



Examiners' Report
Principal Examiner Feedback

January 2023

Pearson Edexcel International GCSE
In English Literature (4ET1)
Paper 1R: Poetry and Modern Prose

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Centres are thanked for choosing Pearson Edexcel as their International GCSE English Literature provider. We very much hope that both our candidates and centres are delighted with their results.

Introduction

The body of this report is very similar to the main paper report, but feedback is provided for the individual questions. Even though the January 2023 series was very successful and performed well, there were very few entries. The paper was very similar in performance to previous series, particularly for Sections A and C. There were no errors in the paper, no erratum notices and there were no enquiries from centres following the examination.

Centres are once again congratulated on preparing their candidates so well, especially with the reintroduction of Section B, Anthology Poetry. The reintroduction of this section added to teaching and learning demands, while still recovering from two very challenging years during the pandemic. The challenges and demands have been taken into consideration during the Awarding process.

In Section A, candidates are presented with an unseen poem and answer a question based on it (20 marks). Section B, Anthology Poetry, gives candidates the choice of two poetry questions (30 marks). For Section C, Modern Prose, candidates respond to one of two questions based on the prose text that they have studied (40 marks). The total mark for this paper was 90.

The most popular prose texts were *Of Mice and Men* and *To Kill a Mockingbird*. There were no responses for *The Joy Luck Club* and just one each for *Things Fall Apart* and *The Whale Rider*.

As expected, the number of entries was much lower than in the summer. A range of marks was awarded with most candidates gaining marks in Level 3 or above. Again, there were some extremely good responses and a number of candidates gained marks in Levels 4 and 5, particularly for their prose response. All responses were marked by the Principal Examiner and two Senior examiners.

Section A Unseen Poem

Q1. *Father Returning Home* by Dilip Chitre

Question: Explore how the writer presents the father in this poem.

The poem performed well and as expected. A full range of marks was awarded between Level 2 and Level 5 and performance was comparable to previous series.

The poem performed well and results are comparable with previous series.

The majority of candidates fully engaged with the poem and most gained marks in Level 3 and above. There were some candidates who used overly-long quotations and provided little comment or close analysis of language. There were some maturely expressed responses; however, some responses required more explanation and development.

The candidates were mostly successful in discussing the father's journey home on the train and his isolation, both on the journey and at home. The use of repetition and alliteration were often commented upon. There were some sensitive readings of the poem, with some sympathy felt for the father.

The poem performed extremely well and was very successful.

When comparing with previous series, the level of demand was similar. Key areas to consider for future series remain the same.

When responding to the Unseen Poetry, Section A, candidates should try to:

- demonstrate an understanding of the overall meaning of the poem
- focus on the question
- refer to form and structure and try to suggest why this may have been used
- give examples of language and explain their effect on the reader
- comment on all areas of the poem, not just the first few lines
- use short quotations and avoid copying large areas of the poem.

SECTION B, Anthology poems

This section was reintroduced for this series following its removal during the pandemic. This is the first time, since the pandemic, that the full paper has been taken and the Anthology poetry reintroduced. Unlike in previous series, the attention to depth and detail appeared to be lacking in some responses; possibly as a result of the section's reintroduction and the limitations of teaching and learning opportunities to study all 16 poems in sufficient detail; however, more marks in Level 5 were awarded to candidates taking this Regional (R) paper.

Q2 Compare how the writer's present feelings about fathers in *Poem at Thirty-nine* and *Do not go gentle...*

The question performed well and some responses were comparable to previous series; however, there were some brief responses and often close analysis was not sustained.

This was the most popular Anthology question.

A range of marks were awarded, mostly Level 3 and above. Some candidates provided a good range of examples, but had not explored them in sufficient detail. Sometimes, techniques were identified, but more in relation to the effect on the reader and more coverage of the poems would have benefited the responses further.

Most candidates commented on Walker's relationship with her father and how he had taught her life skills and how she misses him. Responses to *Do not go gentle into that goodnight*, demonstrated an understanding of the poem, but often coverage was more limited. The autobiographical nature of the two poems was often mentioned and there was some attempt to explore structure.

Q3 Compare the ways the writers present loss in *Search for my Tongue* and one other poem.

As with Q2, A range of marks were awarded for this question, mostly Level 3 and above. Popular poems for comparison included: *Poem at Thirty-nine*, *Do not go gentle*, *Piano* and *Remember*. Some candidates provided a good range of examples, but had not explored them in any detail. Sometimes, techniques were identified, but more in relation to the effect on the reader and more coverage of the poems would have benefited the responses further.

SECTION C Modern Prose

Q4 *To Kill a Mockingbird*: The title

The responses were all Level 3 and above; however, some candidates would have benefited from including more specific examples from the novel, rather than providing a generalised overview. There were some responses that included a great deal of context, but not enough examples.

Q5 *To Kill a Mockingbird*: Jem

Similar to the main paper, marks were placed in L4 and 5. One response, gaining a mark at the lower-end of Level 5, lacked sufficient contextual evidence to place it any higher.

Q6 *Of Mice and Men*: Animals

Most candidates demonstrated a thorough understanding of the novel when referring to the animals in the novel. Most commented on Candy's dog and Slim's puppies. Others included the heron and water snake and some discussed the American Dream being a fantasy, giving Lennie's multi-coloured rabbits as an example. There was also reference made to the animal link in the title.

Q7 *Of Mice and Men*: Curley's wife

Responses were mainly placed in Level 3 and above. Although there was evidence of some inaccuracies and misinterpretations of Curley's wife, such as the suggestion that she was a bad wife because she had not had any children, and clearly not realising that she has only been married two weeks. More examples of what Curley's wife says and does in the novel would have benefited responses. One in Level 2 provided a

generalised overview of the role of women with very few comments about Curley's wife. Even within a small number of responses, there was a range of marks awarded.

Q8 *The Whale Rider: Marriage*

There were no responses to this question.

Q9 *The Whale Rider: The significance of the bull whale and his herd*

There was just the one response to this question. Mover coverage, explicit contextual comment and a wider range of examples from the novel could have benefited the response further.

Q10 and Q11 *The Joy Luck Club*

There were no responses to either of the questions: Mahjong and Ying-ying St. Clair.

Q12 *Things Fall Apart*

There were no responses to this question: Settings

Q13 *Things Fall Apart*

There was just the one response that demonstrated an assured understanding of the novel and a wide range of examples were provided. As there was little by way of explicit contextual comment, a mark at the lower-end of Level 5 was awarded. Again, as this novel lends itself naturally to context, such as references to the Ibo or traditions, this helped the candidate.

Please refer to the 4ET1 01 centre report for further feedback. Points raised for individual questions may be useful for future reference.

In comparison with previous series, the Prose (Novels) questions performed in a similar way. A full range of marks was awarded, particularly for the most popular texts. The questions followed a similar style and there were no new phrases or alternative wordings to the question stems.

In summary, and as mentioned in previous series, when responding to Modern Prose, candidates should remember to:

- focus on the question
- avoid narrative retelling of the events in the novel
- provide a range of examples from their chosen text – remember that as this is a closed book examination, examples need not be quotations but examples of events or episodes within the novel
- prove to the examiner their knowledge of the text – do not assume the examiner knows everything
- comment on contextual points and try to relate these to the points being made
- avoid dealing with context separately. Do not write a page of historical background, but link all contextual points with an example from the novel and in relation to the question being answered

- when using film versions, which are most valuable teaching aids, remind candidates that not all scenes in a film appear in the novel that they are studying. Responses must be based on the novel and not a film version.

There were some responses where candidates had written in the wrong area of the answer booklet, which is possibly because the answer space currently begins on a right-hand page. If candidates fold their answer booklet over, it could result in them writing the second page of their response in the wrong place. It would be appreciated if centres could remind their candidates about avoiding this.

Conclusion

As always, the responses are always a pleasure to mark and have, once again, been very enjoyable to read.

Centres should be congratulated on preparing their candidates for the examination. As always, we very much hope that you will continue to deliver this specification and that you and your students are delighted with results.

Do look at our website for more details about the Summer 2023 examinations. For those candidates looking to continue their English Literature studies, the Pearson Edexcel International AS and A Level (Specification references: YET01 and XET01) are ideal options. These qualifications are becoming very popular and successful and have received positive feedback from centres. Full details are available on our website.

Again, thank you for choosing Pearson Edexcel as your International GCSE provider. We should like to wish you all every success for the future.

Thank you.

Chief / Principal Examiner
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