

Moderators' Report/
Principal Moderator Feedback

Summer 2016

GCSE English Literature (5ET03)
Shakespeare and Contemporary
Drama

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 2016

Publications Code 5ET03_01_1606_ER

All the material in this publication is copyright

© Pearson Education Ltd 2016

General Overview

Summer 2016 was the final series of 5ET03 English Literature - Shakespeare and Contemporary Drama controlled assessment, and as Principal Moderator I would like to take this opportunity on behalf of Pearson and the moderating team to thank you for working with us over the last few years.

Overall, the series was a great success and the moderation team felt that a considerable proportion of centres had approached the 2015/6 tasks set with a rise in confidence, not only in task-setting but also in the assessment and marking of this unit, something you would expect as the specification matured. Centre marking of the unit was generally found to have been most reliable, while moderator disagreement with centre marks showed a noticeable decline compared to previous years. Many centres used marginal/summative annotations which highlighted areas where an objective had been exemplified and centres marked often with greater reference to assessment objectives this year, and had prepared their students in addressing these. There was also some decisive and accurate paired moderation this year which suggests how successfully this course has been implemented over past years' series.

Many moderators noted that errors in centre administration this year were lower than in 2015. Inputting of data by centres was still erroneous at times, with particular regard to incorrect addition of marks or missing entries, and this did cause delays in the moderation process. However, overall, it was felt that the administrative side of the controlled assessments was better this year than previously.

Following some concerns last year regarding the imbalance between AO3 and AO4, it was noted that centres focused significantly more on the social and historical context of the Shakespearean play and adaptation, along with its impact on the audiences. Sometimes the focus of context mistakenly over spilled into AO1 essays, though this was often only as an introductory device in respect of the essay's structure. There was still some evidence of scaffolding in responses, which was restrictive for some of the abler students who were working to a set framework.

As in previous years the most popular choice of texts remained the same with the majority of centres choosing:

Shakespeare

Romeo and Juliet

Macbeth

Much Ado About Nothing

There were fewer 'The Merchant of Venice' than in previous years but those that were submitted were of an excellent standard.

Contemporary drama

An Inspector Calls

A View from the Bridge

Journey's End

Educating Rita and Blood Brothers were less popular, but were refreshing to moderate.

The most popular tasks were those of character or relationship for Shakespeare and character or theme for the Contemporary Drama. Very few centres attempted performance for the Shakespeare task - this may be owing to its complexity.

Moderators reported that centres were being far more selective with the choice of adaptation and how it linked with the drama and the tasks selected for their candidates. More recent versions of Macbeth were chosen, which made moderating candidates' work extremely enjoyable.

When it came to the choice of tasks for both Shakespeare and contemporary drama, in the past a high proportion of centres opted for the same task and focus for all students – a "one size fits all" scenario, however there was far more evidence of differentiation this series. Some centres not only selected different texts for their cohort but also varied the tasks set to suit the students' abilities, which enabled students to engage better with the text and produce well written responses.

Despite regular reminders that the tasks must be those provided by Pearson Edexcel, there were still a couple of centres who used their own wording and particular focus for the tasks set. In one particular case the moderator commented on how the task set was more like an A Level question than GCSE and she felt that this had created a disadvantage for the students when it came to accessing the higher marks.

In top band responses candidates had clearly been taught to consider both a contemporary and Shakespearean audiences' perception of the play. Moderators felt that most centres had encouraged their candidates to avoid explicit discussion of language, form and structure, although when candidates did discuss these features it was to illuminate aspects of the drama/play and helped to develop the points made. It is anticipated that fewer centre marks will be regressed this year as a result of the improvements noted. As in previous years, there were still a few responses seen where the candidates were including unnecessary detailed context in AO1, however this again appeared to have reduced from 2015.

Within the Shakespeare task, the balance of text to adaptation was more correlated than in previous years and it was noted that far more candidates gave a wider range of textual evidence, suggesting that they had read the full text. It was only in the lower level responses where candidates selected from only one or two scenes.

The approach to AO1 was again much more straightforward for students. They engaged with the plot almost entirely, but again, to achieve the higher levels, the students needed to make the statement relevant to the task, support it with a quotation from the text and explain the effects. The best students excelled in this area, using an incisive analytical style, with a range of interpretations.

The preparation of folders was in many cases good, with annotations and summative comments aimed at the moderator rather than the candidate. Staff in many cases made reference to the language of the mark scheme to assess work. Virtually all centres sent Optems lists, and only a few failed to send in the highest and lowest folders – it was felt that administratively, this year was the best we have seen. There were far more examples of internal moderation by the centres.

Summary of what went well:

- more centres submitting samples before the deadline
- marks entered on Gateway were more accurate and consistent
- a greater number of centres had moderator focused annotations and comments
- where provided, written annotations reflected the AOs
- presentation of folders was generally better than in previous years
- more front sheets were completed correctly
- a better balance of text to adaptation for Shakespeare task was noted
- there was evidence of the whole text being studied
- top level candidates discussed both Shakespearean and contemporary audiences when covering context.

The moderating team appreciate the pressures on centres and on, in particular, English departments in preparing their students to produce the tasks, marking and monitoring the responses and collating the folders for submission – thank you for all your much appreciated hard work and the time and care taken in the administration of controlled assessments during the life of this specification.

On behalf of myself and the moderating team, I would like to wish you every success with the new specifications and we hope to work with you again next summer.

Diana Salmon
PM5ET03

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>