

Examiners' Report/
Principal Examiner Feedback

Summer 2015

Pearson Edexcel International GCSE
in English Literature (4ET0)
Paper 01R

Edexcel and BTEC Qualifications

Edexcel and BTEC qualifications are awarded by Pearson, the UK's largest awarding body. We provide a wide range of qualifications including academic, vocational, occupational and specific programmes for employers. For further information visit our qualifications websites at www.edexcel.com or www.btec.co.uk. Alternatively, you can get in touch with us using the details on our contact us page at www.edexcel.com/contactus.

Pearson: helping people progress, everywhere

Pearson aspires to be the world's leading learning company. Our aim is to help everyone progress in their lives through education. We believe in every kind of learning, for all kinds of people, wherever they are in the world. We've been involved in education for over 150 years, and by working across 70 countries, in 100 languages, we have built an international reputation for our commitment to high standards and raising achievement through innovation in education. Find out more about how we can help you and your students at: www.pearson.com/uk

Summer 2015

Publications Code UG041484

All the material in this publication is copyright

© Pearson Education Ltd 2015

General points

A healthy number of entries saw a range of answers across all level descriptors. Candidates in this series appeared able to use the exam time appropriately to compose effective and relevant responses. Answers at all ability levels were seen and it was particularly pleasing to see examples of very original approaches to some of the best answers where candidates combined excellent knowledge with a personal approach. These were very engaging and interesting to read. The quality of textual reference also showed improvement, with examples of integrated and well-selected references seen in many answers. In nearly all cases the quality of reference and use of quotation supported arguments purposefully.

Responses also showed an increasing awareness of structure with those working at Level 4 and above often presenting poised, critical essays. In examples of Level 5 work, a strategic approach to building arguments could be seen. At Level 3, sound discussion was often built using a systematic approach. Candidates working at Level 2 and below applied intermittent control to the organisation of their ideas, sometimes losing focus and cohesion as a result. It was also pleasing to see improvement in reference to the writer's craft, with some clear discussion on language choices accompanying points made. Where some candidates were a little over-ambitious with this kind of analysis, some elements of meaning were lost. It is important that technical language supports knowledge and understanding rather than detracting from it. Overall, candidates worked well with the questions to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding.

Questions 1a and 1b: 'A View from the Bridge'

Question 1a was more popular than 1b. Candidates dealt well with the character of Catherine, often applying a methodical approach by discussing her interaction with other characters and her impact on the play's events. The best answers ranged widely through the text, offering timely and relevant support. Weaker candidates concentrated on her relationships with Eddie and Rodolpho, tending to offer narrative summaries where implicit response was seen.

A range of responses emerged from Question 1b on how Miller creates tension in the play. This question tended to attract more able candidates who took a strategic view of the play. The best answers to this question used Arthur Miller's presentation of Alfieri and a highly selective choice of scenes to engage with the question. The various tensions within the play – sexual, marital, social, cultural and generational – offered opportunities to succeed. Less able answers tended toward a more general approach as they sought to spread their focus too far.

Questions 2a and 2b: 'An Inspector Calls'

Question 2a was the more popular of the two questions, offering candidates opportunities to write about Sheila and her relationships. Answers at all levels of ability were able to talk about the change in Sheila's character, with many referring to her eventual allegiance with the Inspector and her role as Priestley's mouthpiece. Sheila's relationships – with Gerald, Eva Smith, "Daisy Renton", Eric and her parents – formed the framework of many answers. The most

successful responses combined analysis with knowledge to demonstrate the development of Sheila's character throughout the play. Less able candidates tended to produce more narrative accounts of how she changes as the play progresses, and many of these were able to reach Level 3 through sound application of knowledge and understanding.

Question 2b worked very well in discriminating achievement and tended to be chosen either by very good candidates whose elastic and inclusive definition of charity often made for very interesting reading, or by candidates who felt that it was an opportunity to write a basic character study of Mrs Birling. These latter often struggled to find their way beyond Level 2. Better answers considered Mr Birling's dismissal of charity; Gerald's potential charity in looking after Daisy/Eva and Sheila's change of view in the play. Some very sophisticated views were seen with, at times, very relevant inclusion of details of context.

Questions 4a and 4b: 'Much Ado about Nothing'

No answers were seen to Question 4b but there were several on Question 4a. Most of these were straightforward in approach and presented a somewhat formulaic approach to the text and character of Claudio. Better answers in the range attempted to engage personally with Claudio's presentation by Shakespeare, avoiding the 'set piece' approach seen in other answers and at times engaging with writer's craft. Use of quotation, as often is the case on this paper, was evident and at times impressive. One good line from an answer: "there is something deeply unsettling about a man who is at his best in mortal combat".

Questions 5a and 5b: 'Romeo and Juliet'

Question 5a was a very popular question and tended to focus on the Nurse's bawdy nature and care for Juliet throughout Juliet's young life. Discussion on this character tended to be stronger when dealing with earlier scenes in the play. Many used a contrast with the Capulets as a way in to dealing with the Nurse, usually with some success. Popular areas of focus tended to include the Nurse's role in Juliet's secret marriage and her apparent betrayal of Juliet after Romeo is banished. Many answers dealt quite effectively with this material and, as such, found a worthy place in Level 3. A number of answers 'ran out of steam' towards the end of the play, with only a few paying more than lip service to the Nurse's role towards the end of the action.

Question 5b required candidates to write about time in the play and tended to present more difficulties for candidates. Responses tended to come from the more able. Some excellent answers were seen that offered critical and lucid insights into the concept and its use by Shakespeare. Many candidates were able to exemplify the compression of the time frame, the speed with which the play moves, and often the enthusiasm of the central characters for this speed to accelerate. Weaker responses tended to focus on timing rather than time, which led to a reliance on narration and plot summary.

Questions 6a and 6b: 'The Importance of Being Earnest'

Question 6a attracted a small number of answers. Most were effective in their exploration of the characters, interestingly tending to sympathise more with Algernon than Jack; Jack was frequently seen as dull but worthy. A number of responses related Algernon to Wilde himself, drawing contextual similarities with the double life led by Wilde and the reasons for this.

Question 6b answers focused on the themes of secret and hidden identity, largely with success. Most candidates pointed to Jack and Algernon as good examples of dual or assumed identity and supported their points well. Better answers referred to the secret kept for many years by Miss Prism. As with most "overview" style questions, the best answers offered a wide range of reference and dealt with ideas in some depth.

Questions 8a and 8b: 'Pride and Prejudice'

Question 8a proved popular with candidates of all abilities. The best answers showed evidence that candidates had been stretched in terms of their knowledge and analysis. They tended to combine elements of plot with the characters of Lady Catherine and Mr Collins to produce some interesting insights into their roles as catalysts and how they add elements of irony and humour to the novel. Better answers showed how these two characters illustrated Austen's themes of appearance and reality, genuineness and hypocrisy, truth and lies. Less successful answers tended to work through the novel, picking out points at which these characters appear.

Question 8b was based on the theme of appearance and reality and proved effective across the ability range. In general, the best answers dealt with more significant themes – the nature of relationships, the meaning of marriage and the values of the upper middle class and the aristocracy – using character and plot to illustrate these. Answers at Levels 3 and 4 tended to use characters to explore the theme, while the weakest answers relied heavily on plot. Mr Wickham, perhaps predictably, featured prominently in answers. Some sensitive reference to context was seen in a significant number of answers.

Questions 9a and 9b: 'To Kill a Mockingbird'

Question 9a proved popular with many candidates across the whole ability range. Almost all agreed that Tom Robinson is indeed the mockingbird of the novel, while the most astute weighed up the claims of other characters for this status. Jem, Dill, Boo Radley and Mr Raymond all featured with one or two references to Mayella and her geraniums and Mrs Dubose seen (although an element of literary shoe-horning could be seen in some of the arguments.) Some candidates used this question as an opportunity to present a ready-made character study of Tom Robinson, but this approach tended to limit them to the lower reaches of Level 3.

Question 9b seemed to present more challenges to candidates, but often produced the most fresh and original answers. Some candidates, perhaps inevitably, saw the theme of loss exclusively in physical terms through death, while others more deeply engaged with the theme of loss, relating it quite perceptively in some cases to loss of innocence, loss of freedom and loss of

justice. Once again, some excellent use of textual reference was seen and there is evidence series on series that candidates are getting more skilled at using integrated support.

Questions 11a and 11b: 'Of Mice and Men'

Question 11a attracted many answers with most candidates appearing comfortable when writing about Lennie's role as a victim. Answers were seen at all levels of ability, from straightforward descriptive responses to clever analytical discussions of Lennie as a representation of America's lost innocence and suffering. Stronger answers made close reference to details of form, structure and language, with some impressive examples of close analysis seen.

Question 11b was similar in popularity to 11a, with the focus of the dream attracting many answers at Level 3 or above. Candidates who engaged more widely with the idea, e.g. by considering Crooks dreaming of equality and the fact that Carlson seems to be lacking in a dream, fared better than those who concentrated solely on the dream of Lennie and George.

Questions 12a and 12b: 'Roll of Thunder, Hear my Cry'

A few answers were seen to this Question 12a. Some candidates saw the essential difference between Papa and Uncle Hammer – one a revolutionary, the other more pragmatic and restrained in his approach to progress. Those who answered this question seemed to know the novel well and were confident in writing about these characters. No answers were seen to Question 12b.

Questions 13a and 13b: 'Nineteenth Century Short Stories'

A small number of candidates answered Question 13a with few rising above a superficial exploration. Comparisons were offered between the given story and *The Case of the Speckled Band* as well as *Tony Kytes, the Arch Deceiver*.

Question 13b attracted more answers than 13a with most achieving a detailed and focused response, comparing the given story with *The Unexpected*. Most results reached Level 3 or beyond and there was evidence that the stories had been thoroughly studied. One response even tried to fit *Tony Kytes, the Arch Deceiver* into the answer with some success.

Grade Boundaries

Grade boundaries for this, and all other papers, can be found on the website on this link:

<http://www.edexcel.com/iwantto/Pages/grade-boundaries.aspx>

