

Examiners' Report
June 2012

GCE English Literature 6ET01 01

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Introduction

This, the eighth sitting of 6ET01, passed successfully. The paper provided a good challenge and led to a spread of marks sufficient to suggest that the key objective of differentiation had been met. Candidates are, in the main, well acquainted with the Assessment Objectives, their distribution across the three sections of the exam and the pattern of questions likely to be set, based on past papers and the exemplification of strong responses provided through training and reports such as this one.

Two significant issues arose. Centres are strongly reminded to draw the attention of candidates to the following:

1. Where it is used in Section A (the unseen) the term "sound devices" means technical features such as sibilance, alliteration, onomatopoeia, rhyme and consonance, for example.
2. Candidates should ensure that they answer the question on the named poem from their studied/chosen collection and not one of the other collections. For this series, allowances were made in the marking but for future reference, no undertakings about which poems will be chosen or the adoption of a forgiving approach to students making this kind of oversight can be given.

Question 1

Candidates continue to do well with this task and choose it in a ratio of roughly 3:1 as opposed to the Prose question. The Jackie Kay poem proved accessible and the tasks were a fair challenge, allowing for a wide variety of responses.

1(a) The term "sound devices" (as stated both above and in previous Reports) intends alliteration, assonance, onomatopoeia, sibilance and consonance. Rhyme is also an acceptable topic. Caesura, end-stopping, enjambment and like kinds of technique are interesting, but not relevant in this case. Very many answers focused very generally on "ring", "ringing", "hush" and "trudge", without ever labelling these items or having any sense that they did something other than "reflect sounds" for instance. This said, the level of evaluative comment continues to improve - there is now far less of the "it makes the poem flow better" / "it makes the poem song-like" (based on the Sample materials) style of analysis. A lot of students wrote impressively, for instance, about the hissing effect engendered by Kay's use of sibilance.

1(b) There was much to commend in the specificity of responses in identifying the use and effect of adjectives such as "filmic" and "lustreless" (with many insightful remarks about the undertone of "lust less"). The verbs "strut" and "trudge" also got a lot of attention. "(C) lueless" was another well-worn path. It is encouraging to see many more answers attempt to be both precise and concise. The days of nervous students un-necessarily choosing many more than two examples and spilling over into essay-length work seem to be nearing an end.

1(c) Here is an example of a student scoring highly at 4 + 5:

(c) In poetry, tone and mood are created in different ways.

Using your knowledge of poetry, comment on the tone and mood in this poem and the ways in which they are developed.

(AO1 = 5, AO2 = 5)

The mood being the poem is highlighted through the lack of rhyme. This makes the poem appear quite boring and without excitement. This ~~adds~~ creates the tone that is lack-lustre and boring, just like the lives of people without love → the rigid structure
↑
new paragraph.

emphasises the fact that people are trapped in this cyclical nature of having love, losing it then hoping for it to return again. By ^{writing} ~~creating~~ the poem in four stanzas each consisting of four lines, Kay creates the tone of habit and classification - for this is routine and seemingly unavoidable.

He ~~has~~ By directly comparing the lives of those with love and those without, Kay uses language to display how

dichotomy and emphasise the sad tone of a decrease in the quality of life. Language is used to directly compare the 'skin shining' of those with love with the 'skin lustreless'. This shows that not only are people emotionally worse, but physically too. The 'lustreless' way of their life is showing on their outside surface as well as in their inside emotions. This adds to the mood of helplessness as this is something they cannot control as well as adding to the pitying tone of the poem as the reader cannot help but feel pity and sorrow for those people whose quality and standard of living is dropping.

~~By using the ending the poem with a single line on its own, ^{it} ~~draws~~ acts as a conclusion to the poem.~~

The fact that almost every line ends with some form of punctuation shows that adds to the simplicity of the life that people in this cycle experience and that there is no escape. This adds to the hopeless tone as people find themselves in this cycle and cannot break free from its rigidity.

(Total for Question 1 = 20 marks)



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Examiner Comments

This response scored 4/5 and 5/5.

Question 2

The extract from Evelyn Waugh's "Decline and Fall" prompted a lot of strong answers and, of course, sufficient less good ones to suggest that both it and the tasks attached to it were fit for purpose.

2(a) Many candidates went straight for Lady Circumference and dealt well with the presentation of her through dialogue, though there was a good deal of understandable mis-cue about the implications of her clipping "Shockin", with significant numbers viewing it as indicative of a lack of intelligence or a betrayal of her working class roots. Other techniques drawing comment included contrast and language choice. Grimes and the Doctor were also plentifully considered.

2(b) Here a student scores full marks (5 out of 5) for their comments on setting. The focus on the ironised effect of setting is a strength.

(b) Writers make use of setting for particular effects.

Identify and comment on the use of setting in this extract.

(AO2 = 5)

The setting of the extract is one of leisure. At the beginning of the extract, the reader is shown that the events are set in a field, "... the school and several local visitors were assembled in the field". This gives the extract an idyllic feeling, which is ironic as the events turn out to be far from idyllic. The idyllic setting of the field is emphasised when the ~~car~~ race course is described, "The course ... starts from the pavilion, goes round that clump of elms ... 'Beeches,' corrected Lady Circumference loudly ... and ends in front of the bandstand." Although interrupted by the comic remark of Lady Circumference, the ~~id~~ images of "the pavilion" and "Beeches" show ^{that} the setting of the extract is extremely beautiful, creating more irony as the settings do not reflect the events of the sports day.



ResultsPlus

Examiner Comments

This answer got 5/5.

2(c) For teachers and examiners, it is perhaps not difficult to spot the humour intended in items such as the one prescribed here. For students working under pressure in an exam it is plainly less straightforward and it is to the credit of so many that they identified not only the broadstroke tonality of the shooting incident but that there was so much insight into the nuances of the passage. For example, for a pupil to observe that Circumference is a mathematical term, as is Tangent, is one thing. For someone to note that a tangent only briefly touches a circumference and that this expresses the nature of the relationship between mother and son, thereby enhancing the subtlety of the scene (as more than one did) is truly impressive in the context. Equally, there were enough responses which struggled with the concepts and the material to suggest that genuine differentiation had taken place.

Question 3 (a)

This candidate scored 13/15 for AO1, 5/5 for AO2 and 18/20 for AO3. The work included here is only a part of the whole response.

As Lawrence uses free verse form this allows him to express his emotions and thoughts more freely. Lawrence indent particular lines to create effect. For example, in the 8th stanza, Lawrence uses indents on 'runs seeking & loneliness' and 'patiently to divide and self-divide' in order to emphasise his wishes to gain independence and freedom. He uses a change of sentence length such as 'Ah home, suddenly I love you,' to suggest he has had a change of heart and is exclaiming his emotions. Lawrence uses similar structure in stanzas 5 and 6 to imply that the demands his mother place on him are never ending and continual. The last stanza, ~~emphasises~~ ^{structure of the} emphasises the narrator's true feelings as he begins to follow two structures. This shows how torn he feels about leaving his mother and living independently, showing his obsession over the thought of ~~the~~ change.

William Yeats uses modal verbs such as 'shall' and 'will' in the first line of each stanza, ~~which~~ to suggest that the narrative voice feels like he deserves ~~to~~ ~~the~~ peace and happiness. In the last stanza it is suggested that the ~~person~~ person is currently living in the city. Therefore, the descriptions in the previous two stanzas show their desire for change, as they are completely different. The person wishes to lead a simple life of the isle, with 'a small cabin' and 'nine bean rows'. The preciseness of the ^{dream of} bean rows suggests that ~~the~~ Yeats is obsessed with change. Yeats also desires to

~~have~~ 'have some place there' alongside nature. He creates a picturesque and idyllic setting which shows that he is not opposed to change at all.

Lawrence also uses nature to explore his feelings about change. ~~By~~ ^{By} mentioning the 'half moon sink again', suggests that another day has passed of living with torn emotions about leaving his mother. In the first stanza, Lawrence uses questions to show his ~~state~~ state of being undecided, as he is asking himself rhetorical questions. Lawrence personifies 'all the little roofs' to 'bow low, pitiful, beseeching, resigned', as a technique to explore ~~his~~ ~~his~~ his guilt. ~~to~~ To show his love for his home and mother, Lawrence changes the tone of the poem. He uses sibilance to create the sound of the steam train which would take him away from his mother. He once again uses nature to express his feelings as he describes the sun and rain to not 'ask the secret'. This suggests that they do not demand unconditional love, like his mother does, they receive it naturally.



ResultsPlus Examiner Comments

In this extract, the candidate maintains a good focus on technique, effect and the terms of the task. There is also a strong comparative element so that the A03 mark is high.



ResultsPlus Examiner Tip

The use of terminology such as "modal verbs" is to be commended where it is made relevant. It is not, however, a requirement.

Question 3 (b)

One of the examining team makes the following comments: "there were some very thoughtful essays on the idealisation of home. "I remember, I remember" was a popular text. "My spirit flew like feathers" was frequently quoted, but less able candidates tended to make a broad comment on its meaning, or point out the alliteration and leave it at that. Better candidates successfully attempted a deconstruction, exploring the connotations of lightness and airiness. There was some mechanistic analysis, with some candidates this year being somewhat obsessed with caesura, or on a mission to identify anaphora. Some candidates dutifully outlined language features, as in "tomorrow and today", without appearing to grasp their poignant effects. "Aunt Julia" was occasionally productively discussed, and sympathetically appreciated: "McCaig presents fragmented details – "brown eggs, black skirts" suggesting the impressionistic and fragmented memory of a child ... this creates a sadness in the poem, that someone so strong and full of life is reduced to fragments and 'a sandy grave.'" And positively connected: "This sadness evoked in "Aunt Julia" is similar to the sympathy the reader feels when the father "who wore his collar the wrong way round is juxtaposed with a mother who was "gentle, gently, gentleness." in "Autobiography."

Question 4 (a)

Here too, the remarks of one of the team sum up the situation to fine purpose: "This produced some interesting arguments, sometimes thoughtful. One well-shaped essay comparing and contrasting "Going Going" and "The Trees are Down " argued that they explored an ecological agenda ahead of their time, and linked the modern perspective with the traditional theme of pastoralism. Another good essay contrasted "How the Old Mountains", a "successful evocation of the beauty of nature" with "Mushrooms", "which makes simultaneously and successfully a political and a social point."

Question 4 (b)

Arnold also reminisces about how he used to view the world in a beautiful way. He describes "The Sea of Faith", a metaphor for his religious belief as once being "at the full, and round the earth's shore" and like "a bright ~~git~~ girdle". Like the rain in Beery Cliff, Arnold's belief made a natural feature of the land appear beautiful, at least in his mind. The idea of the "sea" or his faith as a girdle is also interesting as girdles surround and encircle the body as the sea does land, but it also covers the skin and in this way seems protective. A possible interpretation is that Arnold's faith surrounded him and protected him from the harsh world he is now going to.

In Beery Cliff and Dover Beach, the poets convey their changed emotions through their changed perceptions of the land. The sound of the sea becomes a "melancholy, long, withdrawing roar". The use of a tricolon ^{here} ~~there~~, to describe the "roar" of the sea draws out the description and in this way the narrative voice perhaps reflects the way that Arnold dwells on and contemplates this sound i.e. his confusion regarding faith. The long, open vowel sounds and assonance reflect the sound of the ocean but also convey a mournful and sorrowful sound - the reflection of the poets' innermost feelings and as previously referenced, "the eternal note of sadness". Similarly, while Hardy still ascribes the term "Chesmal

beauty" to ~~old~~ Beery Cliff in both stanzas four and five, the contrast is otherwise distinctive. While his love was alive, the cliff was "old Beery", a very familiar, endearing name. It "bathed" to the sky whereas now it "looms", a far more threatening, hostile term. The stone is "wild", "weird" and "weirden" which conveys the alien way he ~~now~~ now views it, not having the attachment to it that he had when his wife was alive.



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Examiner Comments

This answer scored full marks. In the excerpt included here, there is a particularly good use of textual reference.

Question 5 (a)

This candidate scored 12/15, 4/5 and 15/20 (31/40 in total).

Another poem that defies stereotypes and therefore makes a more interesting poem is 'Love'. In this poem, Thomas uses a number of methods to highlight the monotony of everyday life such as alliteration in 'Grass grew' and the use of ~~five~~ regular quatrains. ~~As~~ Although it would be the stereotypical view that someone in this situation would be unhappy, 'Tom Davie' is actually content and happy with his life. This can be seen by the phrase 'Miserable? Kick my arse!' The use of rhetorical question here highlights how he is not conforming to how society thinks he should be.



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Examiner Comments

In this excerpt the student writes clearly and concisely, maintaining a strong focus on the question.

Question 5 (b)

Here the comments of a member of the examining team are reproduced: "Some good answers looked at the way some poems appear simple, but are carefully constructed to appear so, for instance, "Father." Some effective arguments were built around the pastoral idyll of "Haymaking" contrasted with the brutality of agricultural work evoked in "Tractor". There appeared to be some genuine engagement with this topic, blending personal perspectives with detailed textual reference. Some candidates were clearly versed in romanticism, and productively contextualised "Solitary Reaper" and "Haymaking."". It should be added that although contextual placement and discussion can be a useful supplement to an answer, AO4 is not being assessed here and therefore endless summaries of background materials are not productive.

Question 6(a)

An examiner comments: "The genre descriptor "Bildungsroman" is frequently dropped into literary essays, often casually, sometimes productively, as happened in some good essays, using this concept to frame Jane's discovery of her settled identity. Some good answers clearly identified and explored the factors which influence identity, and the ways in which Bronte presents them, through narrative voice, for instance, or through the interaction with other, including minor, characters. Feminist and Marxist critiques were applied, to gender issues such as the definition of the female by the male, and to Jane's status as orphan and governess, defined by her social class, just as Antoinette is defined and confined by race. An interesting essay considered the way Master Reed deliberately dehumanises Jane and attempts to redefine her identity as "Joan", just as Rochester controls Antoinette by replacing her identity with "Bertha." This essay also interestingly contrasted the presentation of Jane's successful quest for her identity with Antoinette's pitiful disintegration under forces she cannot control."

Question 6 (b)

The answer excerpted here scored 12/15 and 22/25 (a total of 34/40).

Jane Eyre and 'Wide Sargasso Sea' use speech and voice to create a sense of interest for the reader and an insight into what the characters feel and believe. The use of narrative voice is done well effectively to portray a sense of time and tension.

The speech of St John in the given extract is opened with a religious take on his ^{foreboding} missionary quest; his language is full of ~~religious~~ ~~very~~ ~~set~~ religious connotations such as; "shore of darker stream ... taken my birth" his stream of holy love is a technique used by Bronte to highlight her cynical views on the Calvinist beliefs. She is persuading the reader to think unconventionally and criticise his livelihood as hypocritical and delusional. ~~St~~ St John states earlier that ~~he~~ ^{loves} ~~he~~ ^{so widely} ~~loves~~ ~~the~~ "or Rosamond yet his duty to God forbids him from seeking this love."



ResultsPlus Examiner Comments

This candidate's introduction is pertinent and to the point. The second paragraph moves quickly into discussion of the prescribed extract whilst also giving a sense of some of the wider concerns of the novel.

Question 7 (a)

The ultimate contrast, and conclusion to this essay, is between Good and Evil. At the close of Brighton Rock, Pinkie, the ~~no~~ serial sociopathic serial killer, is sent hissing with acid, plunging down the cliff as though it was the second Fall of Man. Yet Rose, speaking

to a priest, is consoled by the phrase "Corruptio optime pessima est" - the corruption of the best is the worst. This suggestion that somehow, the archetype of evil possesses the capacity to do good is the ultimate contrast. Through it, Greene asks the reader whether humanity is truly like a stick of Brighton Rock - our innermost core will always "read Brighton" - or whether we all have in us the capacity for triumphant good.



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Examiner Comments

This candidate's work scored full marks.



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Examiner Tip

A good conclusion should be concise and need not necessarily sum up what your argument is. Here, the writer introduces a new point, references the text impressively and provides a pointed and personal response to the terms of the task, demonstrating clearly their engagement with both what they have read and what they have been asked to do in this part of the exam.

Question 7 (b)

There are numerous ~~words in this~~ negative word ~~choice~~ choices which evoke a sense of manipulation throughout this section. For example, words such as "nervously", "force" and "artificial". The word force strongly evokes a sense of manipulation because you ~~can~~ can manipulate something with force to make sure it complies. The word 'nervously' creates a sense of manipulation because other people or events could manipulate your feelings in order to feel nervous. In this case Pinkie ~~is forced to be~~ "laughed nervously" because his feelings have been manipulated by Rose.

Another way manipulation is evoked is through the use of similes in this section. For example, Greene writes "All his pride coiled like a watch spring round the thought". This simile evokes a sense of manipulation because a coil is manipulated into shape and a watch is manipulated by the cogs spinning around inside. Furthermore, it suggests that Pinkie's pride has been manipulated by the thought of marriage and that he feels Rose is now manipulating him because they are about to get married.



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Examiner Comments

The mark for this script was 14/15 and 24/25, equalling 38/40.



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Examiner Tip

A02 requires that you "demonstrate detailed critical understanding in analysing the ways in which structure, form and language shape meanings in literary texts". Here, the candidate focuses very specifically on language choices and imagery in the specified extract and uses them to present an interesting argument that it is not only Pinkie who is doing the manipulating here. Simile, however, is mis-spelt and this sort of error should be avoided!

Question 8 (a)

The response from which this extract is drawn scored 12/15 and 22/25 (therefore 34/40).

In Jane Austen's 'Pride and Prejudice', the theme of choice is inherently linked to many of the other key themes, such as marriage, family and self-discovery. Austen uses the choices of her characters to further develop these themes, as through each choice made, something new is learnt by the characters and by the readers, in relation to one of these themes.

Mary Bennet observes that "every impulse of feeling should be guided by reason", and this observation becomes increasingly relevant as Elizabeth ~~begins~~ makes choices throughout the novel which are guided entirely on judgement, with no regard to reason at all. Most notably is her choice to believe that Darcy is "dishonest" and "abominable", and Wickham is moral, simply because there is "truth in his looks". ~~However,~~ when the truth ~~that comes to light~~ surfaces, this choice comes back to haunt Elizabeth; "astonishment, apprehension, and even horror, oppressed her." The tricolon of "abstract nouns here emphasizes the strength of the emotion that Elizabeth feels on discovering the truth. Moreover, the verb choice, of "oppressed", further emphasizes the powerful and torturous effects that her original choice has had on her; the verb has connotations of inescapable suffering, showing that Elizabeth cannot escape from this choice, as she herself made the original wrong judgement; she has therefore brought this inescapable suffering upon herself. Here, Austen shows the dramatic negative effect that one bad choice can have on the person who made it.



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Examiner Comments

This section of an essay on the importance of choice begins well and then moves very purposefully into targeted focus on language and its effects in relation to the development of theme.

Question 8 (b)

A member of the marking team states: "some candidates conflated the terms and attempted to discuss the single concept of "imagery and symbolism". A number clearly did not appreciate the difference between imagery and straightforward description. Most candidates grasped the symbolic importance of locations as a projection of the character of their owners, and the social symbolism of the houses of the superior classes on rising ground, and the symbolic importance of the trees separating Mr Collins from Rosings. The use of the form of letters to express character was covered, for instance Mr Collins', and of the concise graphical length of Mr Darcy's writings as representative of his honesty. Although most candidates were well-aware of the symbolic power of "The Yellow Wallpaper", some seemed to think this second text does not employ symbolism at all."

Question 9 (a)

This question proved highly popular and allowed for a very wide range of response. Many candidates concluded that it is our formative experiences that make us who we are and focused on the representation of childhood in both "Wuthering Heights" and "The Color Purple". Others took the view that other people make us who we are ("I am Heathcliff!" was often a starting point here). This argument could be easily extended into both of the other prescribed texts, particularly "The Scarlet Letter" where the symbolism of the "A" was widely discussed in the context of the society that branded the heroine with it. However, the most fruitful of the lines of discussion available seemed to be the view that it is love which makes us who we are and there was plentiful harvesting of this notion. Obviously all three texts can be interpreted as powerfully exploring this idea and much fine analysis ensued.

Question 9 (b)

The extract from "Wuthering Heights" had as its primary interest Isabella Linton and there was much discussion of her role and its significance. Other answers dealt with Lockwood and Nelly Dean and their parts in presenting the narrative. Yet further candidates chose to consider the younger generation in the novel and what they represent. "The Color Purple" similarly offered much for students to investigate and there was some interesting work on Squeak, Harpo and Sophia, for instance. "The Scarlet Letter" also had enough in it, to take the evidence of the responses provided, to generate room for argument. Pearl (not always accepted as a lesser character, however) was a source of some interest, as was Roger Chillingworth. It is true to say that very many answers took serious issue with the terms of the task and also that this often led to wholly good work, however the proviso must be made that the best responses at least acknowledged the potential for interest generated by some of the minor characters before moving into wholesale disagreement.

Question 10 (a)

As ever, the candidates answering on Forster, Colegate and Ishiguro were comparatively few in number, but what they produced was often excellent.

10(a) was variously reported as: "particularly nuanced and well-realized. Most responses... understood 'responsibility' as 'social responsibility', and so these answers were particularly well historio-contextually informed" and "generally of good quality, fluent in expression, detailed in analysis and mature in vocabulary". One examiner added, however that some answers "fell short of top band through a tendency to overwrite, and to over-analyse specific points, as in Forster's use of the comma."

Question 10 (b)

This answer scored full marks.

'Howards End' is a novel full of questions and there is no one who seeks the answers more than Leonard. Leonard thinks that through acquiring culture he will find the answers, he will be able to "place his hands on the ropes" of society. However, as readers we understand that Leonard will never truly acquire culture, he will go to music concerts, read books, even talk to cultured people yet he himself will never truly be a cultured man; he will merely go through the motions. Leonard himself therefore could be considered to be the embodiment of a question; why has Forster chosen to place a character in a novel in which he seemingly has no place. It is however, if Leonard himself is a question he is also an answer, an answer to the future inheritance of England. Leonard undermines the aesthetic harmony of the novel, he cannot fit in with the novel's natural symphony because he himself contains no music. And yet he is crucial. In a world of continual flux, where London is a "caricature of infinity" of formlessness, it is Leonard who provides form as he provides an heir

not just to Howard's End, but to the legacy of England. 'Howard's End' cannot therefore be considered a novel that raises more questions than it answers as it provides the ultimate answer to the condition of England through the character of Leonard. Leonard is the connection.



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Examiner Comments

Having already offered a fine level of analysis relating specifically to the extract, the candidate moves out into a broader discussion of Leonard Bast. This is extremely well handled.

Paper Summary

The hallmark of good to high attainment in 6ET01 is engagement - with the texts, with the tasks and with interpretations. Teaching and learning strategies across the vast majority of centres would seem to be promoting this to ever greater effect - students and teachers are to be commended for their efforts in preparing for this stretching and challenging exam.

Based on their performance on this paper, candidates should:

- Address the terms of the task as precisely as possible in Section A;
- Make use of appropriate terminology in Section A;
- Continue to limit themselves, as a general rule to two examples, even where this is not specified, in 1a & 1b or 2a & 2b;
- Quote from the text in Section A;
- Ensure that they are answering on the correct named text for their poetry anthology in Section B;
- Remember to spend at least some of their answer dealing in relatively close detail with the secondary text in Section C;
- Focus part of their response on the set passage in Section C if they choose a b task;
- Avoid re-producing lengthy passages of prepared material.

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