



GCE AS EXAMINERS' REPORTS

AS English Language and Literature

SUMMER 2023

Introduction

Our Principal examiners' reports offer valuable feedback on the recent assessment series. They are written by our Principal Examiners and Principal Moderators after the completion of marking and moderation, and detail how candidates have performed.

This report offers an overall summary of candidates' performance, including the assessment objectives/skills/topics/themes being tested, and highlights the characteristics of successful performance and where performance could be improved. It goes on to look in detail at each question/section of each component, pinpointing aspects that proved challenging to some candidates and suggesting some reasons as to why that might be.ⁱ

The information found in this report can provide invaluable insight for practitioners to support their teaching and learning activity. We would also encourage practitioners to share this document – in its entirety or in part – with their learners to help with exam preparation, to understand how to avoid pitfalls and to add to their revision toolbox.

Further support

Document	Description	Link
Professional Learning / CPD	Eduqas offers an extensive annual programme of online and face-to-face Professional Learning events. Access interactive feedback, review example candidate responses, gain practical ideas for the classroom and put questions to our dedicated team by registering for one of our events here.	https://www.eduqas.co.uk/home/professional-learning/
Past papers	Access the bank of past papers for this qualification, including the most recent assessments. Please note that we do not make past papers available on the public website until 6 months after the examination.	www.wjecservices.co.uk or on the Eduqas subject page
Grade boundary information	Grade boundaries are the minimum number of marks needed to achieve each grade. For unitised specifications grade boundaries are expressed on a Uniform Mark Scale (UMS). UMS grade boundaries remain the same every year as the range of UMS mark percentages allocated to a particular grade does not change. UMS grade boundaries are published at overall subject and unit level. For linear specifications, a single grade is awarded for the overall subject, rather than for each component/unit that contributes towards the overall grade. Grade boundaries are published on results day.	For unitised specifications click here: Results and Grade Boundaries (eduqas.co.uk)

Exam Results Analysis	WJEC Eduqas provides information to examination centres via the WJEC secure website. This is restricted to centre staff only. Access is granted to centre staff by the Examinations Officer at the centre.	www.wjecservices.co.uk
Classroom Resources	Access our extensive range of FREE classroom resources, including blended learning materials, exam walk-throughs and knowledge organisers to support teaching and learning.	https://resources.eduqas.co.uk/
Bank of Professional Learning materials	Access our bank of Professional Learning materials from previous events from our secure website and additional pre-recorded materials available in the public domain.	www.wjecservices.co.uk or on the Eduqas subject page.
Become an examiner with Eduqas.	We are always looking to recruit new examiners or moderators. These opportunities can provide you with invaluable insight into the assessment process, enhance your skill set, increase your understanding of your subject and inform your teaching.	Exam Marking jobs Examiner & Moderator Vacancies From Eduqas

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Subject Officer's Executive Summary

Although the mean mark on Component 1 was slightly lower this year. In general, there were fewer marks awarded at the higher end of the scale and at the lower end. There was a more significant difference between performance in 2022 and 2023 for Component 2, however.

For Component 1, the Principal Examiner noted that there was some good engagement with integrated study but that too many candidates, while being able to use terminology well, lacked close analysis. Too many candidates did not cover the whole poem in their response in Section A while a significant number did not reach the word limit in the Section B tasks, which was self-penalising. Any analysis is difficult because of the low entry numbers.

Candidates answered on either *Kindertransport* or *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof* in Section A of and on either *In Cold Blood* or *Homage to Catalonia* in Section B of Component 2. While the Principal Examiner saw some good work, a significant number of candidates lacked knowledge and understanding of the texts while too often there was a tendency to narrate rather than to analyse in responses. This led to a dip in performance. This report will therefore be essential to ensure candidates' success in summer 2024.

Areas for improvement	Classroom resources	Brief description of resource
Introductions should start to answer the question rather than repeating it.	Essay writing skills	Digital Resource on the elements required for a Language and Literary essay.
Include a range of stylistic features which will provide structure for the commentary, aiming to provide clear differences between the creative writing pieces.	Glossary of Terms	Terms and definitions.
The identification of features needs to be accompanied by explorations of meanings.	Linguistic and Literary Analysis 1 Linguistic and Literary Analysis 2	These have been written for the WJEC specification but they are skills-based and are still applicable to the Eduqas AS qualification.
For Component 2, avoid off-loading contextual knowledge. <i>Relevant</i> contexts should be integrated into the essay and enrich the reading and understanding of the text.	Eduqas AS English Language and Literature Component 2 CPD 2019	The link takes you to the secure site. The resource has a PowerPoint presentation with guidance on integrating contexts on slides 24-27.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE

GCE AS

Summer 2023

COMPONENT 1: COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS AND CREATIVE WRITING

Overview of the Component

In Section A of Component 1 candidates compare a set poem, which they have studied, with an unseen text. In Section B they produce two pieces of creative writing which they then compare in an analytical commentary. Candidates have clearly been well prepared to allow enough time to complete all three parts of Section B although there were some very brief commentaries in part (c). While time is no longer being wasted on over-long creative pieces, some candidates produced creative pieces using only half of the recommended 200 words. Very brief pieces will limit achievement for AO5 as opportunities for demonstrating suitable stylistic techniques will be reduced.

Technical accuracy was a problem in several responses. Accurate writing is assessed throughout Component 1, in AO1 for Question 1 and 2 (c) and in AO5 for Question 2 (a) and (b). The front of the examination paper reminds candidates that the quality of written communication will be taken into account. Many responses included lapses in clarity, spelling errors, poor sentence control and inadequate punctuation. This even included misspelling 'God's Grandeur'.

Achievement for using terminology to show knowledge and understanding varied enormously but almost all candidates this year showed at least basic evidence of linguistic and literary study. The best candidates were able to draw on a range which covered lexis, syntax, phonology, poetic form and literary techniques. Candidates must be reminded that using terminology accurately to identify techniques, although worthy of credit, is not in itself analysis. Several candidates who recognised key features using relevant terms and examples failed to develop their analysis by exploring meanings. Generalised comments such as 'to make the poem flow' or 'to emphasise the message to the reader' are unhelpful.

There are online CPD resources available on the Eduqas website to assist with the teaching of terminology as well as frameworks for supporting comparative responses. It is vital that centres make full use of the resources on offer to best serve the interests of their candidates.

Comments on individual questions/sections

Section A: Comparative Analysis of Poetry and Unseen Text

The poem 'God's Grandeur' by Gerard Manley Hopkins, taken from the anthology, was to be compared with a choice of unseen texts: an extract from Charles Dickens' novel *Hard Times* (1854) or an extract from a speech on climate change by Leonardo DiCaprio (2014). All three featured concerns about the environment and candidates were asked to compare and contrast how the environment had been presented in the poem and their choice of unseen text.

Several candidates wasted time by repeating the question in their introduction. Those who repeated the question and the AOs might write half a page without actually starting the response.

In some responses, however, the question was overlooked by candidates who spotted features they recognised, rather than selecting material for its relevance to the presentation of the environment.

The extract from *Hard Times* was more popular than DiCaprio's speech. Several better responses produced detailed analysis and made secure links with the poem drawing on their knowledge of stylistic features as well as the attitudes of the writers to the impact of industrialisation on the environment. Less successful responses demonstrated at least a basic grasp of conditions in Coketown, although several had little focus on the range of techniques used by Dickens beyond 'repetition'.

Work on 'God's Grandeur' reflected the full range of knowledge and analytical ability. Most identified the sonnet form and rhyme scheme accurately, although confusion between rhythm and rhyme was common. There were some insightful readings of the poem but several candidates struggled with the 'shook foil' simile, not understanding that it refers to 'the grandeur of God'. 'Crushed' in line 4 was often discussed out of context as expressing man's impact on the environment. The rhetorical question in the same line was often identified but few discussed its meaning. Although the volta is significant, this term was seldom used. Several candidates ignored the sestet altogether, leading to a simplified account of Hopkins's view and hampering comparison with the unseen text.

Most candidates dealt with the poem first. Several, after then writing about Dickens, found little time to address connections between the texts. More successful responses chose to focus on similarities and differences between the poem and the unseen text as soon as they introduced the second text. The most successful compared the texts throughout and the best responses also featured an accurate comparative introduction. The most secure and productive links included: bleak views of man's impact upon the environment; Hopkins' focus on God as Creator, an element missing from Dickens' Coketown; Hopkins' more optimistic sestet expressing inspiration from Nature's power of renewal and the protective vision of the Holy Ghost contrasting with the unrelieved monotony of Coketown; the writers' use of imagery and syntactic patterning. It was encouraging to read the work of well-prepared and observant candidates who were able to support these connections accurately.

Characteristics of successful responses:

- planned comparison and contrast throughout the response rather than leaving it until the end
- selection of a range of material from different sections of the poem and unseen text to show knowledge and understanding of a range of stylistic techniques
- key features identified with brief accurate quotation and relevant discussion of meanings conveyed.

Areas for improvement:

- introductions should start to answer the question rather than repeating it
- the identification of features needs to be accompanied by explorations of meanings
- keep the question e.g. 'presentation of the environment' in mind when choosing material to analyse.

Section B: Creative Writing and Commentary

Previous reports have advised against creative pieces which much exceed 200 words. While this advice has been heeded, in some responses the creative pieces were very short, half the recommended length.

This restricted the range of features and appropriate content which could be included to address AO5. Candidates can easily discover how much space around 200 words of their handwriting will occupy and very brief pieces of creative writing are self-penalising. Candidates should be reminded that AO5 also assesses the quality of written expression, including technical accuracy. As in Section A, there were many responses with errors of spelling, punctuation and sentence control.

2. (a) Write an extract from an article for a school or college magazine entitled 'Everyone can make a difference: Ways to save the planet!'. In your article you should aim to give young people practical advice on how to be more environmentally friendly. Aim to write approximately 200 words.
- (b) Write the introduction for a voiceover to a documentary describing a place affected by an environmental issue. Aim to write approximately 200 words.

- Q.2**
- (a) Most candidates were able to express involvement with the topic of environmental issues and some were very well informed. Candidates need to be reminded to focus on the key phrases in the question. Some responses concentrated on the reasons to be more 'environmentally friendly' but offered little or no actual 'practical advice'. The most successful responses recommended three or four specific actions or routines. The best creative pieces were firmly organised; successful techniques included direct address, imperatives, memorable phonology and often a slogan or extended metaphor. Content referred to parents, family life, shopping, travel and other familiar elements of student life.
 - (b) This question produced an enormous variety. In some less successful responses 'a place affected by an environmental issue' was too broad to be easily handled, such as the ocean or the planet. Those who chose a specific named location produced more convincing voiceovers and were able to focus on appropriate local detail. Some responses lost focus on the topic of place and became more like speeches encouraging environmental awareness. Those who deliberately included techniques such as contrasting pre-modified noun phrases or similes provided themselves with starting points for analysis in Question 2 (c).
 - (c): an analytical commentary. Again it was common to see repetition of the questions with much reference to audience. Task (c) requires a discussion of 'style, form and content' but several dealt only with content. Previous reports have pointed out that analysis needs to feature from the beginning of the commentary. When writing about texts which lacked deliberate crafting to include a range of stylistic features, candidates found it difficult to find meaningful points to make. Several showed limited or very basic evidence of linguistic and literary study.

There were a few thorough and focussed commentaries which compared throughout and were able to identify a range of techniques in their own work, referring to register, lexical choices, phonology and imagery. Some candidates who were aware of the key features and able to use appropriate terms failed to provide supporting quotation or made vague, generalised comments about the impact of their choices on meanings. Comparing the texts (AO4) is important in Question 2 (c) but a few overlooked this requirement altogether or made only general unsupported assertions.

Characteristics of successful responses:

- creative pieces of a suitable length with stylistic features chosen to provide material for the commentary
- focus on key phrases such as 'practical advice' in the questions
- technical accuracy in all three tasks.

Areas for improvement:

- make sure you know roughly how much space 200 words will occupy
- read the requirements for each task carefully and make firm decisions about your choice of content
- include a range of stylistic features which will provide structure for the commentary, aiming to provide clear differences between the creative writing pieces.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE

GCE AS

Summer 2023

COMPONENT 2: DRAMA AND NON-LITERARY TEXTS

Overview of the Component

Once again, there was a very wide range of responses seen across entries this year. Many candidates have clearly been prepared very well for this examination, and it was pleasing to read some work where candidates were able to fully integrate all of the Assessment Objectives in their responses.

Enjoyment of the texts was in clear evidence where this was the case, and many responses demonstrated a high level of maturity in the way they discussed the set questions. These candidates typically scored the most highly. There was evidence of some perception in responses which addressed how the writers achieved certain effects, and some were able to successfully integrate contextual discussion into their analysis. However, as with previous years, this varied greatly, and there are a number of candidates who will not have performed as well as anticipated. Where this has occurred, it is frequently the result of over-narration at the expense of analysis of language, a lack of linguistic and literary terminology, or where there is limited reference paid to contextual discussion.

When candidates do not address the Assessment Objectives they are self-penalising, as examiners are unable to reward work which does not pay due reference to the key indicators or requirements of the specification. Without a *range* of terminology, candidates are limiting the marks they can be awarded for AO1, and in Section A, their discussion needs to go beyond the simple identification of sentence moods and use of stage directions.

As candidates are under great time pressure in this examination, it is advisable to only use brief embedded quotations rather than overlong ones which do not form any part of the ensuing discussion, as too frequently candidates wasted time copying out quotations which were of no relevance. It was also disappointing to read an increased number of incomplete responses this year, and candidates need to be reminded of the importance of keeping to strict time limits during the examination. Whilst there is no doubt there is much content to cover for this examination, time spent in class completing assessments under examination conditions is highly beneficial for candidates, as it enables them to make more informed decisions once in the adrenaline fuelled situation of the exam hall.

The same message regarding context from last year unfortunately applies again. In some Centres, there were significant issues with context (AO3). In part (ii) of Section A and in Section B, candidates are required to discuss context as an integral aspect of their response, and the clear lack of contextual consideration did not allow some candidates to access the full range of marks available. Without consideration of the more demanding social, historical, political and cultural influences on the text, AO3 is not being addressed in sufficient detail. Contextual discussion must also be relevant to the set question, rather than a series of learned pieces of information, or sweeping generalisations which bear no impact on analysis.

Comments on individual questions/sections

Section A: Post-1900 drama (open book)

Examiners mark candidate scripts in accordance with the relevant Assessment Objectives for each question. In this section of the examination, the extract-based part of the question should only address AO1 and AO2. Candidates should ensure that they only refer to the set extract in their response. A number of candidates again wasted time and possible reward by drawing on other areas of the play as part of their discussion. Whilst they may be relevant, there is no benefit to this approach, as candidates are assessed on this knowledge in part (ii) of the question. Candidates should also be guided to remember the mark allocation for this section. There are 20 marks available for part (i) and 40 for part (ii), so it is advisable that they do not write more or spend more time on part (i) than part (ii) of the question. They should also aim to begin their responses with a brief overview, especially for part (ii), where they can be rewarded for AO3.

Alan Bennett: *The History Boys*

No responses were seen on this text.

Diane Samuels: *Kindertransport*

Candidates responded well on this set of questions. Both questions enabled candidates to explore this play widely, with Question 3 being significantly the more popular. The extract in Question 3 allowed candidates to discuss Evelyn and Faith near the start of the play as Faith prepared to leave for university. There was some purposeful discussion of the dynamics of their relationship, with many candidates recognising the clear personality differences between mother and daughter. Some were able to make mature comments regarding the metaphor of the 'chipped glass' and establish its relevance in the play. The popularity of Question 3 may have been in part due to the option to discuss conflict in part (ii), which enabled candidates to fully explore the impact of Nazi Germany, and many of the cultural conflicts arising from Eva's move to England.

Edward Albee: *Who's Afraid Of Virginia Woolf?*

No responses were seen on this text.

Brian Friel: *Translations*

No responses were seen on this text.

Tennessee Williams: *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof*

This remains a very popular text which candidates clearly enjoy studying. There were significantly more responses to Question 9 on the presentation of Maggie and Brick, and then jealousy elsewhere in the play. Candidates wrote fairly well on their presentation in the extract and commented on the evident tension, and how the situation affected both characters. When discussing jealousy elsewhere, some candidates chose to discuss Mae and Gooper's jealousy of the favouritism shown to Brick with some success, whilst most candidates focused on Maggie's jealousy of their marriage, but also of her attitudes towards Brick's relationship with Skipper.

Characteristics of successful responses:

- focus on the relevant assessment objectives in part (i)
- choose episodes other than the extract in part (ii)
- use a range of linguistic and literary terminology to explore how meaning is created must go beyond identification of sentence mood

- specify the terminology being discussed
- integrated context (AO3) throughout the essay in part (ii) having avoided contextual points in part (i).

Areas for improvement:

- only discuss the set extract in part (i)
- avoid discussing the set extract in part (ii)
- linguistic and literary terminology must go beyond identification of sentence mood
- divide time sensibly between part (i) and part (ii) responses according to the marks available
- use relevant contexts to support the reading of the text.

Section B: Non-literary text study (open book)

In this section, responses were seen on *In Cold Blood* and *Homage to Catalonia*. There were no responses seen on *Skating to Antarctica*, *A Heartbreaking Work of Staggering Genius* or *Once in a House on Fire*.

Careful selection of specific 'episodes' from the text is central to success in this section. It enables candidates to have a greater scope for close literary and linguistic analysis which will help them access the upper bands of the mark scheme. As previously stated, prior to the examination, candidates could select a wide range of episodes from the text they have studied for close exploration. Remembering that they will have the text in the examination with them, this should assist them in quickly identifying which 'episodes' are most relevant and plan their response accordingly. The selection of examples to support their argument is also addressing AO1, as this Assessment Objective considers their line of argument and the organisation of their response.

As with Section A part (ii), a lack of context in essays was a significant issue in some centres, as was a lack of linguistic and literary terminology. These areas of the assessment objectives are clearly identified as carrying high weighting, and unless candidates are able to discuss them successfully, they are unable to access the range of marks available.

Contextual discussion needs to be relevant and specific, linked to the analysis of language, and have a clear connection with the set question.

Andrea Ashworth: *Once in a House on Fire*

No responses were seen on this text.

Jenny Diski: *Skating to Antarctica*

No responses were seen on this text.

Dave Eggers: *A Heartbreaking Work of Staggering Genius*

No responses were seen on this text.

Truman Capote: *In Cold Blood*

The majority of candidates responded to Question 17 on the presentation of suffering, although a few did attempt Question 18 on fathers and father figures. Question 17 saw candidates discuss Capote's depiction of various forms of suffering in the text, especially the physical and emotional suffering endured during the murder scenes, but some choices of episodes did not allow candidates to fully explore the implications of suffering, and most completely ignored the suffering of the community in the aftermath of the killings.

For Question 18, there was sensible discussion of the differences between Herb Clutter and Tex John, but frequently candidates missed the opportunity to discuss others, such as Alvin Dewey or even Willie-Jay, which would have added more depth of coverage to their response.

George Orwell: *Homage to Catalonia*

The more popular question was Question 19 on the presentation of violence, although a few did attempt Question 20 on rivalry. Most candidates began with a discussion the violence Orwell experienced on the front line and his incident with the bullet at Zaragoza, commenting on the poor quality of equipment and lack of resources. They frequently then progressed to his incapacitation following being shot in the throat, and his return to Barcelona. However, many responses simply failed to engage with the contextual significance of these incidents. The most successful essays integrated contextual discussion to both personal and political aspects of his time there and were able to comment on this with relevance to the question.

Characteristics of successful responses:

- carefully selecting relevant material from the text
- include context as an integral aspect of the response
- use apt and concise textual support
- write fluently, coherently and use an academic style and register
- use linguistic and literary terminology for each quotation.

Areas for improvement:

- careful planning is required as candidates need to select relevant material. This is essential for a successful response as it informs the line of argument
- avoid off-loading contextual knowledge. *Relevant* contexts should be integrated into the essay and enrich the reading and understanding of the text
- avoid long quotations
- improve technical accuracy and ensure that correct spelling and standard English is used
- draw on a range of linguistic and literary terminology whenever a quotation is used.

Supporting you

Useful contacts and links

Our friendly subject team are on hand to support you between 8.30am and 5.30pm, Monday to Friday.

Tel: 029 2240 4292

Email: gceenglish@eduqas.co.uk

Qualification webpage: https://www.eduqas.co.uk/qualifications/english-language-and-literature-as-a-level/#tab_overview

See other useful contacts here: [Useful Contacts | Eduqas](#)

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Please find details for all our courses here: <https://www.eduqas.co.uk/home/professional-learning/>

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ⁱ Please note that where overall performance on a question/question part was considered good, with no particular areas to highlight, these questions have not been included in the report.