



GCE EXAMINERS' REPORTS

**GCE (NEW)
ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND
LITERATURE
AS/Advanced**

SUMMER 2018

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ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE

General Certificate of Education (New)

Summer 2018

Advanced Subsidiary/Advanced

UNIT 1 – COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS AND CREATIVE WRITING

General Comments

In Unit 1, candidates have two questions to answer: comparative analysis of a poem and an unseen text and creative writing, which has three strands to it. Effective planning of time is essential and we are now seeing this being dealt with effectively and most candidates are answering every question on the exam paper. In cases where candidates did not plan their time effectively, they did not complete, or in some cases attempt, the comparison of their own writing, Question 2 (iii), and therefore were not able to achieve higher than half of the marks for Question 2. In this situation, it was often the case that the candidate had written over-long creative pieces and this had cost them valuable time for the commentary.

Technical accuracy and quality of written expression is assessed in AO1 for Question 1 and 2 (c) and in AO5 for Question 2 (i) and (ii) and candidates are reminded on the exam paper that assessment will take into account the quality of written communication used in their answers. However, in some responses, written expression contained lapses, not only in key spellings but in sentence construction, punctuation use and sometimes in clarity of meaning.

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 best responses this summer used a wide range of technical terms confidently (AO1), explored approaches meaningfully (AO2) 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; had difficulty linking the approaches identified to the meanings in the texts for Question 1 or in their own writing for Question 2 (iii); and 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.

Section A: Comparative Analysis of Poetry and Unseen Text

Candidates had to write about the poem 'Sonnet 43: How do I Love Thee?', taken from their anthology, and had a choice of unseen text. They could write either about an extract from a prose extract from *Written on the Body* by Jeanette Winterson or a transcribed extract from the film *When Harry Met Sally*. All three dealt with love and candidates were asked to compare and contrast how love had been presented in the poem and in one of the unseen texts. More candidates chose to write about *Written on the Body* than the film transcript, with some choosing to use Winterson's more complex and cynical thoughts about love as a counterpoint to Elizabeth Barrett Browning's poem, and some preferring to consider the way that passionate declarations of love are conveyed through Harry's language in the film script. On the whole candidates handled the analysis of the poem well, identifying some key linguistic and literary features, with most choosing to focus on sentence mood in the opening lines, as well as considering the use of listing as a feature, and dealing well with the possible meanings of the text. There was misreading of the poem in some cases, with some candidates interpreting the opening interrogative as an expression of doubt and wondered if Barrett Browning was indeed protesting too much and that her passion belied a sense of

uncertainty. However, most candidates securely identified tone and attitude in the poem and demonstrated understanding of some of the religious imagery and social commentary in the poem. Similarly, on the whole candidates handled comparisons well, identifying some key connections between the texts. Most responses correctly commented on the poetic form and metre of Browning's poem and made useful connections to Harry's pauses and emphatic stress in Text B. Productive links were also made to the unseen extract from Winterson with many candidates identifying key points of comparison between the two texts, with most commenting on the parenthetical asyndetic list used by the writer to outline love as an unstoppable force which won't 'be silent', comparing this to Browning's own private declaration of love. This would have been an interesting angle from which to explore contextual factors, such as the decision to publish her poetry under the guise of translated verse in *Sonnets from the Portuguese*, and her father's condemnation of her relationship with Robert Browning. Some candidates took this opportunity, but a number of candidates in this exam series struggled to engage with and apply relevant context.

It is so important that candidates remember that AO3 is worth a maximum of 15 marks out of 60 for this question, a quarter of the overall marks, and so it forms an integral part of the response. There were many occasions this summer where it was jettisoned to a few sentences at the very start of the response, then not used again, or where contextual factors were not written about at all. Centres are reminded to look at the CPD resources for Unit 1 for the last two exam years (2016, 2017) where there are several ways to encourage candidates to consider context and to think about how best to use it in responses. The most successful responses used a range of contextual factors to access and illuminate meaning (AO2) in the poem and this is by far the best way of handling AO3. Obviously the reading of the poem is central to this question, and candidates have to also pay attention to terminology and connections, so context can perhaps seem like an extra burden, particularly given the number of poems that candidates have to 'prepare' before sitting the exam. When it is taught, however, alongside meaning rather than separately, it can help candidates make inferences and so often will impact upon AO2 as well. Again, candidates should be reminded that context does not necessarily need to just consist of biographical details; it is interesting to consider literary movements and to see the anthology poems as part of a continuum of poetry, rather than always as very separate entities. Broadly, categories such as the Renaissance, the Enlightenment, the Romantics and the Victorians might be a good starting point and would enable candidates to sit Unit 1 with good broad contextual knowledge of the period rather than just having to learn basic biographical points which can sometimes merge and become confusing; more than a handful of students wrote about Browning as if she were Anne Bradstreet, for example, and this perfectly illustrates what can happen when candidates feel pressure to just learn biographical facts.

Under time pressure, some candidates only wrote about one or two aspects of the unseen texts, particularly in Text B where most, it was observed by examiners, mainly focussed on Harry's language and overlooked Sally's. This was a missed opportunity as those who had a close look at Sally's language were able to make some perceptive observations about her assertiveness, as well as the juxtaposition between her words ('I hate you') and her actions ('they kiss'). Where this inference was made, it proved a key comparison and contrast with Browning's female perspective. Similarly, few candidates commented on the references in Text C to 'grandma and grandad' who 'did it'. In this text, some candidates generally commented on the first sentences of the first and second paragraphs and little more. Candidates should be reminded to try and ensure even coverage of texts in order to make sure that their inferences (AO2) and connections (AO4) are as rich as possible. There were numerous examples of candidates who did this well and who offered some very thoughtful responses to Text C with a real effort made to engage with subtextual meanings.

Errors in the identification of terms was a sometimes an issue here, as in Question 2 (iii). Errors which occurred most frequently were the misidentification of sentence types in the poem, with examiners noting that the imperative construction 'Let me count the ways' was frequently labelled as a declarative. Similarly, in Text B 'Love demands expression' was often labelled an imperative. There was some problem identifying word classes in all three texts, in particular a confusion over nouns and pronouns, comparatives and superlatives. Listing often proved challenging, with misidentification of both syndetic and asyndetic lists. Some candidates dealt very well with some challenging aspects of syntax in unseen texts, and this was pleasing to see, as they had obviously been very well prepared for the examination.

Key Points:

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 love is presented' as a focus throughout the response, dividing different aspects of their presentation between paragraphs
- 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 for Section A:

- Focus on attitude and tone to help with AO2, 'Analyse the way meanings are shaped'. A useful strategy would be considering a sentence starter such as 'Love is presented as being...' and using this to focus first readings of texts and initial annotation.
- 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 leaders 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: Creative Writing and Commentary

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.

2 (i) Write an extract from a novel where someone confesses their love.

2 (ii) Write the opening voiceover of a television documentary about love.

Question 2 (i) asked candidates to write in a genre, prose writing, and register with which hopefully they were familiar. We read a range of lively and engaging novel extracts, from passionate and intimate moments with love reciprocated to bittersweet narratives about crushing disappointment and heartbreak. Most wrote an extract, as instructed, though some candidates attempted to write what felt more like a self-contained short story and so in cases like these, candidates should refrain from trying to write whole texts – this was also an issue with the documentary voiceover task for 2ii where they were ending their documentary and saying goodbye to their audience no sooner than they'd begun. These tasks should just be a snapshot of their writing skills, and candidates should remember the rubric instruction to write approximately 200 words. Length of response was an issue, particularly when candidates spent too long and wrote several hundred words more than necessary on 2i and 2ii. Some novel extracts for 2(i) were very effective indeed, and examiners commented that some handled both description as well as dialogue expertly, with some using dialogue deftly to hint at past events or tensions. Most contained a strong sense of audience and purpose and candidates showed themselves to be familiar with prose writing. Less successful were those whose responses read more like speeches or stream of conscious monologues; equally, there were some candidates who failed to move beyond simply and emphatically stating 'I love you' in a few ways with not much evidence of conscious crafting of material.

On the whole, the documentary voiceover task was slightly more problematic, with many candidates struggling to find the appropriate tenor and register for the spoken piece. This is a problem which has been noted in previous reports, and I would encourage candidates to practise a range of spoken text types to make sure they understand what is required of the genre. Most candidates used the third person narrative voice, and most were able to adopt the tenor of a documentary opening with some success; candidates were somewhat drawn to the question 'What is love?' to open their voiceover, or the minor sentence 'Love.' was observed numerous times. The more successful responses were able to narrow the focus of their documentary, imagining documentaries on historical love (Henry VIII was often a figure of focus here!), on the chemistry behind attraction or social attitudes towards romantic love, focusing on issues relevant to them such as sexuality or legislation of marriage. Some candidates used elaborate conventions to craft and shape the voiceover and introduce the topic to their audience, such as different voices, edits of visuals and sound effects. A few used the style of a nature documentary to explore love between animals which was an original and refreshing approach.

Technical accuracy and quality of written expression was a problem for many candidates, particularly in 2(i) where some novel extracts had problems with organisation, paragraphing and punctuation.

2 (iii) An analytical commentary

It was in responses to this question that candidates who had not managed their time effectively struggled. 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 (AO3, 15 marks).

Key Points:

Successful responses for Section B ...

- demonstrated secure awareness of genre, audience and purpose in 2 (i) and 2 (ii)
- built in a range of features in both creative tasks in order to compare them in the commentary 2 (iii)
- 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, writing an extract and an introduction rather than a whole text.

Areas for improvement for Section B

- 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 (iii), 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 TEXT STUDY

General comments

The range of questions available to candidates enabled them to answer with confidence and accuracy. There were many excellent responses, with candidates clearly engaging with the texts and subject matter. It is very pleasing to see how many are able to produce high quality responses to three essay questions in a limited amount of time. Centres which have devoted time to preparing their candidates in the skill of essay planning and writing have spent their time wisely. As **AO1** marks are also awarded for cohesion and fluency of writing, if centres do not already devote time to essay writing techniques then they may find merit in doing so.

It is clear that there are centres which thoroughly prepare their candidates for this examination, enabling them to respond to any of the possible questions which may be asked on their texts. Candidates who consistently ensured their responses met and addressed all of the relevant Assessment Objectives, made it straightforward for examiners to reward their work. As this is the third cohort to undertake the new specification, it was pleasing to note that the use of 'bolt-on' context appears to be disappearing. In fact, candidates seemed much more comfortable discussing contextual information (AO3) this year, and in the majority of cases what they used was relevant. There was much less use of basic biographical information, and far more consideration of the cultural, social and historical implications on their texts. There were still examples of candidates not discussing it at all, or making huge, sweeping generalisations ("During the 70s/80s all men were violent" in a number of essays), but the impression from this series of examinations, is that both candidates and teachers are more comfortable and competent with integrating relevant context into essays.

Some of the same messages apply from the report last year. Most notable still, is the lack of **range** in linguistic and literary terminology, which limits the marks candidates could be awarded for AO1. Again we had many candidates who simply identify stage directions and sentence mood which is not going to help them move up the band descriptors. In the pressure of an examination, candidates frequently make careless errors, but there were some which mystified examiners, such as plays referred to as novels, and poetic terminology used to discuss non-fiction texts. What was also alarming was the increase in candidates who did not use quotations to support their argument. This is an open book examination, so candidates do not have any excuse not to use quotations as they do not have to learn them. This is also self-penalising as if they do not use quotations, then they cannot support their argument or use terminology. Instead, it makes their response almost entirely a narrative account. Candidates should also be reminded about the importance of basic technical accuracy and paragraphing, as this can have an impact on the cohesion and quality of their written response.

Section A: Post-1900 drama (open book)

Still the most popular text in this section was 'A Streetcar Named Desire' followed by 'Kindertransport'. However, more responses than usual were seen on 'Amadeus' and '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). Whilst some candidates still waste time discussing context for part (i) of the question, it was less evident this year. However, what was notable from this year was a high number of overlong responses to this question, with candidates frequently writing considerably more for part (i) than part (ii) when part (ii) carries more marks. This is a fruitless exercise and is ultimately self-penalising as they do not give themselves sufficient time to address the rest of the paper. With three essays to write in 2 hours, this unit is time sensitive, and candidates should prepare under timed conditions and writing to a certain length, even if they try this at home.

Some candidates still discuss the extract from part (i), as an aspect of their response to part (ii) of the question. The question clearly states that they should refer to at least two other episodes from the whole play. 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.

Tennessee Williams: *A Streetcar named Desire*

Both of these questions were popular with candidates, with their choice possibly being dictated by whether class or violence was the more appealing topic for part (ii). Discussion of Stanley and Blanche featured prominently in both questions, but some candidates also discussed the lack of violence from some, for example Mitch until the end, and the mental violence targeted at Blanche. They also commented on the relationship between Eunice and Steve, and how domestic violence was somewhat 'normalised' at the time. Discussion of class conflict occasionally tripped over into an essay entirely about Blanche, but there was also interesting writing regarding the differences between the Old South and the new America and melting-pot of New Orleans. On the whole candidates used context purposefully and usefully for this text, and there was some rich writing in evidence.

Peter Shaffer: *Amadeus*

Question 4 seemed to be more popular with candidates, perhaps due to the fact that the relationship between Mozart and Constanze is so integral to the whole play. They wrote confidently on them in the extract and especially the seemingly genuine love and affection these characters are presented as having. Salieri featured more prominently when discussing the whole play, especially the change in his attitude when he realises his bargain with God is revoked. Question 3 provided a clear opportunity for candidates to explore the selfishness and underhand tactics in evidence in the Court of Joseph II, as Salieri and Rosenberg, in particular, plot to destroy any ambition Mozart had. Some candidates also picked up on the ambitions of Constanze and how she influences Mozart.

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, number 6 was far more popular. There were some excellent responses on the extract, establishing the dichotomy between Will and Viola in bed, and Nurse and Wessex outside, with Wessex representing Viola's future away from Will. Most wrote of Viola's far more realistic approach compared to Will's threats of fighting Wessex, and also on the contrast in Wessex's language once Viola appears before him. When writing about relationships between men and women in the whole play, candidates sensibly chose to discuss how women of Viola's class were often bargaining tools between families, while those such as Rosaline were equally abused by the men in their world. It was also pleasing to see how some decided to discuss the Queen, and that as a woman, her relationship with the men in her life was rather more one sided.

Edward Albee: *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?*

Very few responses were seen on this text.

Diane Samuels: *Kindertransport*

The majority of candidates opted to write about question 9 for this text, with many discussing the importance of separation to all of the characters. There was good evidence of candidates writing about different time periods, with responses frequently discussing Eva/Evelyn's change towards Helga after their separation. This led interestingly into useful discussions about the mental impact of the Holocaust on those who were somehow involved. Some also commented on Evelyn and Faith's relationship, and how Evelyn's fear of separation may have indoctrinated her into not forming such a close bond with her own daughter. Those who answered question 10 wrote well on the extract, and made sensible comments about Eva's sense of fear and abandonment. They also wrote well about the various examples of hope, in what is a rather dark play.

Key points:

- 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
- specify the terminology being discussed
- context should be integrated throughout the essay in part (ii) and avoided in part (i).

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 offered for this section of the unit.

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, then candidates are self-penalising.

As mentioned in the report on previous occasions, candidates are required to demonstrate detailed knowledge of their text in this section. However, simply stating a number of different examples without discussing and analysing them is not a productive way to respond. There were instances where candidates wrote over 10 pages for this section, outlining virtually every example of the specific theme they could recall, and simply narrating this for their examiner. Clearly, this is not answering the set 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 answer the question. In order to reach the top bands for AO2, candidates need to demonstrate sustained and perceptive analysis. Time in class can be devoted to essay planning and selecting a range of episodes which perhaps cover a number of different themes/issues. Candidates have a clean copy of the text in the exam, and they can look again at episodes to make a final judgement as to which ones work most effectively for the question. This aspect of essay planning and organisation can earn them marks for AO1.

Andrea Ashworth: *Once in a House on Fire*

This text continues to be very popular with centres and candidates. Of the two questions on offer, more candidates responded to the presentation of men (Q 12) rather than crime and criminal behaviour (Q 11). Responses to question 12 unsurprisingly saw candidates predominantly focus on the negative presentation of men, but a number also discussed Andrea's biological father and her relationship with Jamie, and how even though her previous experiences had been so damaging, she was able to find happiness. Interestingly, some candidates also commented on how her mother's dependence on men had an impact on Andrea. There were some sweeping generalisations regarding context for this question, so candidates should be encouraged to aim to be more specific in future. Those who responded to question 11 frequently discussed the impact of poverty on criminal behaviour, and also connected this to physical violence and how this was normalised for some. Discussion of some other characters, such as Wendy, proved fruitful as they demonstrated more thorough knowledge of the text.

Truman Capote: *In Cold Blood*

Candidates continue to produce 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 **different** settings. However, far too many limited their response to the description of Holcomb in the opening page, without exploring how Capote uses settings throughout the text. With such rich pickings as Alaska, Mexico, Miami, Lansing to choose from, it was quite disappointing that candidates did not explore these settings further. Responses to question 14 focused primarily on the courage demonstrated by Herb and Nancy when faced with the murderers, but there were some very interesting responses which also discussed Perry's courage during his childhood, both with the Nuns in the convent and with Tex in Alaska. A minority also commented on Dick's mother's courage in attending the trial, which reflected a thoughtful and mature response to the question.

Dave Eggers: *A Heartbreaking Work of Staggering Genius*

For this text, question 15 was more popular than 16. His relationship with Toph is integral to the text and there are numerous episodes that candidates could have selected. The majority of candidates decided to focus on how their relationship transforms from the idyllic and fun beginnings in San Francisco, to Eggers' more serious and 'parental' role. Some also commented on their relationship at the very beginning which seemed slightly distant. A number of candidates found success in exploring how Eggers' initial impression of using Toph as a 'depository' for his ideas altered very quickly, when the reality of parenting began and responsibility and judgement of other parents changed his approach.

Robert Minhinnick: *Watching the fire-eater*

This text continues to be popular with a number of centres and both questions allowed candidates to select a wide range of chapters to discuss. The majority discussed question 17 on attitudes towards tourists and tourism. 'Rio de Journal' figured heavily in both questions, and with good reason, but this one chapter should not dominate responses. For question 17, many candidates opted to discuss his attitudes towards tourists in Wales and how they caused environmental damage, but also Minhinnick's own experiences of being the tourist. Some candidates explored the more philosophical experiences of being a tourist, for example feeling alienated from one's own culture and the different ways he examines this concept. Those who responded to question 18 on being an outsider tended to discuss the impact of Globalisation on indigenous cultures, but also how one can feel isolated/alien from one's own culture, for example in 'Dock of the Bay' and 'Our Back Pages'.

George Orwell: *Down and Out in Paris and London*

Candidates were asked to respond to either the presentation of challenging situations (Q 19) or friendship (Q 20). Struggling to find work and extreme poverty figured heavily in question 19, with many citing the numerous references to his work as a *plongeur* as an example of the working conditions Orwell faced. Interestingly, a number of candidates, once they had discussed some of the challenging situations, then went on to discuss how it was more challenging for some of the other characters as Orwell could remove himself from the situation whenever he wanted by relying on family/friends. Those who chose to write about friendship primarily focused on Boris, Paddy and Bozo. Most wrote convincingly about the impact these men had on Orwell and selected appropriate episodes from the text to integrate context into their responses.

Key points:

- 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 not over-generalised
- technical accuracy and correct spelling is essential, as is the use of standard English
- aim for sufficient coverage of the whole text without feeling it necessary to discuss everything.

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UNIT 3 - SHAKESPEARE

General Comments

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. Once again, *King Lear* was the most popular Shakespeare text studied. Many centres had thoroughly prepared candidates for this examination and examiners read many insightful and perceptive responses to the set questions. For both Section A and Section B, the strongest responses evaluated literary and linguistic features (AO1), confidently linking language and meaning (AO2). For Section B where candidates had to provide relevant contextual detail (AO3) the best responses saw this context being *applied* meaningfully to the Shakespeare text.

Given the AO1 weighting for both Section A and Section B on this paper, the teaching of terminology must remain be at the forefront of teaching for this unit. Candidates need to be reminded that discussion of a range of literary and linguistic terminology is essential in an integrated course.

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. This requires the candidates to read, think and write at speed. Responses were seen on all the texts on the specification, with *King Lear* being by far the most popular.

It is worth centres reiterating to candidates the importance of reading the set question and shaping their response to address the requirements of the question asked. Although candidates are free to select detail from within the extract itself, examiners expect to see coverage of the whole extract. Responses which only referred to the first half of the extract were self-penalising. Better responses provided sustained analysis of the extract itself, covering a range of points and exploring language/meaning in detail. Once again, responses that were a side to a side and half rarely scored well. They were too brief, failing to cover the extract in enough depth. It is worth reminding candidates that they must focus on discussing the specified extract rather than other parts of the play. Several candidates wasted precious time referring to irrelevant detail from elsewhere in the play.

Many candidates responded to their chosen extract with knowledge and insight. There were, however, still some instances where candidates seemed to be treating the extract as an unseen text and showed limited knowledge of the text they had studied. Where mis-readings occurred, candidates struggled to place the extract in the context of the play itself.

Given the AO1 weighting for this question, examiners expect to see a range of literary and linguistic terms being correctly identified. The extract is printed on the examination paper and Section A is a key opportunity for candidates to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding of terminology. Once again, the best responses saw a wide range of terminology being meaningfully applied and there were some perceptive readings offered. Some candidates, however, did not use any terminology at all and this severely impacted upon the AO1 mark awarded.

Candidates must be encouraged to use *specific* terminology for each quotation they cite. There are still too many occasions when candidates cite a quotation without specifically identifying the term they are analysing. This year, there was a marked increase in candidates referring to adjectives when quoting whole noun phrases. Declaratives were also being misused in abundance with candidates citing part of the whole sentence as support. Feature spotting without linking the language to meaning tended to score poorly for AO1 as the terms were not being *purposefully* applied.

Context (AO3) is not explicitly assessed in Section A. As pointed out in last year's report, it is possible to credit contextual information if a candidate has used relevant detail to inform their reading (AO2) of the extract. However, once again a number of candidates included irrelevant contextual detail at the expense of close focused literary and linguistic analysis (AO1) when discussing meaning (AO2). Ironically, many of these candidates then failed to use sufficient context for Section B where they would have been rewarded.

Antony and Cleopatra

The majority of responses seen were competent and candidates offered insightful observations on how dramatic tension was created. Better responses explored how language/character/plot/staging were used to create dramatic tension. Less successful responses tended to lapse into description.

King Lear

There were many insightful responses on Shakespeare's presentation of Lear with candidates confidently analysing a range of language features. Some candidates ignored the question and their responses moved from focusing on Lear to a more generalised discussion of all the characters on stage. There was some misreading of the extract where candidates thought Lear's tirade was directed at Cordelia rather than Goneril. There was also irrelevant context provided when Lear denounced Goneril as a 'Degenerate bastard' with some candidates writing over half a page on Edmund, the sub-plot and attitudes to his illegitimacy.

Much Ado About Nothing

This extract was well handled with many candidates making pertinent points about Beatrice's attitudes towards Benedick. Some candidates ignored the question completely and responded descriptively.

Othello

The best responses here provided a sharp focus on Othello's state of mind. There were some competent responses to this extract and the better candidates had a real grasp of Othello's conflicting emotions. Less successful responses tended to lapse into description and were narrative driven. Some candidates wasted valuable analysis of the extract itself by including too much irrelevant contextual detail.

The Tempest

Very few candidates attempted this question. Better responses explored how language/character/plot/staging were used to create dramatic tension. Less successful responses tended to lapse into description and were narrative driven.

Key points:

- 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
- Candidates should demonstrate clear understanding of the given extract – this is not an unseen text
- Include a brief introductory sentence placing the extract in the context of the play
- Avoid irrelevant contextual detail

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.

The best candidates shaped their arguments into a coherent response. Some responses were too brief at only two pages. There were also examples of work where the essays were very long/rambling and these tended to lapse into narrative and description. Some candidates chose to ignore the question completely and wrote a 'pre-prepared essay'. This is clearly not advisable as often there was not enough focus on the set task.

To fully access AO1 students needed to have prepared thoroughly and learned a sufficient number of relevant quotations. They needed to apply a range of literary and linguistic terms to access the marks available. Once again, some candidates offered superb responses which utilised sophisticated terms and there was much to be celebrated. However, as with Section A, many candidates needed to be far more specific in identifying language precisely. Students also need to be reminded of the importance of quoting accurately from the play. Once again, there were many examples of students making quotations up which clearly could not be credited.

Context (AO3) is clearly important in Section B. Candidates who wrote mini-biographies, random historical detail or who included context as a 'bolt-on' at the end of a paragraph performed less successfully than those who meaningfully embedded contextual detail into their responses. Some candidates wrote introductions which included generalised context which had little relevance to the set task. The best responses applied context to their reading of the text and provided thoughtful interpretations of the play.

Antony and Cleopatra

There were a limited number of centres studying this text. Both Question 6 and Question 7 were well done. Question 6 – Antony 'as a man desperate to establish his own identity and his honour as a Roman hero' – proved to be popular and was coherently responded to. Question 7 – personal and political loyalty – resulted in some insightful readings of the text with very high-level analysis. Less successful responses tended to use a character-based approach which led to more descriptive responses.

King Lear

Question 8 – female power and determination – was a popular choice. Candidates who constructed a clear argument here provided competent responses. Some responses tended to focus on Goneril and Regan and ignore Cordelia - this was a missed opportunity and tended to narrow the argument. Question 9 - betrayal – was also popular and candidates covered a wide-range of points. Some responses were character driven and there were candidates who chose to focus on a single character which was an extremely narrow approach. Where candidates looked at betrayal as a concept, the level of analysis was generally very competent.

Much Ado About Nothing

Question 10 focused on how Shakespeare used the Hero/Claudio relationship to present social and political issues. Some candidates wrote descriptively about Hero and Claudio, relying heavily on narrative. The best responses shaped a clear argument and considered the relevant contextual factors. Some candidates also meandered into discussing Beatrice/Benedick, a response they had possibly pre-prepared. Question 11 focused on appearance/reality. Better candidates dealt with appearance/reality as a plot device and cogently linked the concepts to character, theme and audience reception.

Othello

Question 12 asked candidates to consider Shakespeare's presentation of Emilia as an unconventional Elizabethan woman. Some candidates ignored the question completely and wrote descriptively about Emilia. The best responses shaped a clear argument and considered the relevant contextual factors. Some candidates had a limited overview of Emilia's role in the play as a whole. Question 13 – status and identity – was a popular choice. Some responses were character driven and there were some candidates who chose to focus on a single character which was an extremely narrow approach. However, there were many insightful responses which covered a range of valid points and effectively used context to shape the argument.

The Tempest

Responses were seen on both Question 14 and Question 15. Question 14 asked candidates to consider Miranda as a conventional, passive heroine. The best responses shaped a clear argument and considered the relevant contextual factors. Some candidates relied heavily on a narrative response and had a limited grasp of the function of the character. Question 15 focused on Shakespeare's use of magic. The best responses engaged with the quotation and considered how magic was an instrument of manipulation, intimidation and control. Weaker responses tended to provide a character description of Prospero and Ariel.

Key points:

- Answer the set question
- Candidates need to shape their response into a coherent argument
- 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
- Avoid description/narration – candidates should be encouraged to adopt the SEA approach
- Candidates should demonstrate understanding of the whole text
- Where specific extracts have been used to construct the response, candidates should demonstrate understanding of how these are relevant to the play as a whole
- Candidates need to put the text at the centre of their response and apply relevant context
- Context should be meaningfully applied and embedded into the candidate's response
- Centres should prepare their candidates with a wide and broad understanding of the social, political, historical and cultural context of their chosen text
- Centres should also encourage candidates to consider how their chosen texts can be interpreted in contemporary and modern societies

ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE

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UNIT 4 – UNSEEN TEXTS AND PROSE STUDY

General comments

This was the second time that Unit 4 had been sat; centres and candidates have clearly heeded advice which followed last year's examination. The handling of timing between the two sections was encouraging and there were fewer examples of disappointing marks caused by failing to address the double-weighted AOs - AO4 (comparisons) in Section A and AO3 (contextual factors) in Section B. Time is well spent ensuring that the Assessment Objectives are thoroughly understood.

On the paper as a whole, the most important concern remains the range and quality of linguistic and literary analysis.

Section A: Comparative analysis of unseen texts

Compare and contrast the presentation of the coast in:

Text A: Tennyson's poem 'Break, break, break'

Text B: the preface from *Channel Shore*

Text C: transcription from TV documentary *Coastal Path*

Overview

Again, the collection of texts elicited an enormous range of responses, both in quality and in the range of ideas generated. The most impressive responses featured fluent expression, firm organisation to show meaningful links between the texts, and accurate analysis informed by the selective application of a wide range of literary and linguistic approaches. Yet again, however, some candidates seemed to have omitted the essential careful reading stage, ignored the question or chose superficial connections to discuss.

AO1

Use integrated linguistic and literary approaches

Apply terminology purposefully

Organise and write coherently

Planning and organisation

It is worth repeating that empty introductions and conclusions waste space and time but cannot gain marks. The text descriptors should not be copied out but they are intended to be helpful and should be read carefully. A few failed to notice that Tennyson was mourning, which was essential to understanding the poem. Very generalised openings which repeat the question and announce that the candidate intends to answer it are also unhelpful.

Successful introductions always show evidence of thorough reading, focus on the question set and start to address the comparative element of the question in a meaningful way. Candidates can gain credit straight away for organisation (AO1), understanding (AO2) and connections (AO4).

A conclusion should be included as part of shaping the response (AO1) but it should be brief. Too many still feel obliged to offer a long paragraph repeating what has been said in the essay or offering vague generalisations.

Organising the essay

Using connections between texts as an organising principle is recommended. 10-15 minutes spent on reading, re-reading and annotation helps connections to emerge. Responses built around meaningful similarities and differences are the most successful as they address the comparative element.

Fewer now use a systematic framework approach as an essay plan. This is good news because starting with form and structure makes it difficult to focus on meanings and comparisons are likely to be superficial. In some centres, candidates have evidently been advised to begin with audience and purpose. Although these are valid considerations and can show awareness of genre differences, they can only be rewarded on this paper as part of a comparison or contrast and are most successful when linked to analysis of language features.

Candidates should also be reminded to answer the question and to decide on starting points which will address it directly. Whatever the form of organisation used, meaning must always form the basis of any analysis.

Terminology and expression

Common errors include:

- **Connotation** is widely used incorrectly. 'Connotation' means an *additional* tone, idea or feeling which a word or phrase suggests, as well as its literal meaning. The expressions 'negative connotations' and 'positive connotations' should be discouraged.
- Texts may contrast but they cannot **juxtapose**, which refers to the close placing of two elements within a text.
- **Lexical sets** are connected by meaning and their identification requires quotation of the relevant words (which do not need to be classed) from the same **semantic field**.
- **Phrase** is often used inaccurately for a sentence or a clause.
- A list which includes a conjunction (often 'and') is **syndetic**.
- Writers **imply**; readers **infer**.

The quality of expression, as ever, ranged from impressive to inadequate. Here are just a few reminders:

- 'Positive' and 'negative' are not the answer! Once used, these reductive terms are almost always repeated and in extreme case are the only judgments made on the impact of stylistic features.
- Candidates are expected to paragraph their writing, using topic sentences and to aim for technical accuracy. Misspelling of characters' and writers' names and of key terminology is all too common.
- Titles should have capital letters, as they do on the examination paper.
- It is customary to use a writer's full name or surname i.e. not Alfred.
- Starting a sentence with 'Similarly' does not in itself create a connection.

AO2

Show understanding of meanings

Show awareness of how meanings are created

Explore linguistic and literary features

Genre awareness

Most candidates acknowledged poetic form but there were many inaccurate comments. Iambic pentameter and rhyming couplets are the most popular terms but neither apply to 'Break, break, break'. Few recognised the use of spondee in the opening lines; some comment on monosyllables here would have been equally valid. The rhythm of the poem is unusual and some spent far too long trying to interpret form convincingly. Responses which focussed swiftly on language were more successful. There was more success with structure, especially the circular patterning.

Many responses included thorough understanding of the spoken text, especially turn-taking and informal features. Those who understood that this text would have viewers, rather than readers, and would be accompanied by coverage of the episode on screen, were able to make more meaningful comment on the relatively simple descriptive language.

In responses where an opening section was devoted to 'form and structure', focus on the question was often lost, however. It is also difficult to *compare* forms.

Quality of analysis: selecting approaches (also applies to Section B).

Examiners want to reward relevant understanding informed by evidence of study. This year, there were many thoughtful and some highly perceptive essays on the unseen texts. In some centres, candidates show confidence in selecting a range of stylistic features and skill in drawing out meanings. Work on the Tennyson poem was sometimes very strong with assured reading of the relationship between location and emotion. There are of course many 'right answers' here, but also some wrong ones ('...he had a nice day out, although it was a bit chilly'.) There is an enormous choice for candidates. For example, in the poem's opening line we see imperative mood, the dynamic verb, plosive alliteration, spondee, monosyllabic lexis, plosive alliteration, consonance, assonance, lexical repetition, caesuras. One principle for selection involves focus on the question: which features identified will lead directly to discussion of how the coast is presented?

So what can go wrong? Here are some ideas:

1. **Literary approaches** can be overlooked. For example, some discussed the symbolism of the 'stately ships' or the use of tactile and auditory imagery in stanza 3 of the poem but they were outnumbered by those who only used linguistic approaches.
2. A few centres have encouraged over-interpretation of **phonological effects**. Many assertions about the impact of alliteration, sibilance or fricatives (to name a few) were entirely unconvincing and prone to error. One candidate devoted half of her response to sibilance this year. Ending with a section on phonology, as the framework approach demands, often produces flimsy analysis and tenuous links, even from able candidates.
3. **Word class labels** are difficult to master and easy to mix up. While close linguistic analysis requires some accurate word classing, attempting too much occupies time and space, which would be better used to widen the range of linguistic and literary approaches. As it would be possible to attach word class labels to every single word, selection is a useful skill to practise. It is unnecessary to specify the class of each word in longer quotations but a few centres seem to have encouraged this.

4. Pointing out **declaratives** might occasionally be useful, particularly when combined with other terms e.g. the use of the pronoun in the simple declarative 'Everyone is here' in Text B. But declarative is the most common sentence mood and it is unproductive to use the term repeatedly. Examples given are often not full sentences and therefore do not actually show sentence mood. It is usually be more useful to look for other sentence moods.
5. **Unrealistic claims** on the impact of linguistic choices cannot be rewarded. Assertions such as 'The use of the first person pronoun 'I' is used to convey a sense of joy and admiration.' are clearly untrue. This example can gain some credit for AO1 knowledge but not for purposeful application and is in band 1 for AO2.
6. **Literal or vague explanations** cannot achieve higher than band 2 marks when accurate. Many discussed 'cold grey stones' in Tennyson's second line and most were able to use linguistic terms accurately (adjectives, noun phrase) but some comments on effect were limited ('negative') or basic ('not very warm').

AO4

Explore connections across texts
Identify similarities and differences
Discuss reasons for these

Again, thorough reading is essential. Basic misreading of one text makes it difficult to achieve well on AO4 as well as AO2 because attempted links will be flawed.

Useful starting points for this collection of texts included: weather and temperature; the physical nature of the coast; the presentation of people; solitude and community; tone and atmosphere; leisure and learning; enjoyment and suffering; natural and man-made. The most successful connections follow a topic sentence with evidence for differences or similarities, between two texts or all three. Most candidates understand the requirement to use comparative language rather than simply talking about each text in turn.

Connections led by technique e.g. lexical sets, pronoun address can be successful, but only when the focus is on the question and the creation of meanings. One problem here is that looking for a particular feature can lead to narrow analysis. Another is that analysis is more likely to be superficial if it does not start with meaning.

Key Points:

- Careful and thorough reading of the texts must be the first priority.
- Timed practice is strongly recommended.
- Practise meaningful introductions. Advise candidates not to write out the text descriptors or the question.
- Promote the use of a wide range of literary and linguistic terminology, not just word classes or phonology.
- Encourage organisation based on linking texts through meanings, tone and attitudes with clear focus on the question.
- Ban the terms 'positive' and 'negative'.

SECTION B

Prose Study (Open Book)

Overview

Section B's open book opportunity means that we expect to see selected textual evidence from relevant episodes. Many candidates clearly had the necessary thorough knowledge of the text is essential for brisk and effective selection. This need not mean starting at the beginning of the novel although many still chose to do so. Others used a very narrow range of textual evidence, chose episodes which were not helpful for the question or used none at all. Too many still gave descriptive outlines of their chosen topic or told the story.

There were fewer centres this year where contextual factors were overlooked or added as an afterthought. However, the quality, range and integration of contextual factors differed markedly between centres.

Texts and questions

The Handmaid's Tale was very popular, along with *The Color Purple*. *Tess of the D'Urbervilles* was also quite popular. There were some responses on *Great Expectations* and very few on *Emma*. The most popular question was on marriage but many also wrote about contrasts or loss and disappointment. There were fewer answers on secrets, including interesting work on *The Handmaid's Tale*. Achievement was not really influenced by the choice of question. **The crucial factors were the quality of analysis (AO1/AO2) and the strength of the contextual element (AO3).**

AO1

Evidence of integrated study was limited in several responses and very sketchy in many others. Previous remarks on word class and phonology apply here: with such a wealth of studied material to hand, it is disappointing to see candidates who only label individual words or make exaggerated claims for the impact of alliteration.

Those showing sound knowledge of terminology in Section A sometimes omitted to use it in Section B or used only very general terms. Although close analysis as sustained as in Section A is not expected, candidates need to choose quotations in support of relevant arguments so that they can cover a range of literary devices and linguistic choices in their analysis. Successful centres make sure that literary techniques are thoroughly discussed and revised, so that the focus is kept on linguistic **and** literary approaches.

Useful linguistic approaches are partly determined by the novel studied. For example, we would expect to see some discussion of dialect features and register in *The Color Purple* and of naming in *The Handmaid's Tale*. There was little irrelevant discussion of dialect features used by Walker which is encouraging. Many candidates, however, did not mention them at all and some discussion is productive, linked contextually to the setting in the U.S. state of Georgia. In Atwood's novel, distinctive naming leads naturally to discussion of the patriarchal theocracy, enabling candidates to integrate relevant contextual points. Another useful area is the neologisms invented by the Gileadean regime. These features are all linguistically interesting and so widespread in the novels that they will be relevant to any question chosen.

AO2

In the most successful centres, candidates began engaging with the question in the introduction, with an overview of their chosen topic in the studied novel. In well-crafted responses this also acted as evidence of planning and indicated the approaches to the question they had chosen. The issue of choice is important: there is much more material to choose from than in Section A. While a written plan is not required, it is essential to have one in mind. On the other hand, it is disappointing to see responses which start at the beginning of the novel and tell the story apparently in the hope that something relevant will turn up.

In some centres, there was clear evidence that useful practice had been done on selecting relevantly and analysing closely. It was not uncommon for different candidates to use several of the same episodes although for different questions. This is fine as long as the material is used relevantly.

It is a good idea to extend range by making sure that the focus is not exclusively on the protagonist. When that does happen, there is a danger that whatever the question chosen might be, it will turn into a 'development of Celie' (or Tess or Pip) answer. Another useful strategy is to know some later sections of the novel really well: this adds balance as well as ensuring a wide range of textual evidence. It was noticeable that confident candidates were able to draw productively from Nettie's letters in *The Color Purple* or the Historical Notes in *The Handmaid's Tale*.

At the top of the range it was good to see candidates with an excellent knowledge of their studied texts, who had clearly enjoyed close study and were able to select from a wide range in order to shape cogent and convincing essays.

AO3

Including a range of contextual factors (AO3) was essential to ensure achievement on Section B. In some centres, all candidates understood this: every response had at least some basic reference to context and the strongest featured integrated informed evaluation at every stage. This contextual material has to be learned and candidates should be reminded of its importance, preferably through having practice essays AO marked. Recent discussions at CPD have confirmed that contextual factors are more fully understood when they are introduced after the novel has been read and while it is being studied, rather than right at the beginning.

The keys to success here are: **range, relevance** and smooth **integration** into the response. The most impressive essays had contextual points woven into each section of analysis. It is wise, although not essential, to include some key context, such as genre and time period in the introduction. A chunk of biography at the start of the essay will not score as highly and there is a temptation to include knowledge which is not connected with the chosen question. At the top of the range there was an impressive range which included history, biography and critical opinions. Insist on accurate knowledge of dates, rather than 'When it was written' or 'in that time'. On the whole, discussions concerning the **production** of the text will centre on different factors influencing the writer when the novel was written as well as social and historical issues from when the novel is set (not necessarily the same as in the case of *The Color Purple*.) As for the **reception** of the text it is valid to discuss responses of readers today, in the light of current attitudes and events, as well as the opinions of earlier readers and critics. It is important that candidates have a wide range of factors to draw on: their selection will then depend on the question and the material they choose.

It is necessary to add a cautionary point here. On *The Handmaid's Tale*, candidates in one or two centres referred only to present day politics and current affairs, rather than to any factors which could have influenced Atwood originally.

There is a list of starting points for each novel in the AO3 section of the Specimen Assessment Materials and in the Mark Schemes.

Key Points:

- Make AOs and their weightings clear and apply them to marked work from the outset.
- Practise introductions which focus directly on the topic and blend in least one contextual factor.
- Candidates should choose at least three relevant key episodes in the novel to analyse. Practise integrating different contextual factors with the analysis of key episodes in the novel.
- Remind candidates to keep using a range of terminology. Revise literary terms and approaches to avoid too narrow a linguistic focus.
- Blend in the study of contextual factors during study of the novel.

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UNIT 5 – CRITICAL AND CREATIVE GENRE STUDY

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.

Section A: Genre study

Work was seen from almost all of the genres on offer. Gothic, dystopia and romance were the most popular genres. Centres had taken a range of valid approaches to this part of the non-examination assessment folder. 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. A few had 'taught' extracts from texts and given candidates a common task. This led to virtually identical content across the sample and is not in the spirit of the Unit. The genre study should provide candidates with the opportunity to explore an area of individual interest and to engage with challenging and interesting texts.

All candidates chose prose texts from Appendix A in the specification. Some texts proved very popular indeed such as *1984*, *The Great Gatsby*, *Frankenstein*, *The Woman in Black* and *Wuthering Heights*. *The Bloody Chamber* proved especially popular this year. It is worth noting that at least two short stories from a collection should be referenced in the genre study and internal comparisons between stories from the same collection do not accrue AO4 marks. Wider reading was generally appropriate and moderators saw an impressive range of texts. Most were 'classics' of the selected genre but there was some evidence of more modern texts such as *The Power*. Centres should also avoid texts which are examined elsewhere on the specification such as *In Cold Blood* and *The Handmaid's Tale*. Wider reading must be prose and candidates should avoid making detailed reference to poetry or drama texts. The most successful responses tended to focus on one wider reading text in detail rather than making brief reference to a range of texts within the selected genre. Bibliographies included with the work were very useful and demonstrated the care and attention that candidates had given to researching their chosen genre.

Task setting is crucial in this unit as, when done effectively, it guides candidates toward the demands of the relevant assessment objectives. Moderators saw a wide range of tasks again this year. The majority of centres had offered candidates flexibility in selecting their area of focus allowing for an appropriate level of independent study. This is undoubtedly best practice as a common task tended to result in genre studies with very similar content and a more limited overview of the genre being studied. Tasks which targeted context tended to work well. For example, responses on gender and power in Gothic texts, setting essays in the Dystopia genre and studies which focused on gender roles in Romance all tended to produce clear lines of argument. Tasks such as these allowed candidates to consider relevant literary and social context. Some centres provided a critical quotation in the task which candidates were required to engage with when constructing their argument. This approach worked well and allowed candidates to make some perceptive observations when candidates engaged with the quotation

and used it to progress their argument. Broad tasks such as 'An exploration of the Gothic genre' and 'How do your chosen texts establish the conventions of their genre?' were much less successful as they led to responses which did not have sufficient depth of understanding of the core and wider reading texts.

In terms of AO1, 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 candidates who 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. This resulted in some generosity in the assessment of AO1, particularly in Band 4 and 5. This year, moderators saw a significant number of candidates who lacked precision when applying terminology. When indicating a specific word class for analysis, candidates must be precise and should underline the word when citing a longer quotation. For example, 'The noun 'the traitor ran...' should have the noun 'traitor' underlined in order to clarify the candidate's point.

There was some misapplication of terminology such as vocative which was often used to describe any proper noun rather than for terms of direct address. There was also a heavy reliance on straightforward terms such as declarative, imagery and lexical set. Whilst these terms provide a useful starting point, candidates should be interrogating quotations in much more detail. Candidates adopted a suitably academic register on the whole and most arguments were well crafted. However, introductions and conclusions were areas in need of development for many candidates this year. Effective introductions should provide a clear overview of the argument and should not simply offer a brief history of the genre and/or authors' lives. Conclusions are needed to sum up what has been proven in the genre study - in a worrying number of cases, these were entirely absent.

AO2 was an area of strength across much of the work seen with candidates engaging well with their key ideas explored within their selected texts. Generalisations, such as 'it creates imagery in the reader's mind', were, thankfully, rare and nearly all candidates were able to engage with meaning well.

AO3 has a significant weighting in this section of the folder and, as such, candidates are expected to include a range of contextual points to illuminate their arguments. 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. Reference to genre was, however, quite rare with many candidates not clearly exploring the impact of the genre on the issue being discussed. 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. Many candidates were also able to make useful references to biographical, historical and cultural factors surrounding their texts. Reference to reader responses and critical readings of the texts also proved very useful when used to illuminate the argument. In less successful responses, candidates included whole paragraphs of descriptive contextual points which did not connect to their argument and were, therefore, irrelevant to the demands of the genre study. Contextual points which were simply added on to the end of paragraphs also tended to be limiting as they were not fully integrated into the candidate's argument. There was a clear tendency toward generosity in the assessment of AO3 this year, particularly where

candidates did not embed contextual detail or did not include sufficient reference for the number of marks available.

In order to meet the demands of AO4, candidates need to offer insightful and purposeful comparisons between their selected texts. Whilst nearly all candidates included comparisons in their responses, AO4 is an area of concern this year with many candidates offering only superficial links between their texts. Best practice was seen in centres where a comparative approach was adopted throughout and was signposted by comparative topic sentences. 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. There was also a tendency toward generalised comments such as 'This texts also uses setting and isolation.' Simplistic statements such as this do not allow candidates to make productive connections. There was generosity across much of the assessment of AO4 this year.

Key Points:

- 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)
- Avoid general terms such as 'word', 'lexis' etc..., instead applying precise terminology at phoneme, word and sentence level (AO1)
- Write in an appropriate academic style (AO1)
- Clearly structure the argument including crafted introductions and conclusions (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)
- Make specific reference to the conventions of the chosen genre and how the selected texts fit into that genre (AO3)
- Consider reader responses to the chosen texts (AO3)
- Embed contextual detail into the argument (AO3)
- Ensure all contextual points are relevant to the task being addressed (AO3)
- Adopt a comparative approach from the outset (AO4)
- Avoid generalised comparative statements (AO4)
- Select texts of an appropriate level of challenge for comparison (AO4)

Section B: Related creative writing

Nearly all candidates submitted short stories or story openings in this section. These stories showed that candidates had been well prepared by centres as there was a secure understanding of effective characterisation and use of setting. Some candidates also showed some originality in the structure of their stories using appropriate techniques such as the multiple narrative voices or time shifts. A minority of candidates submitted monologues or non-literary writing such as travel writing, TED talks, articles and reviews. Monologues and scripts can be really effective outlets for candidates and can be an effective alternative to a first person narrative. Candidates should, however, ensure that the form and structure of the monologue is authentic. The non-literary pieces were mixed in terms of success. Most showed a clear awareness of audience and purpose but a minority lacked clarity. Some non-literary pieces focused on the texts studied in Section A, for example an interview with the author of the core text or a review of a film/theatre version of the text. This led to a fairly narrow focus for the folder. Nearly all of the creative writing pieces seen by moderators had obvious links to the genre study and it was clear that candidates were able to apply their knowledge to their own writing.

Some candidates included a brief preface with their creative writing which explained the link. This was particularly useful when candidates were using non-literary work as both the audience and purpose of the text could be clarified. A minority of candidates submitted work which was a continuation of an existing text or which featured existing characters. This approach should be avoided as it is self-limiting and impacts upon flair and originality. Technical accuracy and the quality of written expression was generally very good. In some cases, technical errors marred the quality of the work. Thorough proof reading and editing during the drafting process would allow candidates to craft more polished writing pieces.

Key Points:

- Have clear links to the knowledge gained from the genre study
- Show clear awareness of genre by either conforming to or subverting conventions
- 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
- Proof read work carefully to ensure a strong degree of technical accuracy, particularly in terms of punctuation of speech
- Use wide ranging vocabulary
- Select the best genre for their writing. For example, in some cases first person narratives would have been better as monologues
- Have a clear sense of audience and purpose

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.

Conclusion

Moderators saw a great deal of excellent work in this unit. Successful folders included thorough comparative essays which showed a real engagement with the selected genre and engaging writing pieces which showed flair and originality. Centres should be commended on the hard work that has clearly gone into preparing candidates for the Non-examination Assessment — it was a pleasure to read the work submitted in this year's moderation process.



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