally assessed since 2019. There was much to be praised in the work seen this year. Despite the difficulties faced by teachers and students over the last two years, the work seen by moderators demonstrated that candidates had effectively engaged with their chosen texts and had also produced engaging pieces of writing appropriate to their ability. Assessment was generally secure. Where generosity was in evidence, this tended to be in Band 5.

Comments on individual questions/sections

Section A: Genre study

Moderators saw work from almost all of the genres on offer, although very little was seen from the genres of journalism, travel and satire/comedy. The most popular genres remain Gothic and dystopia, closely followed by romance and crime. The majority of centres had given candidates access to a range of texts within one or two genres. Some centres had given candidates complete free choice of both genre and texts leading to an entirely independent approach to the Unit. A minority of centres had prescribed genres and texts offering their candidates limited independence in their study and leading to responses which were very similar in content. Where practicality requires common texts to be used, it is best practice to offer candidates a range of tasks from which they can choose.

Texts were generally well chosen and appropriate to this level of study. As always, some texts proved particularly popular such as *The Catcher in the Rye* in the identity/outsider genre, *The Woman in Black* in the Gothic genre and *The Secret History* in the crime genre. Wider reading was generally appropriate and moderators saw an impressive range of texts. It was pleasing to see more contemporary texts appearing as this allowed candidates to explore changes over time in their chosen genre. Centres should avoid texts which are examined elsewhere on the specification such as *The Handmaid's Tale* and *The Color Purple*, both of which were used as wider reading again this year. A minority of candidates chose poetry or drama texts as their wider reading. Unit 5 is a prose study and, whilst brief reference can be made to other text types if relevant to the candidate's argument, non-prose texts should be avoided. The only other note on text selection is for candidates selecting a collection of short stories as their core or wider reading text. To ensure breadth of study, more than one short story in a collection should be used within the genre study.

Moderators saw a wide range of tasks again this year with the majority of centres offering candidates flexibility in selecting their area of focus allowing for an appropriate level of independent study. Task setting is crucial in this unit as, when done effectively, it guides candidates toward the demands of the relevant Assessment Objectives. The strongest responses were based on tasks which allowed candidates to explore context whilst addressing the question. Broader tasks, such as those which ask candidates to explore how texts established their genre, tended to result in responses which lacked sufficient depth of analysis. Narrower areas of focus, such as methods of control in dystopian texts or male weakness in Gothic texts, tended to work more effectively.

The assessment of Section A covers AO1, AO2, AO3 and AO4. AO1 addresses terminology but also academic register and organisation. It was pleasing to see that most candidates had clearly planned their responses, using topic sentences to organise their ideas into comparative paragraphs. For the most part, candidates were able to use an appropriately academic register. However, in a minority of cases, candidates lapsed into a conversational first-person style which marred the quality of their written expression. This year, moderators noted more issues with technical inaccuracy in the Section A responses. In terms of terminology, candidates are expected to apply a wide range of terminology to their analysis of quotations from the texts studied. As candidates can edit and draft the non-examination assessment, the expectation is that this range will draw from all aspects of the framework and should include both literary and linguistic approaches. In stronger responses, moderators saw work which applied a wide range of literary and linguistic terminology with confidence and precision. Where marks were awarded in Band 5, moderators expected to see candidates engage with language on both word and sentence level. In a minority of centres, the range of terminology across the sample of work submitted was too narrow and in rare cases, was entirely absent. This heavily impacted candidates' access to both AO1 and AO2 marks as the identification of terminology should always be linked to meaning. A minority of candidates continue to apply terminology imprecisely, citing a word class i.e. verb and then proceeding to cite a phrase or sentence without specifically highlighting the verb. As this is an A2 unit, candidates are expected to show much more careful consideration of terminology than this.

AO2 continues to be an area of strength in the NEA. Across much of the work seen with candidates engaging well with the key ideas explored within their selected texts. The strongest responses tended to use the Statement/Evidence/Analysis (SEA) approach to very good effect, linking terminology to meaning to progress their arguments. Weaker responses tended to lapse into description, failing to provide adequate textual support for their points.

AO3 continues to be the area in which moderators see the most generosity in terms of assessment. The strongest responses dealt with the conventions of their chosen genre, and the typicality of their texts within it, in some detail. This was a very effective approach and allowed candidates to demonstrate the knowledge they had gained from critical and literary research. Candidates who had read a range of texts from different eras within their chosen genre were, perhaps, better equipped to address this as they were able to consider the changes that had taken place within the genre. Candidates should explore a range of contextual points but they must be relevant to the question. Sections of biographical or historical detail which are not relevant to the essay's focus should not be credited for AO3. Reference to reader responses and critical readings of the texts also proved very useful when used to illuminate the argument. Contextual points should be fully integrated into the argument – effective task setting helps with this.

In terms of AO4, best practice was seen in responses which were comparative from the outset. This indicated that effective planning and drafting had taken place in order to ensure that relevant sections of the texts were selected for comparison. Fully integrated links between the core text and wider reading resulted in some very fruitful veins of argument. Weaker responses on AO4 tended to be characterised by a lack of comparisons through the body of the essay, instead leaving all comparisons to the introduction and conclusion or adopting a 'bolt on' approach in paragraphs. There was generosity across much of the assessment of AO4 again this year.

Section B: Related Creative Writing

Moderators saw a great deal of good work in this section of the NEA folder. Narrative writing, including short stories and opening chapters, was the most popular writing type chosen by candidates. This is an entirely appropriate genre and enables candidates to demonstrate their understanding of their chosen genre. Some candidates were able to show some originality in the structure of their stories using appropriate techniques such as the multiple narrative voices or the epistolary form to the good effect. A minority of candidates submitted middle chapters of longer narratives this year. This is a potentially interesting task but is extremely challenging, particularly when a text descriptor contextualising the chapter is not provided. Across much of the narrative writing seen, characterisation and setting were handled well but dialogue was less successful.

Other than narratives, moderators saw literary texts such as monologues and play scripts. These forms allowed for some interesting exploration of character. A minority of candidates submitted poetry as their related creative writing piece. While this is entirely appropriate, candidates should be mindful of the length of the poems and should consider a collection of poems if more appropriate to the recommended word count for this section of the NEA.

In terms of non-literary writing types, articles, reviews, speeches, TED talks and travel writing all worked well when audience and purpose were clearly defined by the candidates. Less successful were pieces where the place of potential publication was unclear. A text descriptor outlining audience and purpose is particularly useful when submitting non-literary texts. Inappropriate tasks were in the minority again this year, although moderators still saw work which was based on the characters of the genre study. This approach should be avoided as it is self-limiting and impacts upon flair and originality. As noted in Section A, more issues were seen with technical accuracy than in previous years. In some cases, technical errors marred the quality of the work. Thorough proofreading and editing during the drafting process would allow candidates to craft more polished writing pieces.

Administration

Administration on this unit was greatly aided by centres' use of the Non-examination Assessment Checklist. However, a number of centres did not supply this checklist this year. Where this was missing, administrative errors occurred. A minority of candidate and teacher signatures were missing from the cover sheets provided with folders. It is a requirement of the specification that all work is authenticated by both the teacher and the candidate. Final marks were unclear on some of the folders seen and there were a number of clerical errors this year with the totalling of marks.

Annotation on the work submitted for moderation was generally very good and referenced the appropriate Assessment Objectives and band descriptors. In a minority of cases, limited comments were visible on the work – this was particularly evident in Section B responses.

Summary of key points

Section A

Candidates should:

- adopt a suitably academic register, avoiding the first person e.g. 'In this essay, I will...' (AO1)
- use topic sentences to effectively organise arguments (AO1)
- apply a wide range of literary and linguistic terminology (AO1)
- avoid a lack of precision when applying terminology e.g. referring to a verb but then quoting an entire sentence (AO1)
- establish clear links between terminology and meaning - HOW do the identified literary and linguistic features create meaning/effect (AO2)
- link all points clearly back to the question being addressed (AO2)
- support all points with relevant evidence from the text (AO2)
- link contextual points to argument (AO3)
- include a range of contextual detail e.g. literary, biographical, historical, social etc...
- make specific reference to the conventions of the chosen genre and how the selected texts fit into that genre (AO3)
- make sure to adopt a comparative approach from the outset (AO4)
- avoid generalised comparative statements (AO4)
- ensure that links are relevant to the question (AO4).

Section B:

Candidates should:

- have clear links to the knowledge gained from the genre study
- use a style which is appropriate for audience, form, genre and purpose
- produce original and engaging writing
- use language choices which reveal detailed knowledge of literary and linguistic features and their impact
- proofread work carefully to ensure a strong degree of technical accuracy.

Conclusion

There was some excellent work in evidence again this year. Despite the challenging circumstances of the last two years it is clear that there is a great deal of good practice going on in preparing candidates for the NEA.



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