

Principal Examiner Feedback

Summer 2010

IGCSE

IGCSE English Language (4355) Paper 1F

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Section A: Reading

Questions 1-6

For Section A the candidates studied a passage about a man who was spending his last night at home before going to prison the following day. The passage proved to be accessible to almost all candidates, with many making a strong connection with the experiences of loneliness or the strength of family bonds. The lower mark tariff questions provided a useful lead into the passage and most candidates were able to make a response and be awarded some marks.

Question 3 dealt with the symbolism of the grandfather clock and, despite not necessarily knowing what distinguished a grandfather clock from any other sort of clock, most answered this question well.

Question 4 was a question that tested candidates' ability to read the question and respond appropriately. The question asked for, "three differences that the writer notices between the evening before, and the early morning." As such candidates needed to detail three examples of differences, not simply give simple statements that are not comparative, such as "The writer is very lonely." The line references on this question were intended to help candidates by focusing them on the section of text where the answers could be found. Candidates should be reminded to follow such instructions closely.

Question 5 asked about the writer's feelings for his wife, and was generally well answered.

For question 6 candidates were asked how the writer's choice of words, and the way he tells his story, help us to understand his thoughts and feelings about going to prison. Some candidates were able to explain the impact of the writer's use of a range of techniques such as the dramatic use of layout and the use of figurative and emotive language and the strong use of contrast as a structural feature. Weaker answers often lacked insight and gave personal opinions of prison and family. .

Section B: Reading and Writing

Question 7

Section B was based upon the pre-prepared text from the Edexcel Anthology, *I Never Thought I could be this Lucky*. Almost all candidates seemed to have knowledge of the text and were able to recognise key features of Karen Darke's character. Stronger responses recognised the range of characteristics that she displays, at different times mentally and physically strong yet also emotionally vulnerable. The bullet points are there to help focus candidates and to support them in constructing their response. However, candidates must ensure that they are answering the central question and not responding to the bullet points in a disassociated manner. Better answers did this whilst weaker responses only partially addressed the bullet points or narrated aspects of the writer's life.

Question 8

The writing task in Section B asked candidates to write about a time when their life changed in an important or memorable way, and explain what was different as a result of this change. This was a highly accessible task for all with many writing about accidents or moments of sporting or academic achievement. Stronger answers communicated effectively and recognised the need to explain rather than just narrate events. As previously, candidates would do well to remember the constituent parts of the writing mark scheme: effectiveness of communication, organisation and spelling, punctuation and grammar. Better answers addressed both parts of the question rather than focusing solely upon the incident itself whilst weaker responses were sometimes brief and sometimes lacking in organisation and coherence.

Section C: Writing

Question 9

The final question asked candidates to consider the importance of getting the balance right between hard work in school, and having a life outside the classroom, and then write an article to give their views. Candidates were engaged by dealing with this issue and as such almost all candidates were able to write in response to this task and it produced some engaging and sensitive responses. The better ones were those that presented their views with clarity and accuracy and yet adopted techniques specifically designed to engage the reader. These answers were able to control paragraphing and text structure and to communicate clearly and accurately. Weaker responses were often brief and asserted views with little explanation or expansion.

IGCSE English Language: 4355 Grade Boundaries

Option 1 - 03, 1F

C	D	E	F
59	49	39	29

Option 2 - 04, 05, 1F

C	D	E	F
60	47	34	22

Option 3 - 03, 2H

*	A	B	C	D	E
76	68	60	53	45	41

Option 4 - 04, 05, 2H

*	A	B	C	D	E
80	71	62	54	43	37

Option 5 - 04T, 05T, 1F

C	D	E	F
60	47	34	22

Option 6 - 04T, 05T, 2H

*	A	B	C	D	E
80	71	62	54	43	37

Note: Grade boundaries may vary from year to year and from subject to subject, depending on the demands of the question paper.

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