

GCE Examiners' Report

English Language and Literature
GCE
Summer 2025

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Introduction

Our Principal Examiners' report provides valuable feedback on the recent assessment series. It has been written by our Principal Examiners and Principal Moderators after the completion of marking and moderation, and details how candidates have performed in each unit.

This report opens with a summary of candidates' performance, including the assessment objectives/skills/topics/themes being tested, and highlights the characteristics of successful performance and where performance could be improved. It then looks in detail at each unit, pinpointing aspects that proved challenging to some candidates and suggesting some reasons as to why that might be.¹

The information found in this report provides valuable insight for practitioners to support their teaching and learning activity. We would also encourage practitioners to share this document – in its entirety or in part – with their learners to help with exam preparation, to understand how to avoid pitfalls and to add to their revision toolbox.

Further support

Document	Description	Link
Professional Learning / CPD	WJEC offers an extensive programme of online and face-to-face Professional Learning events. Access interactive feedback, review example candidate responses, gain practical ideas for the classroom and put questions to our dedicated team by registering for one of our events here.	https://www.wjec.co.uk/home/professional-learning/
Past papers	Access the bank of past papers for this qualification, including the most recent assessments. Please note that we do not make past papers available on the public website until 12 months after the examination.	Portal by WJEC or on the WJEC subject page
Grade boundary information	<p>Grade boundaries are the minimum number of marks needed to achieve each grade.</p> <p>For unitted specifications grade boundaries are expressed on a Uniform Mark Scale (UMS). UMS grade boundaries remain the same every year as the range of UMS mark percentages allocated to a particular grade does not change. UMS grade boundaries are published at overall subject and unit level.</p> <p>For linear specifications, a single grade is awarded for the subject, rather than for each unit that contributes towards the overall grade. Grade boundaries are published on results day.</p>	For unitted specifications click here: Results, Grade Boundaries and PRS (wjec.co.uk)

¹ Please note that where overall performance on a question/question part was considered good, with no particular areas to highlight, these questions have not been included in the report.

Exam Results Analysis	WJEC provides information to examination centres via the WJEC Portal. This is restricted to centre staff only. Access is granted to centre staff by the Examinations Officer at the centre.	Portal by WJEC
Classroom Resources	Access our extensive range of FREE classroom resources, including blended learning materials, exam walk-throughs and knowledge organisers to support teaching and learning.	https://resources.wjec.co.uk/
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Executive Summary

The Principal Examiners noted that all candidates had found the papers accessible with some excellent responses seen across all units.

Some common points to consider in future include the following:

- Candidates need a sound knowledge and understanding of whole texts, not simply extracts from the set text.
- A return to the formal instruction of language levels, such as Form, Grammar, Lexis, Imagery and Sound, is advocated at the beginning of the AS course and as the underlying mechanism for analysis for every type of text encountered on the course.
- Candidates need to be able to utilise a range of terms from across the language framework accurately and applied them sensitively in order to comment on meanings
- Terminology must not only be used correctly but with precision.
- Centres should provide candidates with regular, timed exam practice to help build sustained writing skills and develop stamina under exam conditions.
- The most successful candidates embedded accurate references to contextual factors throughout their response, making these references relevant and central to readings of the poem and moved beyond just biography
- Where AO5 is assessed, candidates should have an awareness of genre, audience and purpose, and use an appropriate register and voice.

AS LEVEL ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE

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UNIT 1: COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS AND CREATIVE WRITING

Overview of the Unit

In Unit 1, candidates have two questions to answer: one on a comparative analysis of a poem and an unseen text in Section A, and a creative writing question in Section B 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 most cases, easily met the rubric instruction to write approximately 400 words for Question 2 (iii).

There were a very small number of candidates this year who wrote about all three texts in Section A, rather than the poem and then one unseen text. This may perhaps occur when candidates are sitting this examination paper again, alongside revising for Unit 4's synoptic paper where they will compare all three texts. It is worth reminding resitting candidates of the rubric instructions for Unit 1.

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. I would repeat my previous comments on reminding candidates that the quality of written expression is important and particularly notable in Section B Question 2 (i) and (ii).

The most important consideration in Section B is for candidates to be really clear on what genre / text type they are being asked to write in. They can expect to write one creative response that is intended to be spoken, so need to make sure they are familiar with the conventions of speeches, monologues, play scripts, tour guides, vlogs, to name a few but not all of the types of responses they may be asked to write. Many responses struggled to write a dramatic monologue and this impacted cohort success on Question 2 (i). 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 number of candidates who used a range of terms was pleasing, particularly those using terms relating to form and structure and engaging with more difficult syntax terms; 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 struggle to use technical terms.

Last year's Principal Examiner's Report highlighted a concern that candidates did not answer the question for Section A fully (on birds) but this was not a concern this year; the majority of candidates focused appropriately on the presentation of the weather. There are online PL resources available on the WJEC website to assist with the teaching of terminology as well as frameworks for supporting comparative responses. It is clear that many centres are making full use of the resources on offer to best serve the interests of their candidates.

Comments on individual questions/sections

SECTION A: COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF POETRY AND UNSEEN TEXT

Candidates had to write about the poem 'Spellbound' by Emily Brontë, taken from their *Anthology*, and had a choice of unseen text; they could write either about an extract from the novel *The Woman in Black* by Susan Hill (1983) or a transcribed extract from the television documentary 'Britain's Wildest Weather' (2020). All three dealt with the presentation of the weather and candidates were asked to compare and contrast how the weather had been presented in the poem and one of the unseen texts. Most candidates chose to write about the novel extract, with very few choosing the spoken transcript to compare to Brontë's poem. This perhaps reflects a growing reluctance, noted in previous reports, amongst candidates to choose to discuss spoken language. As was my observation in 2023, centres could remind candidates that the spoken transcript often offers an opportunity 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. Given that candidates will be studying a spoken drama text for Unit 2, it is worth them thinking of their work here on speech as transferable from that paper and terms like intonation, stress, paralinguistics and discourse features such as adjacency pairs can often be rich ground for analysis.

'Spellbound' was a poem that had featured on a previous Unit 1 examination paper. As this specification ages, it is key that candidates are given the opportunity to read and study all of the *Anthology* poems rather than focusing on the ones which may not have featured on previous examination papers. This paper is a good chance to remind candidates that poems can and may 'reappear', paired with different unseen texts. In some cases, despite the accessible nature of the poem, it seemed that candidates might not have 'expected' this poem to appear and thus were not as well revised in contextual factors and linguistic features as they might have been.

Candidates wrote well about 'Spellbound', finding it more than accessible and most were able to talk about the sense of impending doom and the persona's complex relationship to the weather. Coverage of this short poem was not an issue and most engaged with the whole poem. Candidates wrote about the presentation of nature in bad weather and in particular the second stanza's focus on the trees; the 'wild winds' of stanza one and the repeated refrain 'I cannot go', analysing her reasons for changing this to 'will not go' at the end of the poem. Generally, it was understood that the weather was at once hostile and also captivating and most were able to move this analysis onto a wider discussion of pathetic fallacy in the poem, with some candidates offering readings of the persona / Brontë's state of mind at the time. The poem offers candidates rich opportunities to discuss language choices and in particular its interesting use of poetic form, including metric form, enjambment and caesuras but few were able to do this successfully with 'form' being offered as a descriptive chunk of text in lieu of an introduction. Evaluation of contextual factors was mixed, with the best responses offering biographical and social contextual factors, considering the role of the female writer at the time, Brontë's use of a pseudonym, her famous literary relatives, *Wuthering Heights* and Haworth. Some were impressive in their knowledge of Gondal and the possibility of this poem being in the Gondal and Agria sequence and being about a mother losing her child during the storm. That said, many candidates did not offer any contextual references, and this sometimes was a feature across whole centres. If a candidate makes no contextual references, then they will only be able to achieve marks in AO3 for overview and summary. Another feature this year was a slight tendency to 'reach' towards any relevant context. Less helpful comments including the poem being about her impending death, her travels to America as a Puritan, comments on Romantic poetry, and very broad and generalised comments on social attitudes.

Another area for general improvement is in the rigorous application of literary and linguistic terms to the poem and unseen. Errors in identification of terms was often an issue, and a thinness of terminology applied also impacted performance in AO1. A return to the formal instruction of language levels, such as Form, Grammar, Lexis, Imagery and Sound, is advocated at the beginning of the AS course and as the underlying mechanism for analysis for every type of text encountered on the course. There are some excellent Blended Learning resources on linguistic and literary terminology on the WJEC website that can be used both in the classroom and independently by candidates as revision.

SECTION B: CREATIVE WRITING AND COMMENTARY

Creative Writing

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 Question 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 an extract from a dramatic monologue in which a character is experiencing an extreme weather situation. Dramatic monologues have featured on this examination paper before and it is a register with which they are hopefully familiar, having studied a dramatic text for Unit 2. However, we really struggled to find many responses which securely engaged with the task, offering a credible and fitting monologue for performance. Many wrote in a style more suited to narrative prose, often with a third person narrative voice and a high level of description which made the response fit in a written rather than spoken mode. There was confusion about what constituted weather – it seemed in some cases that any natural disaster would do and equally, at times, there were issues with ‘extreme’ weather situations – with some perhaps understandably feeling that a rainy day on straightened hair or without a coat might be extreme. Better responses adopted a persona or fictional situation in order to contextualise their extreme weather. We saw some very mature pieces where the speaker was a soldier in the trenches, where the landscape was dystopian or gothic. We saw some very creative pieces on drought which reflected on climate crisis. Candidates need to demonstrate a secure sense of audience and purpose and candidates show themselves to be familiar with monologue conventions. Some responses contained technical errors, responses where subject and verb disagreed, some which slipped unsuccessfully between past and present tense, and those where a first-person voice became third person and struggled with even tone.

For Question 2 (ii) candidates were asked to write an extract from a lively and entertaining article for their school or college website entitled ‘Don’t let the weather get you down!’. Overall, the article task was much more successful, with many candidates achieving the appropriate tenor and register for the written piece. Candidates clearly had some experience of article writing and were able to adopt a lively and entertaining tone with plenty of advice, mainly centred around lifting mood during revising in the rain, clothing advice as well as school and college events or support services to help. There was evidence of candidates deliberately choosing features in both pieces which matched for purposes of comparison in Question 2 (iii) and it was pleasing to see this forward-planning.

Analytical Commentary

I have noted previously that it is in responses to this question that candidates who had not managed their time effectively struggled. There has been a huge improvement in the length and completion of Question 2 (iii) responses in the past few years. Examiners noted the number of candidates who wrote responses which offered clear and, key here, sustained comparisons of features in both pieces. Simply put, on the whole, candidates found much more to compare this year within their written pieces. 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 candidates that they should prepare and plan for these links by including similar and different features in their two pieces. Some candidates were still 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. However, as noted, the majority were able to find plenty to comment on. 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 that 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 the weather is presented' as a focus throughout the response, dividing different aspects of their presentation between paragraphs
- embedded accurate 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 Question 2 (i) and (ii)
- built in a range of features in both creative tasks in order to compare them in the commentary Question 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.

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 Question 2 (i) and (ii). Exceeding suggested word length is self-penalising as it leads to timing problems with Question 2 (iii).

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UNIT 2: DRAMA AND NON-LITERARY TEXTS

Overview of the Unit

It is always very encouraging to see the high quality of work candidates are capable of producing for this paper. There were a significant number of responses which were highly analytical, developed a strong line of argument, had a range of accurate and sophisticated terminology, and were able to fully integrate relevant textual discussion into their responses. Where centres had thoroughly prepared candidates along these lines, there was a strong performance across their responses. Unfortunately, examiners also encountered a high number of responses which fell prey to the typical pitfalls in this paper, namely a lack of terminology, rubric infringements, irrelevant and in some cases fictitious contextual points, and a failure to answer the set question.

Comments on individual questions/sections

SECTION A: POST-1900 DRAMA (OPEN BOOK)

The most popular text in this section by far was again *A Streetcar Named Desire*. 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). Pleasingly, 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, or far too brief. For this question, two pages of A4 is ample space for them to track through and discuss language in detail. With three essays to write in two hours, this unit is time sensitive, and candidates should spend time preparing themselves under timed conditions and in writing to a certain length, even if they can only try this at home. However, if candidates do not write more than one page of A4 for this essay, then they are self-penalising as they will not have given themselves the opportunity to demonstrate their analytical skills.

As reported last year, there was a significant increase in rubric infringements in Part (ii) of this section and, unfortunately, this did not appear to be on the decline this year. In fact, there were centres where a large proportion of candidates limited their marks through discussing the extract from Part (i) in their response to Part (ii) or discussed quotations which were not in the specified extract in their response to Part (i). Part (i) should be a relatively brief response of approximately two pages of A4, but candidates need to try to *extend the range of terminology they use*. Too many still rely simply on-stage directions and sentence mood. There were a number of cases where candidates had used an appropriate quotation and identified a term, but did not specify where in the quotation this term was or identify which word they were discussing. There was still the odd occasion where candidates used poetic terminology, such as caesura, in the discussion of a modern play, and the use of the word 'novel' to identify the play in question. The terms candidates use should be fitting for the form that they are studying.

Contextual discussion in Section A Part (ii) is heavily weighted and, 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, helping them to avoid limiting their response, and ultimately their mark, in the examination. Candidates also need to be warned again about using pre-prepared essays which do not answer the set question.

Tennessee Williams: *A Streetcar named Desire*

This continues to be a text which candidates enjoy and there were some spectacular responses. Of the two questions available, Question 1 on the relationship between Blanche and Mitch was the most popular. There were a significant number of candidates who used the question stem to guide their response, successfully analysing how their relationship develops and changes over the course of the play. The majority of candidates chose to discuss scene 6 and scene 9 for this essay, with some electing to write about scene 11 as an alternative. A significant number of candidates responded to Question 2 and were able to select aspects of the play, such as domestic violence or the role of women to explore how 'a lack of hope' is presented.

Peter Shaffer: *Amadeus*

Very few responses were seen on this text.

Marc Norman and Tom Stoppard: *Shakespeare in Love*

This text continues to be popular with some centres and candidates clearly enjoy studying this screenplay. Both questions were popular with candidates and a range of responses were seen, although those who responded on 'the relationship between Will and Viola' were able to be especially specific with their contextual discussion. On Question 5, there were a range of options for candidates to explore, with the most successful ones demonstrating a sound understanding of how humour is used to defuse conflict. Others also explored the internal conflicts of Will and Viola and how, as with many things in life, money was frequently at the root of most conflict.

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

Very few responses were seen on this text.

Diane Samuels: *Kindertransport*

Fewer responses were seen on this text than in previous years. Both questions were popular but candidates tended to write more effectively on Question 10 where they were asked to explore the presentation of fear. There were clear areas for them to discuss, especially around the separation of parents and children and Eva's lack of knowledge regarding her parents whilst she was in England. Question 9 asked candidates to examine identity struggles, and whilst this provided ample opportunities to integrate contextual discussion in responses, a number of candidates did not take full advantage of this as too many responses lacked the detail required at this level.

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.
- Answer the set question.
- Specify the terminology being discussed.

SECTION B: NON-LITERARY TEXT STUDY (OPEN BOOK)

In this section, *In Cold Blood* was again the most popular text, followed by *Once in a House on Fire*. 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 that sweeping generalisations should be avoided. This was again in evidence this year, with some candidates simply making information up. This year also saw more biographical contextual discussion than previous years, especially on *In Cold Blood*, perhaps partly due to the nature of the questions. Whilst we have previously warned about the overuse of simple biographical information, where candidates identified clear and purposeful connections between Capote's life and the events in the text, examiners were able to reward. In a minority of cases, this was handled very successfully. 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.

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 successful approach. 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, spending 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, begin their analysis with topic sentences which clearly establish their point and relate their discussion to the question.

Andrea Ashworth: *Once in a House on Fire*

This text continues to be popular with centres and candidates and, on the whole, they respond with maturity, empathy and passion regarding the content. Of the two questions on offer, significantly more candidates responded to the presentation of fathers/father figures (Question 11) rather than survival strategies (Question 12), although there were some outstanding responses to this question. Responses to Question 11 unsurprisingly saw candidates predominantly discuss how poverty can lead to violence and the impact this can have on men, due to their stereotypical role as the 'breadwinner'. More successful responses had a wider range, with some candidates developing their discussion to include Andrea's biological father as being someone who broke the mould. When responding to Question 12, candidates discussed the supportive relationships between the women in the text, how Andrea used education and specifically reading as a survival strategy and how she was able to educate herself on appropriate behaviours through her interaction with various friends and their families. For this text, however, there are still far too many sweeping generalisations with context and, if candidates intend to use statistical information as part of their response, it should not be fabricated.

Truman Capote: *In Cold Blood*

Work on this text continues to be of a high quality, and candidates clearly enjoy Capote's non-fiction novel. There was a wide range of responses on both questions. For Question 13, candidates were able to focus on the early part of the novel which allowed them to explore Herb, Bonnie, and then most likely Nancy in response to the question. A few candidates branched out to further explore other families in the text and, whilst not strictly relevant for the question, where they made comparisons to the Clutters, examiners were able to reward. Nearly all who discussed Bonnie were able to highlight how although the Clutters may have presented as the ideal family, not all was as successful as it seemed. Those candidates who responded to Question 14 on suffering, successfully identified the different types of suffering in the text, from physical, to emotional, to mental. This approach allowed many of them to fully explore the text and write about some interesting episodes, notably about the impact on Bobby Rupp and Susan Kidwell. For both questions, where candidates identified connections between Capote's life and events in the text and discussed them productively, responses were enhanced.

Dave Eggers: *A Heartbreaking Work of Staggering Genius*

Very few responses were seen on this text.

Robert Minhinnick: *Watching the fire-eater*

Very few responses were seen on this text.

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

Candidates responded well to both questions on this text, although those who attempted Question 20 on conflict, used a broader range of episodes in their responses. For this question, they commented on the different types of conflict, such as Orwell's own class conflict and division, the conflicts between differing nationalities, and the attitudes of others to the poor. This also enabled them to successfully incorporate contextual discussion in their responses. There were some very successful responses to Question 19 on loneliness/isolation, but too frequently they resulted in an essay on friendship. Others commented on the dehumanising impact of isolation and how it can alter how individuals behave.

Key points:

- Spend a short period of time selecting the three to four most effective episodes for discussion.
- Answer the set question.
- 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

Overview of the Unit

This unit requires candidates to engage with an extract from the designated Shakespeare play they have studied and to produce one essay—selected from two options—on the same text. All prescribed texts were tackled, although *King Lear* remained the most frequently studied play. In both Section A and Section B, the most accomplished responses demonstrated a confident integration of literary and linguistic analysis (AO1) alongside perceptive commentary on how meaning is constructed (AO2). As seen in previous years, some responses still lacked diversity in their use of terminology, and many would have benefitted from more accurate and targeted application of critical vocabulary across both sections.

In Section B, high-level answers were characterised by thoughtful and purposeful incorporation of contextual understanding. In contrast, weaker essays tended to open with generic context and featured vague or superficial contextual references throughout. AO1 carries significant weight across both sections of the paper, and consistent emphasis on terminology should remain a priority in teaching this unit for the 2026 series. Candidates should be encouraged to explore and employ a broader spectrum of literary and linguistic terms. This year, there was once again an overdependence on sentence moods and word classes. Terminology was frequently repeated and lacked the necessary variety. Moreover, terms must be applied with accuracy. For instance, the term *vocative* was often misused, with many candidates incorrectly identifying all proper nouns as vocatives. Confusion around stative and dynamic verbs also persisted, and *declarative or clause* was frequently assigned to random parts of sentences without justification. Similarly, *personification* was often cited inappropriately. There was also confusion over verbs and nouns.

Terminology must not only be used correctly but with precision. An increasing trend this year involved candidates referencing a term and then highlighting an entire clause or sentence, rather than pinpointing specific examples to support their analysis.

Comments on individual questions/sections

SECTION A: EXTRACT ANALYSIS

In Section A, candidates are tasked with analysing an extract from their studied Shakespeare text. This extract is provided within the examination paper. It is recommended that candidates allocate approximately 45 minutes to this section. Responses were submitted on all set texts, with *King Lear* once again proving the most popular choice.

Most candidates demonstrated engagement with their chosen play and tailored their answers to meet the specific demands of the question. Those who disregarded the question and delivered a broad, unfocused discussion generally achieved lower marks. A number of candidates opened with lengthy, context-heavy introductions, which proved unhelpful and ultimately detracted from their time and focus. Ideally, the introduction should be concise—one sentence at most—briefly situating the extract within the play's internal context.

More successful responses concentrated intently on the extract, carefully selecting pertinent material and offering in-depth analysis of how meaning was conveyed. However, a recurring issue involved quotations that were poorly aligned with the analysis, resulting in vague or disconnected readings of the text. Less accomplished responses tended to lean toward narrative retelling or general description rather than analytical insight.

This year also saw a significant increase in the inclusion of irrelevant contextual information, which often came at the cost of meaningful engagement with the extract itself. It must be emphasised that AO3 (context) is not assessed in Section A; therefore, including such content does not benefit the candidate. Instead, that time should be spent interrogating the language of the passage provided, focusing on AO1 and AO2.

AO1 carries significant weight in this section, and the effective use of literary and linguistic terminology remains essential. Stronger responses demonstrated a confident and deliberate application of a varied range of terms, which were used to explore how the text creates meaning. In contrast, weaker answers featured little or no terminology or used terms inaccurately. Misuse of terminology continues to be a concern: for example, the term *declarative* was again misapplied, with candidates often citing only part of a sentence as evidence. Additionally, candidates frequently included a quotation without clearly identifying the specific term they were analysing. This was particularly common with features such as possessive determiners, clauses, verb phrases, noun phrases, alliteration, and asyndetic/syndetic listing.

Writing stamina also appeared to be a concern for some candidates this year. A number of responses were notably brief, sometimes falling short of two pages. Such brevity inherently limits achievement. For a 45-minute task, examiners expect substantial writing that demonstrates full engagement with the extract. Stronger answers sustained their analysis across a range of points, exploring both language and meaning in depth throughout.

Antony and Cleopatra

Only a small number of responses were submitted for this text. Some candidates made relevant observations on Shakespeare's portrayal of reactions to Antony's death. The strongest responses were well-focused, offering carefully selected evidence to address the demands of the question.

King Lear

The strongest answers demonstrated a confident understanding of the extract, offering insightful analysis of Lear's character in the context of the storm. In contrast, weaker responses tended to rely on general description and often repeated the claim that Lear had 'gone mad' without offering any deeper interpretation or textual support.

Much Ado About Nothing

This text attracted few responses. However, a handful of insightful answers explored Shakespeare's presentation of the characters and dramatic situation in the extract. Stronger candidates maintained a clear sense of the extract's purpose and supported their interpretations with relevant detail. Less assured responses lacked analytical depth, offering mostly descriptive commentary and a limited grasp of the extract itself

Othello

A number of thoughtful responses engaged well with Shakespeare's depiction of character and situation in the extract. The strongest essays demonstrated a confident understanding of multiple characters, supported by focused textual analysis. In contrast, less successful answers tended to become narrative, relying on summary rather than analysis.

The Tempest

Many candidates responded with insight to the way Shakespeare presented the characters and situation at this point in the play. The best responses showed a clear grasp of the extract's significance and carefully selected textual evidence to support their interpretations. Weaker responses often relied on surface-level description and showed limited understanding.

Summary of key points

- Ensure the question is read thoroughly and that responses directly address the specific task set.
- Begin with a concise sentence placing the extract within its dramatic context or move straight into analytical discussion. Lengthy, general introductions should be avoided.
- Use a broad and varied range of literary and linguistic terminology and apply it with precision and relevance.
- Avoid descriptive or narrative responses; focus instead on analysing *how* the text constructs meaning.
- Exclude unnecessary or unrelated contextual information, as it does not contribute to the assessment objectives for Section A.
- Maintain a tight focus on the printed extract. Do not discuss unrelated scenes or parts of the play.
- Provide candidates with regular, timed exam practice to help build sustained writing skills and develop stamina under exam conditions.

SECTION B: ESSAY

In Section B, candidates are required to write one essay – selected from two options – on the same Shakespeare text they explored in Section A. This section demands a broader understanding of the play as a whole.

The strongest responses offered a well-structured, coherent argument that directly addressed the question posed. In contrast, essays that relied heavily on description or narrative summary generally performed poorly across the assessment objectives. It should be noted that many candidates did write at length, thoroughly engaging with their chosen essay and text. Brevity, however, remains an issue with some candidates submitting responses under two pages in length and this was obviously self-penalising. Developing writing stamina should remain a key focus in preparation for the 2026 examination series.

AO1 continues to carry significant weight in this section. To meet its demands, candidates must learn a suitable range of relevant quotations and apply a diverse selection of literary and linguistic terms accurately. Some candidates produced excellent work, confidently using sophisticated terminology throughout. However, there was a noticeable rise in misquoted material or fabricated quotations. The ongoing issue of candidates citing Shakespeare in modernised or translated form also persists. Such responses cannot be rewarded, as analysis must be based on the original language of the play. Additionally, candidates must be reminded that quotations from the Section A extract are not creditable in Section B and should not be included.

As in Section A, precision in the use of language and terminology was lacking in some responses. A number of essays included minimal or no technical vocabulary, limiting candidates' ability to secure marks for AO1 and AO2. Moreover, those who could not supply accurate supporting quotations often struggled to substantiate their analysis.

Contextual understanding (AO3) plays a vital role in Section B. The best responses integrated contextual knowledge seamlessly, using it to enhance and deepen their argument. Rather than delivering generic or front-loaded introductions, high-level essays embedded contextual insights throughout the response, ensuring they supported and enriched the analysis rather than standing apart from it.

Antony and Cleopatra

There were a limited number of centres studying this text. Question 6 required candidates to discuss how Shakespeare presented male power. Candidates engaged meaningfully with the text and had ample to say in relation to this question. Question 7 focused on the play as a 'tragedy of passion'. Very few responses were seen.

King Lear

Question 8 – rebellion – was well received. Some candidates selected a wide variety of detail from the play and were able to produce coherent arguments. Some responses, however, tended to focus heavily on Act 1 Scenes 1 and 2, failing to show understanding of the play as a whole. Question 9 – family conflict – was a popular choice and several insightful essays were seen. The best responses were able to draw upon a range of material from the text.

Much Ado About Nothing

Question 10 focused on how Shakespeare presented attitudes towards women. There were some insightful responses which covered a range of valid points and effectively used context to shape the argument. Some responses were character driven and largely narrative. Question 9 asked candidates to discuss the presentation of disorder. Very few responses were seen.

Othello

Question 12 asked candidates to discuss how Shakespeare presented betrayal. This was a popular question, and the best responses established a clear argument, embedding the relevant contextual factors and clearly addressing the question. Weaker responses were narrative driven. Question 13 asked candidates to discuss the presentation of Othello. Most candidates were able to select a range of material and consider how the character whether Othello was a weak character who brought tragedy upon himself. There were some insightful responses which covered a range of valid points and effectively used context to shape the argument. Again, weaker responses were narrative driven.

The Tempest

Question 14 asked candidates to explore whether *The Tempest* is a play with no hero. Very few responses were seen. Question 15 asked candidates to examine the presentation of power within the play. There were some insightful responses which covered a range of valid points and effectively used context to shape the argument. Weaker responses were narrative driven.

Summary of key points

- Ensure responses directly engage with the set question.
- Do not reuse the extract provided in Section A. Section B requires a broader exploration of the text. Material from Section A WILL NOT be credited.
- Essays should present a clear, cohesive argument that develops logically throughout.
- A wide range of literary and linguistic terminology should be employed accurately and purposefully.
- Candidates must memorise a variety of quotations from the play and reference them correctly.
- Analysis should focus on *how* meaning is constructed; avoid merely describing or retelling events.
- A comprehensive understanding of the play as a whole is essential.
- Centres should equip candidates with a rich and detailed knowledge of the social, political, historical, and cultural influences surrounding their chosen text.
- Contextual material must be integrated effectively and used to support the candidate's line of argument.
- Candidates should also be encouraged to reflect on how their texts can resonate with or be interpreted by modern and contemporary audiences.
- Timed exam practice should be embedded throughout the year to help candidates develop sustained writing stamina.

A LEVEL ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE

GCE

Summer 2025

UNIT 4: UNSEEN TEXTS AND PROSE STUDY

Overview of the Unit

The two sections on Unit 4 carry the same marks and most candidates manage their time accordingly. However, there were several uneven scripts, usually when candidates had chosen to answer Section B first. As the material in Section A is unfamiliar, time needs to be taken to study and navigate the texts. The quality of written expression remains a serious concern, including basics such as capital letters and sentence boundaries. Effective planning and organisation vary enormously between centres. The more successful candidates have clearly practised the skills of purposeful selection from shorter texts as well as the studied novel. Most candidates are conversant with the relevant assessment objectives but, in some centres, need further encouragement to address them from the start, rather than wasting time on very general introductions.

Comments on individual questions/sections

SECTION A

Section A produced a very wide range of responses as usual. This section sometimes reveals startling gaps in general knowledge. Some knew that Cornwall is an area, although 'county' was rarely seen. The most common opinion, however, was that Cornwall is a town. This was not necessarily an obstacle as most then realised that Text A concerned the countryside and the cliffs. Thorough reading of the text descriptors as well as the texts would show that Collins, Fanthorpe and Kesteven were visiting different localities. Discussing contrasts between the texts was often more productive than searching for similarities. Those prioritising similarities between all three did struggle to support links. This year there was often an unfortunate reliance on 'positive' and 'negative' to frame comparisons. This hinders achievement with repetitive expression (AO1) leading to very basic comments on meaning (AO2) and simplified links (AO4).

AO1

Planning, shaping and organisation

Thorough and careful reading of the text descriptors and the texts must be the first stage. As this is a comparative question, it is wise to plan links and organise material accordingly. Sketchy reading led to basic errors: some failed to notice the shift in attitude in Text A or Text B's unconcern with scenery. This led to sweeping inaccurate generalisations which could not be supported.

Several candidates began by writing out the text descriptors which is always a waste of time. Introductions need to show that the texts have been read and that the comparative element is being prioritised. Successful introductions often included links based on the content and concerns of the writers and speaker, leaving more developed overviews for the conclusion. Starting with a linear account of Text A is not necessary and often leads to problems with selection and timing. Planning links between pairs of texts is a useful and manageable strategy. They do not have to appear equally in each section of the response.

Terminology and expression

It was disappointing that so many saw 'positive' and 'negative' as the answer, rather than a very basic starting point. In a few responses their repetition prevented any possibility of developed reading; candidates should be advised to explore their vocabulary instead. Of course, many were able to express attitude and tone more accurately (e.g. appreciative, impressed, enthusiastic, awestruck, excited; despondent, dismissive, disappointed, sceptical, uncomfortable).

'Declarative' is another example of over-use. Where a significant statement is being made, it is a useful and valid term. However, as it is the most common sentence mood, it should be used sparingly; it is usually more useful to identify other moods. Also, it is often applied inaccurately when the examples given are not full sentences. 'Phrase' is also a problematic term as it is frequently used as a label for any group of words. Lists were popular this year and usually identified correctly as 'syndetic' or 'asyndetic'. A sentence with commas in it is not necessarily a list and a list needs at least three items. The opening of the poem 'Civil, unfriendly' was often said to be a list rather than a pair.

'Connotation' and 'lexical set' were often imprecisely used. Connotations need to be attached to words and lexical sets need to be connected by a specified meaning. 'Pathetic fallacy' was widely misapplied in Text A to the weather where it is an experience rather than a literary technique. Poetic terms, particularly caesura and enjambment appeared in several responses, to good effect where the reading of meaning in the poem was clear. There was much comment on Kesteven's spoken delivery, usually when helping to convey enthusiasm; this was most effective when blended with analysis of the words being delivered.

Word classing is productive when it is accurate and purposeful. The identification of prepositions in Collins' weather description often formed part of a secure reading of his damp ordeal. The abstract noun 'adventure' was central to Kesteven's view of his ride. Too often, however, words are classed without a clear purpose or extravagant claims made for their impact. The first-person pronoun 'I' is a favourite here. On the other hand, selecting first and third person pronouns 'we' and 'they' in the poem could support a developed analysis of the roles and relationship of tourists and locals.

AO2

Strictly linear approaches to the texts often cause problems. The opening sentence of Text A did not repay analysis, especially for those who spent too long on it without noticing the weather, the key factor in Collins' experience. His second sentence was an apt starting point and there was some convincing analysis of the use of parallelism. Successful candidates who scan and select often linked with this with the syndetic pair 'dreary and comfortless' at the end of the paragraph. The alliterated phrases 'big boys. . .gossiping gloomily' received disproportionate attention, often to very little effect. Alliteration is very popular and extravagant claims were made for its impact, well beyond the primary meaning that they too were affected by the weather. Some of the most developed analysis was on the third paragraph, the most sustained description of scenery on the paper. Unfortunately, several candidates did not get this far.

Only the least observant failed to grasp that the poem was about tourism, writing Text B off as 'negative' because Cornwall was quiet and boring. There were basic misreadings by those who failed to notice 'February' in the title or picked out 'traffic' as a cause for dissatisfaction. Many offered secure linguistic readings with purposeful selection. For example, there was sound work on the interrogatives, the list of merchandise, the verbs 'blunder and 'brood' and the declarative 'they hate us'. The final stanza received less attention and literary reading was often missing. The metaphor of the 'Razor's edge' and the onomatopoeia in 'snarl', rather different from the more sedate tone elsewhere, were less frequently explored. Very few considered the connotations of 'occupied' or connected it with the '*interrogation*' of the first stanza.

Text C was probably the most popular but the danger of getting stuck at the beginning was obvious again. Kesteven had a wider perspective and the most successful responses acknowledged this by scanning the text to establish the variety of his interests. These included the commercial appeal of Penzance, the history of the region, his weather warning, the rural landscape, archaeology and the experience for cyclists. With so much on offer, it was disappointing to see his appraisal reduced to 'positive'. The sibilance in the first line was overwhelmingly popular but the meanings of the words sometimes entirely ignored. In stronger responses there was accurate work on Kesteven's more informal register and comment on the spoken delivery was integrated with the meanings and messages conveyed. Those who reached the end included the most confident candidates who were able to discuss the speaker's prior knowledge and enthusiasm for Cornwall's industrial past.

AO4

Careful reading of the text descriptors will help with planning links. Some understood that Kesteven would be more knowledgeable than the other visitors, a useful starting point for links. Several discussed his style in relation to the expectations of a YouTube audience. On the other hand, a few even overlooked 'February' in the title of the poem, making an accurate reading very difficult.

Contextual factors are not rewarded separately in Section A. Some candidates spent too long on audiences and purposes, relevant to the tone and content of Text C but less important elsewhere. Time differences provided more useful comparisons, especially the pre-tourism era of Text C and the season in Text B, valid factors as part of a comparative point.

A few responses started with focus entirely on form and structure. These sections are generally unsuccessful as links are usually superficial and unconvincing. Technique-led connections are rarely successful either. For example, spotting alliteration in each text is unlikely to lead to any meaningful comparison. As the question says, discussion needs to start with what the texts have to say about Cornwall. Some successful connections included: rural v. commercial; natural v man-made; the weather -and the season in Text B; different views of locals; tranquillity v boredom.

It is impossible to predict some of the most effective connections. One successful candidate used the idea of pace as a starting point: urban ambling on a small scale in the poem; a more purposeful hike with changing weather and scenery in Text A; greater range and variety in Text C as the cyclist is moving more quickly. Another used prior knowledge as a starting point, selecting to show the more informed and factual approach of Text C, with Collins and Fanthorpe more reliant on what the weather or the locals had to offer in Cornwall.

Summary of advice for Section A

- Read the text descriptors; read and re-read the texts.
- Do not write out the text descriptors.
- Choose connections to plan your answer; contrasts will sometimes be easier to discuss than similarities.
- Your introduction should refer to what the texts have to say on the topic and make some connections between them.
- Be careful not to spend too long on the beginnings of the texts.
- Avoid repetition of 'positive' and 'negative'.
- Identify word classes only when you intend to discuss the impact of the words.
- Remember to include some literary terms.

SECTION B

The strongest responses were planned and shaped, offering a relevant argument in response to the question and selecting a range of material to show understanding of the novelist's techniques. Terminology chosen was well chosen and thoughtfully applied. Because of the double-weighted AO3, they also integrated a range of contextual factors. However, there were several responses which relied on narration or description, lacked analysis and applied little or no terminology. A few responses made no mention of contextual factors; in several more, contextual references were brief, sketchy, inaccurate, repetitive or irrelevant.

Texts and questions

The Handmaid's Tale and *The Color Purple* were the most popular novels. Some centres had studied *Tess of the D'Urbervilles* or *Great Expectations*. There were no responses on *Emma*. The question on the presentation of suffering was by far the most popular. There were also several responses on family relationships, authority figures or friendship and a few on domestic settings.

Each year there will be two or three questions which squarely address the concerns of each novel and others less obviously suitable. Question 4 on friendship was not an obvious choice for *The Handmaid's Tale* but a few chose it. There were few successful responses but one featured Offred and Moira before discussing obstacles to friendship built into Gilead's regime. Others, however, struggled to find relevant material.

Planning and Organisation

Most introductions indicated relevant material and many included genre. Successful introductions went further, outlining an argument in response to the question and integrating key contextual factors.

For the very popular question on suffering there was a huge choice of material in all the novels so organisation was very important. Many organised through the characters in *The Color Purple* but some chose the causes of suffering or the nature of suffering, such as physical, institutional, psychological or emotional. The opening letter was the episode most often used and some responses spent far too long on it. Warnings against a chronological approach have appeared in these reports every year. Those studying *The Handmaid's Tale* are unlikely to be tempted but the novel is more difficult to navigate and needs more careful revision of its structure so that relevant material can be located quickly. Most chose at least three episodes but again this year some gave descriptive outlines of their chosen topic, drifted from the question or told the story.

AO1 and AO2

It was discouraging to see responses with relevant selection and clear understanding where terminology was confined to a narrow range of word classes and sentence moods. Again, the term 'declarative' was often repeated by some to little effect, even when examples were accurate.

Focus on the most productive details is a skill to be encouraged. Taking the most popular choices as an example, suffering is apparent in many key episodes of *The Handmaid's Tale* and *The Color Purple*. Some working with relevant material seemed to select details merely because they could use some terminology rather than for their contribution to the presentation of suffering. In some responses, 'suffering' was repeated with little or no exploration. Examples were catalogued rather than analysed to consider the nature of the suffering and how that was conveyed.

In many responses literary concepts and readings were missing, even when potentially productive episodes had been chosen. However, there were several developed readings of symbolism in *The Color Purple*. Quilting and Shug's encouragement of Celie's Folkspants business, for example, were used to discuss friendship. Settings such as Offred's room and the gymnasium were used to discuss the suffering of Offred and the Handmaids. The most successful candidates recognise that novelists make fundamental stylistic choices for a reason. Several candidates integrated comment on key techniques such as Walker's use of dialect or Atwood's choice of names.

AO3

At the top of the range there were outstanding responses on context. Key contextual factors were embedded in the introduction. A wide range of influences was thoroughly understood and comment was seamlessly integrated throughout the response. The reception of the novel was also covered. Facts were accurate and there was sometimes evidence of independent investigation.

In some weaker responses, contextual points were mentioned at the beginning and then forgotten. A block of biography at the start will gain some credit but not as much as details of the writer's life or beliefs at relevant points in the response. In others, there were numerous very brief starting points but without sufficient development to show a clear understanding of their relevance. Some candidates threw in contextual factors at intervals, without clear links to the issues under discussion. Some repeated versions of the same idea or made vague references such as 'at the time' or 'when it was written'.

Candidates should have a wide range of contextual influences to choose from: biographical, historical, political and social information; the writer's own views; critical opinions; original and modern audiences for older novels; genre conventions. Factual information needs to be learnt. Independent research and reading of background, reviews and works in the same genre should be recommended and encouraged. Contextual factors should be integrated with the teaching of the novel. Essay planning practice should focus on their integration.

Summary of advice for Section B

- Revision should include finding key episodes quickly.
- Learn information such as dates and critics' views.
- Start including context in the introduction.
- If you begin with the opening of the novel, aim to move on briskly.
- Keep the question in mind and make sure that quotations address it.
- Vary your terminology and include some literary terms.

A LEVEL ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE

GCE

Summer 2025

UNIT 5 (NEA): CRITICAL AND CREATIVE GENRE STUDY

Overview of the Unit

Non-exam assessment: 2500-3500 word folder.

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. In reflecting on their studies, learners will then be required to produce original writing related to their chosen genre.

As it is a non-examination assessment, performance in Unit 5 tends to be strong.

Comments on individual questions/sections

SECTION A: GENRE STUDY

Moderators saw work from almost all genres within the specification. Gothic, dystopia and romance continue to prove most popular, with the crime genre continuing to grow in popularity. Very little work was seen in the historical fiction, travel and satire/comedy genres. Centres continue to take a range of approaches to text selection and task setting within the genre study. 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 and tasks were generally well chosen and appropriate to this level of study.

Moderators saw a diverse range of wider reading texts which were paired effectively with the core text selected from the Appendix in the specification. 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.

The assessment of Section A covers AO1, AO2, AO3 and AO4, with AO2 and AO3 double weighted. AO1 addresses terminology but also academic register and organisation. Most candidates had clearly planned their responses and included an appropriate range of literary and linguistic terminology. In the strongest responses, this terminology was applied with precision and was closely connected to meaning. 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. 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 A-Level 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.

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. 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, the most successful responses linked their core and wider reading texts 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.

SECTION B: RELATED CREATIVE WRITING

Moderators saw a great deal of narrative writing this year. Short stories and opening chapters were the most popular writing type selected 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. Across much of the narrative writing seen, characterisation and setting were handled well but dialogue was less successful, often lacking realism and failing to move the narrative forward. Some candidates produced monologues, allowing for some very interesting explorations of characters. The most successful monologues demonstrated clear understanding of staging and used this to good effect in establishing setting, character and genre.

Very little non-literary work was seen this year. A minority of candidates produced speeches, travelogues, podcasts, articles and reviews. The most successful responses demonstrated clear understanding of audience and purpose. Brief text descriptors outlining the intended audience and purpose were helpful.

Whilst much of the work seen had been carefully drafted, technical inaccuracy was more prevalent than should be in the case in a non-examination assessment. Candidates must rigorously proofread their work to ensure that errors are addressed before final submission of work.

Summary of key points

In **Section A**, candidates should:

- apply a wide range of literary and linguistic terminology (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. (AO3)
- 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).

In **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.

Administration

Annotation on the work submitted for moderation was generally excellent, however, in a minority of cases there were limited comments visible on the work and cover sheets had not been fully completed.

On the whole, centres uploaded work to IAMIS appropriately. In a small number of cases, unmarked copies of the work had been submitted which made moderation challenging. Finally, where possible, centres should upload folders as one document rather than individual files for cover sheets, Section A and Section B.

Conclusion

As this specification has been in place for a number of years now, it is clear that centres are comfortable with the demands of Unit 5. Moderators found much to enjoy in the work seen this year and it is pleasing to see new tasks and texts emerge year on year.

Supporting you

Useful contacts and links

Our friendly subject team is on hand to support you between 8.30am and 5.00pm, Monday to Friday.

Tel: 029 2240 4292

Email: gceenglish@wjec.co.uk

Qualification webpage: [AS/A Level English Language and Literature](#)

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