

IGCSE

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English Literature (4360)

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Examiners' Report

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4360/01

General Comments

'A View From the Bridge' was once again, the most popular play by far; with no more than a total of 16 candidates answering on 'Julius Caesar', 'A Doll's House' and 'The Importance Of Being Earnest'. In the Prose Section the vast majority of candidates answered questions on 'The English Teacher', 'Pride and Prejudice' was fairly popular and then there were one or two answers offered on each of the other texts.

Section A: Drama

Generally speaking, candidates knew their material very well. Most candidates who answered Question 4a appeared to have a point of view about Eddie but many fell into the error of offering largely narrative accounts about Eddie and Rodolfo's roles in the play. Similarly, candidates who answered Question 4b all too often presented examples of jealousy rather than examinations of how Miller presented the theme. Candidates must beware of seeing one or two key words in the question and then rushing to write all that they know about those aspects of the text without looking at the question in its entirety. Answers must be in direct response to the question and questions do not require that candidates write in a general way 'all that they know' about an issue. The answer must fit the question.

Section B: Prose

It is clear from reading the papers that many candidates enjoyed their study of 'The English Teacher'. Most candidates chose to write in answer to Question a). Those candidates who did well were the ones who noted that the question required them to explain Susila's importance to the action and themes of the novel. Weaker candidates took the question as an opportunity to write all that they know about Susila. There were some instances of candidates referring to novels as 'our novel' and to authors as 'our writer', this made for a rather odd style. Candidates who attempted Question 6a), which was the most popular question on 'Pride and Prejudice', often did not focus on the question which required them to offer a substantiated personal viewpoint. Straightforward character studies are not sufficient in answer to this type of question.

4360/02

Very few candidates appeared for this paper. The vast majority answered question 2. Those candidates who did answer Question 1 did not always answer the question which required an analysis of the poets' skills in describing places. Candidates were invited to explain the effectiveness of the poets' descriptions yet candidates appeared to ignore this directive and, instead, simply wrote all that they know about the two poems. The poems are in front of the candidates and so summaries of the poems cannot impress examiners. What is needed is a careful focus on the question and a thoughtful response to the terms of the question.

Some of the above comments also relate to Question 2. Another aspect of Question 2 is that the candidate is given the freedom to choose the poems they wish to write about. A careful choice is necessary and it was clear that some candidates were simply writing about the poems they knew best with little attention paid to the fact that they were required to write about poems which told stories. All candidates would be well advised to make use of the support offered to them in the directions suggested in the bullet points.

4360/03

As is usual in the November series there were only a few entries for the coursework option from a fairly narrow range of centres.

The favourite topics were childhood, love and death but a couple of new ones were featured e.g. shocking events. Maintaining the focus on the topic/question is becoming more consistent but still varies between candidates and this is not always reflected in the marks e.g. while *Crabbit Old Woman* overall is focused on the approach of death, some of the details of the old woman's memories need to have the link explicitly made - a general commentary does not do this.

At times marks were too generous when general understanding of the poems was shown but was over-simplified e.g. *Half-past Two*, where the effect of the cruelty of the teacher was over-stated, as was the blame directed at the parents in *My Parents kept Me from Children who were Rough*. Occasionally candidates were rewarded despite a clear misunderstanding one of their chosen poems, not commented on by the teacher.

While there was some detailed analysis, it did tend to be patchy so that some interesting use of language was passed over, even though the quotations were given, e.g. the use of the word 'impostors' in *If*; 'seasoning' in *Poem at 39*; 'loot' and 'forged' in *World! Why do you hound me?*, while adjacent phrases were dealt with at length. At times the points of analysis were incomplete or a word/ figure of speech was identified and the general effect on the mood of the poem given but there was no attempt to explain why or how those words had that effect e.g. 'The alliteration in "son she soon" (from the Achebe) adds sad compassionate music to the poem.' Or 'The opening words in the poem *Piano* creates a warm, homely, romantic atmosphere through his choice of words, "Softly in the dusk, a woman is singing to me".' For the highest grades it would be expected that at least the contribution of the repetition of the soft s sound to that music/atmosphere would be acknowledged.

Overall candidates appreciated the poems and gave enough analysis to produce work of a fairly high standard but generally the insight into the meaning was not subtle enough and the analysis of language not consistently precise enough to deserve the very highest grades with which it was rewarded.

Statistics for IGCSE English Literature 4360

Grade	A*	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
Option 1	73	61	49	37	28	19	11	3
Option 2	80	67	54	41	32	23	15	7
Option 3	80	67	54	41	32	23	15	7

Note

Option 1: Candidates taking papers 1 and 2.

Option 2: Candidates taking paper 1 and submitting coursework.

Option 3: Candidates taking paper 1 and transferring a previous session's coursework mark.

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