



Examiners' Report

June 2023

International Advanced Level English Literature WET01 01

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Introduction

This has been a successful paper.

Most candidates demonstrated familiarity with the contents of the specification. Responses in relation to the set texts and to the range of Assessment Objectives covered the full range of marks and levels.

In the 2306 series responses were received addressing all of the texts available for study.

Question 1

Question 01 was the less popular question in Section A, attracting 194 responses. The question required candidates to compare how poets explore work in 'From the Journal of a Disappointed Man' and one other poem. The most commonly chosen second poems were 'Chainsaw Versus the Pampas Grass' and 'Please Hold'. Responses on the named poem and 'Please Hold' tended to be the most successful and focused on the changing nature of work and the kinds of frustration this causes. Many candidates using 'Chainsaw Versus the Pampas Grass', however, displayed a marked tendency to write about masculinity in the poems rather than responding to the task set. Other selections included 'The Lammis Hireling', 'Giuseppe', 'Look We Have Coming to Dover!', 'The Deliverer', 'Out of the Bag', 'Ode on a Grayson Perry Urn' and 'A Minor Role'. Some of these poems provided more relevant material for responding to the question than others and not all proved successful choices. Responses using 'Look We Have Coming to Dover!' tended to be limited to a few references in Nagra's poem relating to social mobility, which was taken as a reference to people's working lives. 'The Gun' was seen a few times offering an interpretation of the poem as an exploration of a hunter's work. Some more effective comparisons were made with 'Out of the Bag', suggesting the magic or mysticism of the doctor to the young boy and comparing it to the mundane nature of the work in Motion's poem and the speaker's detachment from the scene being described. Some candidates had clearly chosen their favourite poem rather than considering how it could be discussed in terms of the use of time.

There were again cases in this series of candidates choosing poems that are not included in the list of prescribed poems. Centres **must** ensure that candidates use poems only from the prescribed list.

Question 2

Question 02 was the more popular question in Section A and was selected by 470 candidates. The task required the comparison of characters commenting on their own lives in 'A Minor Role' and a second poem of choice. The most popular choices of second poem were 'Eat Me' and 'To My Nine Year Old Self'. Better responses focused on the extended stage metaphor Fanthorpe employs and the literary references in relation to experience and emotion in 'A Minor Role'. Responses to 'Eat Me' were quite varied in terms of success, as some candidates failed to understand what was really happening in the poem whereas others picked up immediately on the abusive relationship and issues of control. There were some good comparisons on control and self-control in both poems and also in relation to ideas of isolation. Some candidates became very involved in the 'story' of the poetic voices in the poems. This meant that in some cases responses became quite narrative and descriptive rather than engaging in analysis of the poems, and candidates did not always demonstrate their understanding that poems are literary constructs. 'On Her Blindness' and 'The Furthest Distances I've Travelled' were also often seen. In the case of 'On Her Blindness', however, whilst many candidates compared the idea of illness in the poem, they did not successfully make the distinction that the voice of the poem is the son's. Other selections included 'The Map Woman', 'The Gun', 'Genetics', 'Material', 'The Deliverer', 'Effects', 'Look We Have Coming to Dover!', 'The Lamma Hireling', 'Giuseppe', 'An Easy Passage' and 'The Map-Woman'.

Question 3

Question 03 was selected by 66 candidates and focused on the creation of narrative suspense in the novel. Candidates in the higher range were able to discuss elements of certainty and uncertainty created by Hosseini's methods of presentation, arguing that characterisation seemed to rely on absolutes – Hassan's 'goodness' versus Amir's flaws – while uncertainty came from Amir as an unreliable narrator. Other uncertainties addressed included the lack of security in status when in America, and Amir's uncertain morality throughout his life. Most candidates were able to make appropriate references to use of context, and stronger responses effectively integrated this within the arguments presented.

Question 4

Question 04 focused on the use of contrast in the novel. It was the most popular question in Section B, eliciting 368 responses. It offered a real range of possibilities with candidates considering contrasts between the USA and Afghanistan, cowardice and bravery, Hazaras and Pashtuns, Amir and Hassan, Amir and Assef, female characters and male characters. Some of the higher range responses drew on structural contrasts of Amir's narrative voice at the beginning and end of the novel and looked at comparisons of the depiction of Kabul across time.

Question 5

Question 05 was the more popular option on this novel, with 31 responses. It addressed the creation of tension in the novel. Some candidates presented general comments about the situational tensions arising in the lifeboat, while others drew attention to the tensions created by the revelations at the end of the novel when alternate interpretations of Pi's experiences are presented. Others considered the tension of Pi's situation in relation to suffering and survival skills.

Although it has been mentioned in several previous Examiner Reports, many responses on *Life of Pi* included limited (or no) relevant contextual information. Centres are reminded that AO3 is assessed in Section B of this paper and that candidates must be prepared to write about appropriate contexts.

Question 6

Question 06, answered by 19 candidates, considered the presentation of memories. This prompted a variety of responses with some looking at Pi's memories and their effect upon his experience as well as the reliability or unreliability of memory and its role in relation to the telling of stories.

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Question 7

18 candidates answered on Question 07, about the presentation of characters struggling to make sense of life. Answers were largely clear and relevant, with some focus on the image of the Rooster Coop and included some effective integration of cultural factors and issues of the caste system. However, several responses did not really develop beyond literal aspects of the narrative.

Question 8

Question 08, on the use of movement in the novel, received 10 responses. Some candidates essentially presented essays on 'naming', arguing that the protagonist's numerous name-changes indicated various transformations and development of character. Others aligned physical movement and migration with changing attitudes.

Question 9

Question 09, selected by 20 candidates, focused on social differences. Responses considered the social differences evident between Ireland and the USA and also between different social groupings in Brooklyn. These elicited some consideration of relevant contextual factors. There were some narrative driven responses, and the majority of responses did not engage so effectively with the ways in which meanings are shaped in the novel.

Question 10

Question 10 considered the idea of concealment in the novel and 17 responses were seen. Several candidates effectively addressing the significance of Rose’s concealment of her illness and how this set most of the narrative action in motion. Concealment was also addressed in relation to the separation of life in America and Brooklyn. Better responses linked ideas of concealment with a lack of self-awareness in various characters. There were some narrative driven responses, and the majority of responses did not engage so effectively with the ways in which meanings are shaped in the novel.

Question 11

Question 11, answered by 79 candidates, considered Adichie's presentation of emotion. Some students struggled to control and shape responses to this question, identifying different episodes and events in the narrative demonstrating different emotions, but not finding a way to link analysis or to present a cohesive interpretation. Better responses considered how Kambili was taught to suppress emotion and the ways in which her experiences with her cousins and Father Amadi taught her to express her emotions in healthy ways. Surprisingly few candidates made links to the section headings in the text, which are not only religious allusions but also an indication of the degree to which Kambili, Jaja and Beatrice can show emotion.

Question 12

Question 12 addressed the novel's presentation of loyalty and was selected by 47 candidates. Most presented a response examining the extent to which the family remained loyal to Papa, even as he commits increasingly violent acts of abuse. Stronger responses also contrasted loyalties to the church in Kambili's household to loyalties to family, community and tradition seen in Aunty Ifeoma's house. The best responses also considered Papa's misplaced loyalties to colonial Catholicism, and the ways in which he could demonstrate loyalty to his country and his colleagues such as Ade Coker yet mistreat his own family. Candidates were able to draw on a range of relevant contexts related to post-colonial Nigeria.

Paper Summary

Based on their performance on this paper, candidates are offered the following advice:

Section A: Post-2000 Poetry

- Candidates need to read the question carefully to make sure they are answering the question set.
- It is important to note that this section assesses AO4 and therefore time needs to be spent developing effective connections between poems. The choice of a second poem therefore needs careful thought in order to ensure that strong connections can be drawn between the poems in relation to the set task.
- Try not to discuss the selected poem in greater depth than the set poem. It is advisable not to select the second poem by how well you know it rather than poems that would most effectively help you to respond to the task set.
- Take time to identify methods the poets have employed and explore the ways in which the use of such methods contributes to the potential meanings of the texts.

Section B

The most popular prose text was the Kite Runner and the second most popular was Purple Hibiscus. As in previous series it is noted that candidates who chose Brooklyn or Life of Pi were more likely to make insufficient reference to AO3.

- It is important to remember that you need to consider a range of ways in which meanings are shaped in lengthy prose texts. Important areas for consideration are discussions on the effects of writers' use of structures and genre in the novels they have studied.
- There should be isolated discussion of local textual examples in relation to identifiable holistic patterns across the texts.
- Using pre-prepared responses are not a good idea. In such cases candidates tended not to gain effective purchase on the tasks they had been set.

Grade boundaries

Grade boundaries for this, and all other papers, can be found on the website on this link:

<https://qualifications.pearson.com/en/support/support-topics/results-certification/grade-boundaries.html>

