



Examiners' Report Principal Examiner Feedback

Summer 2023

Pearson Edexcel GCE Advanced Subsidiary
In English Language and Literature

Paper 2: Varieties in Language and Literature
(8EL0/02)

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Section A:

Similar to last year's summer series, the majority of candidates responded to Society and the Individual with limited entries for Love and Loss, Encounters and Crossing Boundaries. Question 1 on *The Great Gatsby* was the most popular textual choice. Candidates were able to engage with the questions more purposefully this series but at the lower levels, candidates were often unable to successfully negotiate all the demands of the task: the extract, wider novel, contextual factors, and discussion of the writer's craft.

Candidates' knowledge of the text varied. Many candidates did not fully engage with the extract and often missed opportunities to display a literary and linguistic analysis. This series also saw more paraphrasing of the events being discussed in responses. Some candidates were limited by straying away from the question being asked.

Overall candidates selected a range of material for discussion. There were interesting discussions on how Nick ascribes status and explorations of the development of Gatsby's persona. Other common aspects for discussion included the relative status of East and West Egg and Myrtle's role.

For many candidates, the author was largely absent from the response. Many responses did not engage with the text as a construct which impacted the depth of analysis that was present. It was also noted that the range of linguistic and literary terms being discussed was limited. Whilst feature spotting is to be avoided, it is vital that candidates are able to confidently discuss the writer's craft and how this is demonstrated in the extract, and wider novel. Candidates who do not manage this often miss the potential to move up through the levels as they do not achieve highly in terms of AO1 and AO2. Similarly, many candidates took a literary approach at the expense of using both a literary and linguistic lens. This also led to a more limited response by the candidates.

Section B:

Often, candidates felt more secure in their responses to Section B. Candidates were able to use a range of approaches to answer the question and relevant material was selected to support the points the candidates were making. Candidates need to be mindful that AOs 1, 2 and 3 are still assessed on this question and that their responses need to be consistently analytical as well as utilising relevant content from the text. Candidates handled contextual information well and were often able to integrate this into their answer to support the arguments being made.

Candidates would benefit from a greater appreciation of the genre of the text they have studied. Many candidates do not consider staging or form when discussing plays and poetry. It is important that the medium the writer chose is considered when responding to the question set. At times candidates commented on the rhyme schemes of individual poems but this tended to be descriptive rather than analytical.

The majority of responses for Question 9 were on *Othello* and *The Whitsun Weddings*. Responses on *Othello* were wide ranging. There were many interesting discussions on the female characters and the issues they illuminated. Many responses focused on Iago with the more successful ones discussing his role as a marginal character. Less successful candidates tended to focus on the opening scenes of the play and did not demonstrate a full understanding of the text. Context was stronger for this text as many candidates were

able to successfully draw on a range of relevant aspects of the text, the most successful ones moved beyond racial status.

Many responses that utilised Larkin referenced Mr Bleaney as one of the main poems for discussion. Those who engaged fully with the poem were quite successful, other candidates focused their response on the coat hook alone. Candidates generally chose their poems for discussion well and were able to maintain their focus in response to the question.