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Examiners' Report

Principal Examiner Feedback

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In English Literature (4ET0) Paper 01R

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Report on the exam 4ET0 01R 1706

The paper performed well with evidence of purposeful engagement from candidates of all abilities. Responses demonstrated candidates' skills at using their often considerable knowledge of the set texts to present focused and developed answers. Narrative approaches, where seen, involved more judicious selection of material than in previous series and quality of support tended to be effectively integrated for candidates working at Level 3 and above.

The performance of the most successful candidates was characterised by thorough and focused knowledge of the text and a sense of increasing confidence when applying this to the question asked. A structural steer related to argument was usually in place with analytical application in terms of writer's craft. The terminology applied by candidates was understood and related to effects and personal engagement. Aspects of scholarly argument were evident in work at Levels 4 and 5. This was seen most clearly in a) responses where knowledge was applied with supported analytical approaches and b) responses that explored holistic features of text with insight and engagement.

This series, popular questions repeated the patterns of previous series with 'A View from the Bridge' and 'An Inspector Calls' proving most popular. Candidates were able to choose characters to go with Marco when answering Q1a. This element of choice discriminated well. 'Romeo and Juliet' sustains a sound level of popularity and Q5a resulted in some personally engaged responses. In terms of popularity the prose element was dominated by 'Of Mice and Men' as is usually the case with 11a significantly more popular than 11b. Some candidates ran out of episodes and aspects to discuss when putting together their responses. 'To Kill a Mockingbird' was also popular in terms of take up, but most texts attracted candidate responses.

A View from the Bridge

1a

This was a very popular question with candidates of all abilities responding. The most popular choices for another strong character to use alongside Marco included Eddie, Beatrice and Catherine. Some candidates chose to compare the characters with some very positive outcomes, although comparison is not a requirement on this paper. Some wrote most about Marco with the best candidates offering a balance between the given character and the additional choice. Some very well structured answers focused on the specific strengths of each character with less successful responses effectively providing two character studies without considering their strengths. Supporting detail was a discriminating factor with many candidates offering excellent integrated reference to back up their arguments. Some paraphrase of quotation was evident with varying degrees of accuracy and success.

1b

This was also a popular question with candidates and some very astute and thoughtful answers emerged. The most able used the quotation within the question to establish sophisticated arguments with genuine personal engagement evident. Most argued that betrayal is more significant than love but a few cited love as predominant with some well-crafted, deftly supported arguments. One very effective and original response demonstrated a meta-textual approach with real ingenuity and originality of thought. Responses of candidates working at Level 3 and below tended to deal with the themes separately, citing appropriate episodes from the text to illustrate.

An Inspector Calls

2a

This question was extremely popular with candidates of all abilities answering. Some enjoyably acid accounts of Mr Birling were in evidence and candidates tended to be of one voice regarding his position as a rich and successful man. These were accompanied by a wider range of views on Gerald Croft whom some candidates saw in a more favourable light, citing his support of Eva/Daisy when he rescued her from the clutches of Alderman Megarty and his eventual honesty with Sheila. Others saw Gerald as a genuinely cynical character whose support of Eva/Daisy was done only to serve his own desires and needs. Some very well structured responses were seen attracting marks in the highest levels of the range. Candidates working at low Level 3 and below tended to deal anecdotally with the characters, tracking their roles in the play with varying levels of reference to the question.

2b

This proved to be another popular question which offered something for the full ability range. The differentiating factor tended to be those candidates who focused solely on the Birling family with little consideration of either Eva/Daisy or Inspector Goole. The most successful candidates dealt well with the quotation in the question and presented some sophisticated and thorough discussion on the concept of things not being at first what they seem, including the nature of Inspector Goole and what he may represent.

Henry V

3a

A relatively small number of candidates answered on this text. Those that did ranged largely between Levels 3 and 5. Some presented straightforward character studies with some clear and relevant support in place. The best answers demonstrated a sense of how the captains as a group contribute to the themes and action of the play with some making excellent reference to relevant aspects of context here.

3b

Most answers on this question were Level 3 quality or above with some very lucid and focused responses seen. Some saw loss in its most literal sense with consideration of the deaths in the play. The best answers considered loss in a broad sense, aligning it with change in some instances. Candidates working at Levels 3 and 4 tended to work through losses including reference to: trust, life, friendship, status and battle. Some excellent work was seen on this question.

Much Ado About Nothing

4a

A greater number of candidates than usual answered on this question, but numbers remained relatively low. Responses seen tended to be in the higher levels with well-developed consideration of the ambiguity, double dealing and deceit inherent in the play. The quality of support tended to be very good in these responses.

4b

A small number of candidates answered this question. Some seemed to struggle with the concept and indeed those who were more aware of the play's dramatic form dealt better with the idea of humour. It seems that candidates who have seen productions of the play (whether on stage or screen) or who have participated in readings or performances are better able to engage with the humour therein.

Romeo and Juliet

5a

This question attracted a fair number of responses. The stimulus quotation engaged many candidates, the best of whom took a stance on the notion of Romeo's transient feelings. To succeed in the upper ranges of the mark scheme, this question required detailed textual knowledge. Typically candidates cited Romeo's shifting passions between Rosaline and Juliet to begin their arguments and referred also to his rash behaviour in attending the Capulet party as well as his actions towards the end of the play, particularly his rush to suicide. The focus of the question attracted some very strongly expressed personal responses with varying outcomes depending on use with the detail of the play.

5b

This question attracted candidates working across the ability range. Some very apposite responses were seen by those working at Level 4 and above with some excellent use of very well integrated references to details of context. The feud featured in many answers, but also the loyalty shown by Romeo to Juliet in his decision to join her at the Capulet tomb to enact his

plan to join her in death. Answers reflecting lower Level 3 and below tended to write commentaries on the different kinds of loyalty in the play.

The Importance of Being Earnest

6a

This question attracted a number of responses, some working at the lower end of the mark scheme range that effectively presented character studies of Jack and Cecily without really addressing the nature of their relationship. Better answers focused on the two characters together and highlighted their interaction. These were often thorough and well-developed with excellent use of supporting detail.

6b

This question was well handled by most who attempted it, although some answers were somewhat overwhelmed by reference to social/cultural/historical context, some of which was of dubious accuracy. Most candidates were able to write about the shallow nastiness of the upper classes exemplified in the play with some insights into the superficial concerns of the aristocracy at the time Wilde was writing.

Our Town

7a

Very few responses were seen to this question. Those evident were clear in their understanding of the Webb family, writing most about Emily Webb.

7b

Very few responses were seen to this question. Most agreed with the given statement, commenting on the focus on *carpe diem* and the musings of The Stage Manager in their answers.

Pride and Prejudice

8a

Most candidates relished the opportunity to argue that Mr Wickham and Lydia do deserve each other with the best answers offering well referenced personal arguments with clear development and often perceptive observations. Very few disagreed with the quotation and, of those, some focused and original engagement was seen.

8b

Few candidates answered this question but, of those who did, some struggled with the idea of what constitutes manners in the novel. Some included references to social/cultural/historical context with varying success

and relevance. Others relied on a narrative approach, focusing more on matters of etiquette.

9a

This proved a very popular question with candidates for the most part confidently engaging with the characters of Tom Robinson and Calpurnia. Some were a little unbalanced in favour of one or the other and there were instances where lack of planning led to candidates running out of time. Most who answered provided convincing sketches of each character, usually reaching Level 3 or 4. Better candidates found ways to link the experience and significance of the two characters to distinguish between their social acceptability in Maycomb. Some very good answers recognised the nobility in Calpurnia's character related to her understanding of her own value in the Finch household.

9b

This question was less popular than the a) with some candidates struggling to understand what was required to write about daily life. Candidates working at Level 3 and below tended to give a little background information relating to the town of Maycomb but then moved on to descriptive answers that limited them within the mark scheme. A better approach involved reference to broader themes such as racism and the effects of the Great Depression with the opportunities this gave for thorough analysis of Harper Lee's presentation of this through the lives and experiences of different characters.

The English Teacher

10a

A small number of responses were seen to this question with some impressive answers demonstrating their knowledge not only of Krishna but also of those he relies upon. Some very sophisticated and accomplished work was seen with apt reference to the influence of the Headmaster, Susila and Leela on Krishna's development. Interestingly, a number of candidates demonstrated awareness of the complexity of Krishna's life with a strong sense that bad experiences had as much an impact on his development as those that were more positive.

10b

There were very few answers to this question. Those seen focused on how Susila's death impacted on Krishna and some of the ritualistic aspects of her funeral.

Of Mice and Men

11a

This was by far the most popular question on the paper attracting answers from candidates working at all levels. Candidates working at Levels one and two tended to write brief descriptive character studies of George and Lennie with some mention of their interdependency. Candidates working at Level 3 and above focused on the relationship between Lennie and George. Some drew out details relating to the novel's narrative arc and tragic consequences of Lennie's encounter with Curley's wife in the barn. A number wrote of George's reliance on Lennie and spent time usefully analysing the ending of the novel and its implications for George. Some very purposeful and sophisticated answers built effective analytical arguments which integrated meaningful reference to the context of the novel.

11b

This was significantly less popular than 11a with candidates tending to resort to a list of different incidents from the novel then relating them to the concept of everyday life. Only a few considered the loneliness of life in the Dustbowl with its bleak outlook and lack of hope. Some of these more confident answers made reference to the desperate isolation of Curley's wife and the monotonous routine observed by Crooks.

Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry!

12a

There were a small number of answers to this question with most showing understanding of Cassie's role as narrator. The best of these were able to see the separation between her characterisation and function as the novel progresses. Most understood the nature of bildungsroman and were able to relate Cassie's developing consciousness of racism to the themes of the novel. Most answers seen were of high Level 3 and above.

12b

A small number of answers were once again seen and it was a pleasure to read some of the best quality answers. These offered varied and detailed analytical accounts of different types of courage in the novel including the courage required to grow up black in a racist society. Sensitive and well referenced readings were strongly evident.

Nineteenth Century Short Stories

13a

Those who answered this question were largely confident with the story of Tony Kytes as the given story although many did not seem to appreciate the humour in the story even though they could comprehend the idea of surprise. A number made strong personal responses about the morality of the central character, offering an impressive level of detail and personal engagement in very capable responses. *News of the Engagement* and *Country Living* were most often used to accompany the given story.

13b

Fewer candidates answered on this question than 13a. The responses seen tended to be in the Level 3 and 4 mark ranges with evidence of sound and thorough engagement with *Country Living* and another story. Candidates dealt well with the theme of poverty and applied their analysis to other stories appropriately, most often *Twenty Six Men and a Girl* and *The Poor Relation's Story*.

