



GCE A LEVEL EXAMINERS' REPORTS

ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE A LEVEL

SUMMER 2022

Grade boundary information for this subject is available on the WJEC public website at:
<https://www.wjecservices.co.uk/MarkToUMS/default.aspx?l=en>

Online Results Analysis

WJEC 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.

Annual Statistical Report

The annual Statistical Report (issued in the second half of the Autumn Term) gives overall outcomes of all examinations administered by WJEC.

Unit	Page
Component 1	1
Component 2	8
Component 3	11
Component 4 (NEA)	19

ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE

GCE A LEVEL

Summer 2022

COMPONENT 1: POETRY AND PROSE

General Comments

Following two years of disruption, and with a cohort less familiar with the demands of external exams, it was perhaps to be expected that there would be issues with timings and writing answers of sufficient length in this year's responses. There were many candidates who struggled to complete all three tasks, with some failing to respond to one part of Section B at all. A small number of students did not address the task set in Section A, and some were seen to answer part (i) and part (ii) from different tasks in Section B. These rubric infringements obviously had an adverse effect on those candidates' marks.

In Section A, candidates are required to write about two poems chosen from the *Pre-1914 Poetry Anthology* and an unseen text, with a given focus for analysis and comparison. Candidates were provided with a list of poems for the Advance Information this year, which included poems suitable for the tasks set to help guide their revision and their exam responses. Despite this, a vast number of poems were chosen in response to both tasks, including some not on the shortened list. Many choices did not provide candidates with the opportunity to develop their relevant analysis in relation to the given focus (AO2) or to make sensible comparison points (AO4). Writing a prepared response on a favourite poem often leads to poems being written about separately rather than with comparison in mind. Question 1 was generally answered less effectively than Question 2, with Text A being misinterpreted by candidates who used the first two lines to form their understanding of the poem rather than reading the whole text.

In Section B, there was clear evidence in the part (ii) questions that many candidates knew their chosen novel very well, selecting evidence appropriately from throughout the novel and using the open-book nature of the task to assist with this. Unfortunately, some candidates who otherwise wrote very thoughtful responses included little to no contextual reference (AO3) and this significantly affected the marks which could be awarded. Some part (ii) responses were also very brief, with candidates having spent too long on the previous tasks. Practising timed responses, particularly the 20 minute / 40 minute split for Section B is vital in ensuring candidates are prepared effectively for this exam. In part (i), the best responses selected quotations from throughout the extract to support analytical points related to characters, relationships or situations (as specified by the task).

Comments on individual questions/sections

Section A: Poetry

This section of the paper was answered first by most candidates, providing them with sufficient time to address the different elements of the task, although some failed to write about three texts (two *Pre-1914 Poetry Anthology* poems and the unseen text) and there were a few candidates who wrote about their chosen texts separately rather than creating comparison points. A small number of candidates did not focus on the given task at all. Highlighting the key words in the task is always a good first step in approaching Section A. The best candidates wrote about two texts per paragraph in their poetry responses, structuring their essays (AO1) in a way that allowed for comparison (AO4). There was a significant minority who focused each paragraph on a particular structural element, such as the title, the first line, the last line, and the rhyme scheme. Candidates are reminded that this rarely leads to thoughtful and developed comparison points and is best avoided. Better responses considered how the texts approached the particular focus given, comparing attitudes and perspectives.

The task requires candidates to ‘apply concepts and methods from integrated linguistic and literary study’. Many candidates chose to focus on word classes throughout their response. While terms were sometimes applied accurately (AO1), this approach often didn’t allow candidates to make the more purposeful use of terms required for higher band marks, and analysis (AO2) was affected as a result. Some chose to identify a wider range of techniques, with comments on imagery providing useful material for analysis and comparison (AO4). Identification of rhyme scheme in Text A and in *Anthology* poems was often inaccurate and there are still some candidates who confuse the terms ‘paragraph’ and ‘stanza’. Context (AO3) was included well by many candidates, particularly in relation to Romantic poetry. Where candidates tried to include context related to the unseen texts, they were less successful, and they are reminded that this isn’t a requirement of the task.

Question 1

The first question required candidates to **compare and contrast how a sense of loss is presented** in two *Anthology* poems and Text A, Tony Harrison’s ‘Isolation’. The idea of ‘loss’ is apparent in many *Anthology* poems in many forms, including loss of a loved one, loss of power, loss of sight, loss of love, and loss of faith. The most successful candidates recognised that poems that focused on the loss of a loved one provided better opportunities for making comparisons with Text A, choosing their *Anthology* poems accordingly. The best responses answered on ‘The Voice’, ‘Song’ and ‘Remembrance’ as these allowed candidates to consider a personal response to the loss of a loved one, something key to ‘Isolation’. Less successful responses chose poems such as ‘Ozymandias’ and ‘The Collar’. While these poems focus on loss (of power and of faith), candidates found it difficult to develop comparison points with Text A. There were at least twenty different poems chosen for this task, including some which seem to have been chosen solely as a favoured poem by the candidate rather than for their link to the given focus. Responses that wrote about ‘God’s Grandeur’, ‘To Autumn’, ‘Spellbound’, ‘The Picture of Little T.C. in a Prospect of Flowers’ and ‘Sonnet 43: How Do I Love Thee’ found very few opportunities for close language analysis linked to loss, or for comparison with Text A.

Text A, 'Isolation', was misunderstood by many candidates, focusing as they did on the first two or three lines rather than reading the whole text for meaning before beginning to analyse and interpret. Surprisingly, few candidates identified the poem as focusing on the death of his mother, and even fewer recognised that this happened when he was an adult and not a boy. The reference to the war distracted some candidates, who compounded the misreading by taking 1937 as the date of publication rather than the poet's date of birth. A significant number read the repeated "and don't" as an imperative rather than the way the persona's acceptance of the loss and the grieving process is delayed during the various events described. Candidates also at times focused too much on individual words, rather than considering them in the context of the line or stanza. The references to "Christmas" and the "red berries" were used by some as a way of launching into irrelevant comments on connotations.

Question 2

The second question required candidates to **compare and contrast how power is presented** in two *Anthology* poems and Text B, an extract from John Steinbeck's *East of Eden*. Poem choices were generally more successful for this task, the most popular being 'Ozymandias', 'London', 'A Satirical Elegy' and 'England in 1819'. The best candidates were able to use their contextual knowledge (AO3) to support and develop their analysis (AO2). Candidates identified a variety of techniques used (AO1) and made suitable comparison points with the unseen text (AO4). Less successful poem choices included 'The Schoolboy', 'A Valediction Forbidding Mourning' and 'The Darkling Thrush'. Some candidates recognised the criticism of power and authority often present in Romantic literature but needed to be aware that some poems, such as 'The Schoolboy' and 'Extract from the Prelude Book V', are more in awe of the power of nature rather than criticising the power of mankind.

Most candidates analysed Text B well, the focus on a different person and style of power in each paragraph causing far fewer misunderstandings than seen with Text A. The best responses were able to draw comparisons between the power described in different paragraphs in Text B with that described in their chosen *Anthology* poems. The use of imagery, the religious references and the direct speech at the end of the first and third paragraphs were all identified and analysed successfully by candidates.

AO1

Many candidates this year relied heavily on word class terminology, which can be problematic in terms of accuracy as well as not leading naturally to developed analytical points. There were inaccuracies with some other terms as well, most notably syndetic and asyndetic listing, imperatives and modal verbs. Too many candidates relied on the words positive and negative in their responses when it is far better to be more precise with their choice of adjectives. Phrasing such as 'juxtaposes' and 'infers' was often used inaccurately as well. Candidates are reminded that AO1 marks are given for quality of written expression as well as for accurate use of terminology.

AO2

Analytical points should focus on the effects created by particular techniques linked to the focus of the task. There is a tendency for candidates to paraphrase quotations, particularly if they haven't noted a technique used in the quotation. At least two or three shorter quotations should be used to provide evidence to support an idea, rather than basing a whole argument on just one line of a text. Understanding the meaning of a text is essential for confident analysis. It's important that candidates practise analysing unseen texts in preparation for the exam so that they are confident in reading for meaning rather than making assumptions.

AO3

Context was used well by many candidates, particularly in reference to Romantic poetry. Nevertheless, there were some inaccuracies seen, most significantly in terms of literary periods, with confusion between the Romantic and Renaissance eras, and some uncertainty about the time period covered by the Victorian era. A small number of candidates seemed to think that the General in Swift's 'A Satirical Elegy' was Winston Churchill rather than Sir John Churchill, and when writing about Brontë's 'Remembrance', some candidates read it as an autobiographical piece rather than recognising its origins as a Gondal poem. A few well-chosen contextual points in relation to each of the chosen *Anthology* poems should be used to support analysis, linked to the focus of the task.

AO4

Comparison points linked to the focus of the question tend to be more successful than comparison of techniques used. When responding to question 2, there was some effective comparison of the type of power presented in the chosen *Anthology* poems in relation to each particular paragraph of Text B. Comparison in Question 1 was more problematic, largely due to the misreading of Text A, although some good connections were made between *Anthology* poems in this task. A few candidates used 'similarly' or 'however' to start sentences that then didn't lead to any particular points of comparison point and therefore could not be rewarded.

Section B: Prose

The most popular texts were *Jane Eyre* and *The Color Purple*, followed by *Great Expectations*. Only a small number of candidates responded on *The Remains of the Day* and *Atonement*.

Timing seemed to be more of an issue for candidates this year, with some responding to only one of the two parts required in Section B, and some only having time to reference one part of the text in the essay question in part (ii). It is important that learners are given the opportunity to practise timings, particularly in terms of completing both parts of Section B in one hour.

Part (i) – Extract Analysis

This section requires a concise and focused response, with purposeful use of linguistic and literary terms and relevant analysis. More successful responses selected evidence from throughout the given extract, rather than focusing on only the first couple of lines or labelling one or two minor points. Some candidates, particularly when responding to *Jane Eyre*, picked out motifs common to the novel as a whole and, while this had some relevance, it tended to lead them away from the given extract.

The questions on the extract provided few difficulties in terms of overall understanding, although there were less confident readings of some lines within the extracts. In 12(i), for example, some read Celie's 'What she say that for' as real rather than feigned annoyance. In 3(i), some focused on 'cried' in the first line as evidence of Jane's sadness. Both these points, and others made in reference to the other novels, suggest a less secure understanding of the text as a whole and the characters' feelings at these particular moments.

This year, only a few candidates included context which is not rewarded in part (i). There were also very few candidates who analysed lines from outside the given extract. As in previous years, those that did were generally those studying *The Color Purple*, who need to be reminded that the extracts might not begin at the start of a letter.

Part (ii) – Whole Text Response

The essay question requires a balance between focused linguistic and literary analysis and developed contextual comments. AO3 (context) is double weighted here and some otherwise strong candidates who neglected to include context received relatively low marks as a result. Many candidates adopted a chronological approach in choosing parts of the novel to write about, with some seeming to assume the opening pages would be relevant to any question rather than thoughtfully choosing episodes from the whole novel. The other issue with the chronological approach is that some responses never get further than the first few chapters and therefore are not addressing the task fully or demonstrating understanding of the whole text. Relatively few candidates wrote about the given extract in their part (ii) essay, although the fact that some did suggests that it is worth emphasising that this cannot be credited here.

AO3: Contextual understanding

There is a list of starting points for each question in the AO3 section of the Mark Scheme which candidates can use for future reference.

There was a worrying prevalence of the context-based introduction this year, particularly from candidates writing about *The Color Purple*. Context should be included throughout the response, being used to illuminate and develop arguments made and episodes chosen. It is helpful to focus on the writer at work as a way of phrasing points so that context is not forgotten. A number of candidates writing about *Great Expectations* did so without referencing any context or indeed without reference to Charles Dickens. Being aware of the choices he was making may have led more naturally to a discussion of the impact of Victorian society on his writing.

Candidates from one of the centres studying *Jane Eyre* relied heavily on literary allusions. This provided useful insights, but context should be varied and encompass relevant points from a wide range of areas such as history, society, biography, politics, religion and literature. Only focusing on one area of context can be as limiting as only referencing one episode from the text. Conversely, many *Jane Eyre* responses showed understanding of Brontë's biography, using this to illuminate analysis in addition to comments on genre and early Victorian society. There was also evidence of good contextual knowledge in relation to *The Color Purple*, although there are still too many candidates using phrases such as 'at the time' or 'when the text was written' without specifying when this was.

Jane Eyre

Both questions were popular, with both allowing links to be made with the Bildungsroman genre. In some centres, the reference to journeys (Question 3) was so metaphorical as to make responses almost more focused on education and learning (Question 4). The best responses on journeys recognised Jane's literal movement between different stages of her life in addition to her own personal development journey. Both part (ii) questions elicited some responses that focused heavily on the Red Room, at times not getting much beyond this. This was particularly limiting for the question on journeys as, whilst establishing her starting point, it didn't allow candidates to note any movement or development. There was some interesting consideration of Jane's teaching of Adele in answers to Question 4, as well as the life lessons she learns in relation to her own independence.

Great Expectations

Question 6 was a more popular task than Question 5, possibly due to the extract occurring so close to the beginning of the novel. There were good responses on this, noting how Joe, Pip and Mrs Joe and their relationships were presented. The whole text question on parental figures and children saw many candidates focusing on Miss Havisham and Estella, as well as Joe and Pip, although some also considered more minor characters. Some candidates made good reference to societal context in terms of class divides, but few developed points on children in Victorian society.

Atonement

Only a small number of candidates answered on *Atonement*. There were some good responses recognising the significance of sound and imagery, particularly in Question 7. Conflict in family relationships was addressed mainly in reference to the Tallises, although some candidates also noted conflict within the Turner family.

The Remains of the Day

Only a small number of responses were seen on *The Remains of the Day*. The focus on 'ideas of greatness' in 9(ii) allowed candidates to consider many of Stevens' recollections and stories, as well as the societal changes that affected his role as a butler. It was good to see some appropriate analysis of dialogue in responses on 10(ii), with these candidates choosing terminology purposefully when analysing conversations Stevens had with others.

The Color Purple

Question 12 was much more popular in this pair of questions. The focus on 'freedom and independence' allowed candidates to write about many elements of the novel, and the best responses recognised the links to be made to womanism as well as the Civil Rights Movement and Walker's involvement in this. However, too many limited their responses to the lack of freedom, this being an unfortunately natural result of candidates who focused almost exclusively on the opening pages of the novel. Those who demonstrated their knowledge of the whole text were able to find evidence of religious freedom, personal freedom, economic independence and freedom from established gender boundaries. While very few candidates chose to write about settings in 11(ii), there were some good responses that chose useful episodes focusing on both Nettie's experiences in Africa as well as settings that are significant to Celie. Less successful responses focused more on events, with the setting as a secondary consideration. This approach did not allow for developed arguments linked to the task.

Summary of key points

Summary of advice on Section A:

- Read the unseen texts carefully for meaning, linked to the given focus, and then choose *Anthology* poems accordingly.
- Ensure that *Anthology* poems are suited to the given focus, as well as being sensible choices to compare with the unseen text.
- Write about two texts per paragraph to encourage comparison.
- Choose terminology to identify the techniques that are creating particular effects. Over-reliance on word classes isn't helpful and listing features (without analysis) should be avoided.
- Context needs to be accurate. Not all poems are autobiographical, although biographical detail can be useful in supporting understanding.

Summary of advice on Section B:

- Context should be an integral part of the Section B(ii) response, appearing throughout the essay to support arguments made in each paragraph. A context-heavy introduction should be avoided.
- Terminology should be used purposefully and accurately.
- Candidates should select evidence from throughout the given extract in part (i) rather than adopting a chronological approach to the task.
- It is vital that candidates practise completing Section B under timed conditions so that they are aware of how concise their part (i) answer needs to be in order to allow enough time for part (ii).

ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE

GCE A LEVEL

Summer 2022

COMPONENT 2: DRAMA

General Comments

This year's Component 2 examination produced some high-quality responses and centres and candidates are to be congratulated for their excellent work, particularly in the light of the challenges they faced during the two years prior to the exam. Although some candidates had clearly not studied the whole of the Shakespeare play, probably resulting from disruptions to teaching while Covid restrictions were in place, this was a small minority. Word class and sentence mood identification are still by far the commonest form of integrated study seen in AO1. As always, candidates are unable to gain more than Band 2 unless it is 'purposefully' applied, elucidating how meaning is created. There is an increasingly wide range of linguistic frameworks being used, however, often appropriately. There is widespread evidence of good work being done on introductions to essays. The majority of candidates now offer useful, clear introductory paragraphs, which can contribute to their AO1 mark.

On a negative note, there is an increasing tendency for candidates to respond to the essay questions by selecting a series of quotations from the given text and simply analysing them in turn, with little or no reference to the speaker of the line, to its relevance to the scene, or without any analysis of the play as a whole. Although this gives a superficial impression of detailed and rigorous analysis, if the candidate is not offering a reading of the work in question, they cannot gain high marks. Essentially, a literary essay is required, with special emphasis on language (and in the case of this paper, dramatic) analysis. There is also a tendency for weaker candidates to offer a quotation, identify the sentence mood and word class, then paraphrase the meaning. This is especially prevalent in the Shakespeare questions, where the language may be challenging. It should be stressed that paraphrasing is 'superficial' analysis, a descriptor from Band 1. Similarly, there is heavy dependence on the term 'connotes', preceding a list of loosely associated impressions, often offering no genuine analysis. 'Juxtaposition' is still widely used to mean 'contrast', even sometimes in cases where there is no proximity between the items in question. "Placing or being placed close together" is the Chambers Dictionary definition. Finally, there was a disconcerting plague of 'slashes' (/) in essays across all levels and centres. The use of an appropriate academic register is part of the requirement for AO1, and slashes are used in note taking, not formal prose.

Comments on individual questions/sections

Section A: Shakespeare extract questions

Othello is by far the most popular Shakespeare text still, with *King Lear* second, followed by *Much Ado About Nothing* and *The Tempest*. There were no responses on *Antony and Cleopatra*.

Most candidates were able to offer competent accounts of the Act 2 Scene 3 extract from *Othello*, focusing on the dramatic irony of Iago's contribution, and Othello's authority, with the turning point that the moment represents, as he begins to lose his composure. A number of responses misread Montano's angry shout of "He dies" as a stage direction, so discussed the sadness of his death, despite the fact that he has another speech a few lines later. Some candidates still offer contextual comments in (a), although there is no AO3. There was, however, some good analysis of dramatic effects here, and of the significance of Iago's lengthy but evasive description.

Similarly in the *King Lear* extract, a generally high standard of analysis was seen, considering the dramatic irony here, too, as Edmund sets out to dupe his father. Most candidates writing on *The Tempest* were able to write about the contrast of mood between Iris's ornate, celebratory verse and Prospero's brooding aside, and analysis of the Act 4 Scene 1 extract from *Much Ado About Nothing* was generally well done.

Some candidates struggle with quoting from the blank verse in the extracts, often stopping inappropriately at the end of a line, rendering the quotation meaningless. One example of this seen quite frequently in responses to the *Othello* extract was Iago's "I cannot speak", cut off from the rest of the sentence that follows: "I cannot speak / Any beginning to this peevish odds". So the verb "speak" is actually being used transitively and does not mean (as many claimed) that Iago is unable to speak at all. Generally, however, there is very promising work being done on dramatic effects in the extracts.

Shakespeare's use of the grand style is beginning to appear in essays and extract analyses, which is good news, particularly where it is understood. It is sometimes confused with any use of figurative language (as in "Are we turn'd Turks...?"), but those candidates who had learned examples of it (for example of Othello's 'music' from Act 1) were able to analyse them to good effect in the essay questions.

Section A: Shakespeare essay questions

One of the striking features of this year's examination was the impressive work being done on the context of the Shakespeare plays, important here of course as it is double weighted. Although the best marks are always gained by candidates whose context points are relevant and fully integrated into their analyses of the play, the majority of Shakespeare essays now offer meaningful contextual information. Some of the best work was seen on the context of *Othello*, where the significance of Iago's Spanish name, the influence of the Moorish Ambassador, and the work of Leo Africanus were all discussed fruitfully in terms of their impact on the meaning and reception of the play. Candidates should, however, beware of generalising too freely, for example about the Great Chain of Being (although it is important at the time, social mobility was increasing in the Shakespearean period), or about the nature of misogyny in the period (the preoccupation with Eve as the source of all evil originates mainly from the late 17th century, connected with Milton and his contemporaries). Also, some candidates cited Iago's speeches as evidence of general cultural attitudes in the period. As always, the speaker and the situation create the meaning.

Most candidates answered on power and conflict in *Othello*, and some excellent work was seen there, but there were also impressive responses to the Iago presentation question, particularly where candidates were able to recall evidence from his soliloquies, and so discuss his relationship with the audience.

The question on the presentation of the generations in *King Lear* was the most popular and offered many candidates the chance to demonstrate their knowledge of the play at a range of levels. Some candidates struggled to cope with the *King Lear* question on the double plot of the play, finding it difficult to discuss both plots alongside each other, although there were high quality responses here too. The presentation of power in *The Tempest* was tackled impressively by some, and (similar to the generations in *King Lear* and power and conflict in *Othello*) offered the majority of candidates a chance to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding of the play.

Section B: Modern Drama

Section B produced some excellent responses on *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof* (the most popular text), *The History Boys*, *Kindertransport* and *Translations*. There were very few responses on *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?*. The majority of candidates chose to write about 'pain and suffering' (Question 15) in Tennessee Williams' play, rather than the setting question, and most did it justice, with some excellent contextual support being offered, as we saw in the Shakespeare section.

There was a more equal distribution of answers on *The History Boys*, with some excellent analyses of the presentation of 'success' in the play (Question 8), although some were tempted to stray from the question into a contrast of approaches to education, which, although relevant in part, was not the whole matter. Rudge's success in gaining his university place was often attributed solely to his father's role at the college, rather than what he could offer as a rugby 'blue'. Dakin was discussed thoughtfully and insightfully by a number of candidates (for Question 9), although here the temptation to simply reproduce all his taboo language, without real analysis of the significance of the character, was too much for some to resist. Few candidates made use of the proleptic scenes in the play, which was a missed opportunity, particularly perhaps the opening scene where Bennett makes Irwin's meretricious and morally shocking comments the play's opening statement. Similarly, although there was some promising commentary about Mrs. Lintott's breaking of the fourth wall, there are many rich dramatic effects in the play still to be mined for analysis, such as Scripps' narrative to the audience, and the effects of juxtaposition of scenes (dramatic syntax). This may be something to work on in future.

Both the *Kindertransport* questions were tackled well by most, although weaker responses to the settings question did not really address the dramatic effects of the juxtaposition of past and present action in the attic; instead, 'setting' was interpreted more loosely as 'place', such as Berlin and Manchester. Even here though, there was some interesting and successful work done on the significance of train stations in the play, for example.

Summary of key points

There has been impressive improvement and development of contextual knowledge in the Shakespeare and Modern Drama essays. Across the whole component, introductions to essays have improved noticeably. More careful reading of the extracts in Section A (a) will prevent slip-ups in future. Centres are encouraged to keep developing the range of linguistic approaches that students can use in their analyses, so that they do not have to resort to sentence mood and word class when it is not useful to do so. Generally, there were many strong responses and centres should be commended for preparing candidates well in difficult circumstances.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE

GCE A LEVEL

Summer 2022

COMPONENT 3: NON-LITERARY TEXTS

General Comments

In Section A of this component, candidates are required to analyse three spoken texts of different purposes and genres but with a thematic link. Following the extremely difficult and disruptive circumstances of the last few years, it was gratifying to see so many candidates approaching this component so thoughtfully and analytically, and with a thorough knowledge and understanding of the texts. This was testament not only to their own hard work but to the skill and commitment of their teachers over a sustained period. Again this year, the phrasing of the task, which directed candidates to explore different attitudes to imprisonment, helped many of them to move away from descriptive responses and make productive points about how meanings are created. However, some are still engaging in lengthy descriptions of the generic differences between transcribed and non-transcribed spoken texts, a self-penalising approach.

For Section B, the over-arching advice also remains the same as for previous years. The most productive responses track through the extract carefully, using an extensive range of technical terminology to make precise points about how meanings are created. They also relate these points closely to the requirements of the question. Less successful responses tend to use a restricted range of technical terms (or apply them incorrectly), leave out relevant sections of the extract and do not develop their points about meaning in sufficient depth. High-quality essay responses select a few key episodes from the text and analyse them thoroughly, also embedding relevant contextual points with confidence. On the other hand, many candidates are hindered by their lack of sufficient knowledge of the text and their inclusion of more general contextual points that are not relevant to the question.

Comments on individual questions/sections

Section A

The linking theme this year was attitudes to imprisonment, and the three extracts were selected to give candidates opportunities to explore a wide range of similarities and differences. As always, the strongest candidates cited an impressive range of linguistic and literary features, made precise comments on how meanings were created, and consistently focused on similarities and differences between the speakers' attitudes towards imprisonment. As noted on the 2019 report, however, some candidates are still producing introductory paragraphs which simply repeat the descriptor paragraphs which are printed on the examination paper before the three texts, sometimes copying them word-for-word. This approach simply wastes valuable time and will score no marks. Some other candidates produced excessively long and loosely organised introductions – sometimes over a page long – making only general points about the texts and not engaging in close analysis. It is also worth reiterating that the repetitive use of the vague terms 'positive' and 'negative' to describe attitudes only counts as 'basic' analysis of the texts.

Text A, an extract from an interview with the former hostage Brian Keenan, offered candidates plenty of opportunities to explore how spoken language can be used to convey first-hand reactions to highly traumatic events. Nearly all candidates selected Keenan's invocation of the metaphorical 'big black monster' and were able to discuss its connotations with varying degrees of analytical skill. Many also identified the presence of non-fluency features such as fillers, repairs and micropauses, though were not always convincing in arguing that these features were evidence of Keenan's continuing trauma three decades on. The candidates who wrote most effectively about this text included analysis of how it ends, with the speaker asserting the power of the human mind to overcome even the most difficult challenges. Those who ignored the ending tended to penalise themselves by offering an over-simplified impression of the speaker's attitudes. Some mistakenly believed that Keenan was being punished for a crime and this probably arose from a failure to read the descriptor paragraph.

Text B, an extract from a TV documentary, enabled candidates to explore perspectives on imprisonment both from a former prisoner and from prison officers. The most successful recognised that the prison officers – perhaps contrary to the stereotypes that many might hold about them – were emphasising their duty of care to prisoners, in particular to those presenting with mental health issues. Many candidates misinterpreted 'manipulating' as connoting cruelty or exploitation when in the context of this extract it implies care and concern. A few candidates described the prison officers as 'police officers'.

Text C offered another interesting perspective on imprisonment, also illustrating the importance of reading the descriptor paragraph. This clarified that Erwin James is, in fact, preparing to argue against the motion. That said, most candidates were able to recognise the speaker's attitudes to his imprisonment by, for example, commenting on the connotations of the phrase 'gladiator schools' to convey the nihilistic and brutal atmosphere of young offender institutions. Many explored some interesting and productive links with Text A in terms of how the speakers coped with their experience of imprisonment and the very different reasons behind their incarceration.

Section B

In Cold Blood was by far the most popular choice of text in this section, with *Once in a House on Fire* and *Homage to Catalonia* being studied by much smaller numbers of candidates. No responses were seen on *A Heartbreaking Work of Staggering Genius* or *Skating to Antarctica*.

As in previous years, successful candidates paid close attention to the writer's use of linguistic and literary techniques to convey theme, character and setting, tracking carefully through the extract and showing a sensitive awareness of how specific meanings were created. Others often produced poorly structured answers, sometimes making only a limited range of points and ignoring sections of the extract. The key to a good-quality extract response is systematic close reading, meaning that candidates should home in on short quotations, give sharp and precise analysis of how meanings are created, and then quickly move on to the next point. Another noticeable point this year was that many candidates included very detailed contextual information in their extract responses. It should be noted that no marks are awarded for AO3 on this task, so such an approach is likely to be self-penalising as it draws candidates away from close analysis of the extract.

As before, many candidates found the essay section much more challenging. This was sometimes caused by timing issues, with candidates simply not leaving themselves sufficient time to produce an essay response in any depth. Others showed a lack of close textual knowledge, producing very generalised answers with little close analysis of key episodes. Context also remained a problem for many, with some candidates including very little and others going to the other extreme by writing context-led essays that included very detailed biographical, social and historical contextual information at the expense of close textual analysis. The most successful approach is to use relevant contextual points to illuminate analysis of the text, embedding these points in every paragraph. Unfortunately, the 'learnt essay' still seems quite prevalent, in which candidates have learnt a standardised response and then try to adapt it to the wording of the question. This approach is restrictive and often prevents candidates from accessing higher marks. Examiners also noticed that, in their essay responses, some candidates referred exclusively to extracts from past papers. This approach was also quite restrictive as the past paper extracts were not always fully relevant to the topic of the essay question in this year's paper.

Andrea Ashworth: *Once in a House on Fire*

In the extract response, most candidates made at least sensible points about the presentation of Andrea and her interaction with her friend Wendy, and how this reveals the writer's attitudes to teenage identity. Many were able to see that Wendy is presented as a stereotypical teenager in many ways, identifying her clothing, smoking and attempts to meet boys as evidence of this. Some candidates went further, arguing that details such as the 'squeaking puffs' at her unlit cigarette suggest a rather absurd figure desperately trying to act out the perceived stereotypes of teenage behaviour, and that Andrea's attitudes are mixed – on the one hand, she feels 'thrilled' at her act of rebellion but is also 'terrified.' Some also saw the irony in Andrea's instructions to her younger sisters which make her sound like her mother, so that in performing this rebellious act, she is simultaneously demonstrating her maturity and sense of responsibility. Others identified the poignancy of Andrea's desire for boundaries when she invents an excuse to go home.

There are plenty of relevant examples in the second half of the memoir of how Ashworth presents her experiences of being a teenager and its implications, in the ways that she is increasingly objectified by males; her developing romantic relationships with boys; and her close bonding with Tamsyn Lee, for example. The most successful responses explored how Ashworth uses these descriptions to present teenage identity as a complex concept. The strongest responses linked this to contextual issues such as the influence of popular 1980s culture on teenagers of the time, and societal attitudes which generally tolerated the objectification and sexual harassment of teenage girls. On the other hand, some candidates referred to incidents in the first half of the memoir which took place long before Andrea became a teenager, while others concentrated on extracts from past Component 3 papers such as the 2019 extract about Andrea's decision to continue her schooling. While this extract was relevant in the sense that Andrea was a teenager at the time, the main focus was on attitudes to education so candidates who chose this approach struggled to make it relevant to the issue of 'being a teenager'.

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

In their extract responses, nearly all candidates grasped that Hickock's description of his past presented him as having a fairly average childhood and adolescence, generally conforming to societal expectations of behaviour in twentieth-century America, for example in the listing of sports and in his acquisition of 'above average grades'. Some others went beyond this reading, arguing that Hickock was trying to present himself in this way to the court in an attempt to mitigate his punishment. The reference to the 'extensive head injuries' that he suffered was seen by some as a potential explanation for his subsequent life of criminality, for example. Others suggested that the repainting of the bike ('he changed it over to a boy's') symbolised Hickock's father's striving for a heteronormative upbringing for his son. While contextual points such as these can be productive as long as they are closely linked to the analysis of quotations from the extract, some candidates strayed away from extract analysis by including very detailed information about expectations of masculine behaviour in twentieth-century America. This approach was self-penalising as AO3 is not assessed in this task.

There was plenty of potential material for candidates to draw on in the essay response, and most tended to focus on the presentation of the failed dreams ambitions of Perry and/or Dick. The most successful responses drew some illuminating links with the presentation of the Clutter family, with candidates debating to what extent the Clutters had achieved the 'American Dream'. Nearly all answers made at least some contextual links to the American Dream, with some merely mentioning it briefly while others went into great detail on how the murders of the Clutter family could be interpreted as dispossessed and alienated figures with thwarted dreams and ambitions destroying the whole concept.

George Orwell: *Homage to Catalonia*

In their extract responses, most candidates were able to identify and discuss a number of valid examples of evasion. Some went on to explore how Orwell, while acknowledging the considerable danger he is in, is also able to step back and show self-awareness of the absurdity of the situation, for example in the noun phrase 'an extraordinary, insane existence'. Some also cited Orwell's persistent belief that, as an Englishman, he is somehow immune from arrest, even though he also points out the danger of this view. Others identified the 'cautious questioning' of the restaurant owner as a further indication of how precarious the situation is and how careful Orwell and his associates have to be in securing their safe escape. Candidates who engaged in lengthy and detailed references to the social and political context of Barcelona were generally less successful as this approach meant that they moved away from close analysis of the extract.

There was scope for candidates to identify and analyse a wide range of examples from across the text in order to explore how Orwell presents deception and evasion. Several, for example, analysed his presentation of war propaganda to deceive the enemy while others explored his presentation of Barcelona early on in the text, the relevance of this being Orwell's failure to realise that the bourgeoisie were passing themselves off as working-class. This is a text that lends itself very easily to the consideration of social, historical and political context but not all candidates used this to their advantage with some producing context-led essays that, while displaying an impressively detailed knowledge of the history of the Spanish Civil War, did not engage sufficiently with textual analysis. As with all the texts on this component, the most successful answers were the ones which used specific context to illuminate their close textual analysis.

Summary of key points

Section A

AO1, AO2 and AO4 are all assessed in Section A, with AO4 being double weighted. The following points outline features of successful answers and areas for improvement for each Assessment Objective.

AO1

Characteristics of successful responses:

- A wide range of technical terminology applied accurately.
- When analysing a transcript, the use of specific technical terms such as micropause, filler, repair etc.
- Fluent and controlled written expression.
- Use of a formal academic register.
- Evidence of an integrated linguistic/literary approach.
- A clearly structured response with a coherent line of argument.
- Made a clear distinction between written texts designed to be spoken by using the term 'sentences', and spoken transcripts by using the term 'utterances'. Referred to 'speaker' and 'audience' rather than 'writer' and 'reader'.
- A short, sharp introduction identifying and comparing attitudes, before quickly moving on to close analysis.

Areas for improvement:

- As in previous years, many candidates show confusion about the basic definitions of the different word classes.
- The term 'declarative' appears to be used more extensively than before, often to label a phrase or even a single word.
- Conversely, many candidates would sometimes describe an entire sentence as a 'noun phrase' or 'verb phrase'.
- Variant spellings of the word 'imprisonment' included 'imprisonment' and (less commonly), 'improsonment' or 'improsement'.
- Some responses were again poorly structured, with much repetition and without a clear line of argument.

AO2

Characteristics of successful responses:

- Consistent analysis of specific attitudes to imprisonment (beyond simply 'positive' and 'negative') as revealed in the three texts.
- Relating these differing attitudes to the identities and experiences of the speakers, and the audiences, purposes and genres of the texts.
- Using a range of precise and detailed comments on how meanings are created.

Areas for improvement:

- Candidates need to move beyond the repetitive use of the terms 'positive' and 'negative' to describe attitudes: this only counts as 'basic' analysis, which is a Band 2 descriptor.
- On the whole, candidates need to be clearer that spoken texts are delivered by a speaker, not a writer, and are received by an audience or a listener, not a reader.
- Making only a small number of points about each text, which may be conveyed in exhaustive and often repetitive detail.
- Paraphrasing quotations rather than analysing them.

AO4

Characteristics of successful responses:

- Devoting a substantial amount of the answer to making connections between texts: this is important as AO4 accounts for half of the marks on Section A.
- Exploring specific similarities and differences between the attitudes of the different speakers.
- Examining how different genres, audiences and purposes could account for these differences in attitude.
- Moving confidently between the three texts – however, there is no need to compare all three texts all the way through the essay. For example, some productive comparisons could be made between Texts A and B, and then between B and C, and so on.
- Including a good balance of similarities and differences.
- Clearly signposting when links are being made (Similarly, Equally, However, In contrast, etc.) but then ensuring that this followed up with a specific and meaningful link.

Areas for improvement:

- As in previous years, many candidates devoted a considerable amount of time to describing obvious generic differences between spoken and written texts without referring to meanings or to attitudes to imprisonment: such comments are irrelevant as they do not address the question and will not score marks.
- Several candidates were still not including many links, and this will be heavily self-penalising. Answers which essentially consisted of three mini-essays on each individual text, followed by some brief comments at the end about links, were unlikely to score highly for AO4.
- Some candidates used signposting without supporting this with really specific and meaningful links between texts. Examiners will not award AO4 marks simply for including terms such as 'Similarly' or 'In contrast'.

Section B(i)

Characteristics of successful responses:

- A good range of technical terminology used accurately and purposefully (AO1).
- A good balance of literary and linguistic terms, to show 'integrated study' (AO1).
- Attaches a technical term to every quotation (AO1).
- Showing clear awareness of the writer's reasons for employing linguistic and literary devices, making sensible comments on how specific meanings are created (AO2).
- A thorough approach, tracking sequentially through the extract and covering a good range of points, including analysis of the ending (AO2).
- All points about meaning are linked back to the question (AO2).

Areas for improvement:

- As with Section A, there was still often confusion about the definitions of basic features, particularly word classes (AO1).
- Some candidates wrote at length (and often repetitively) about very specific parts of the extract and omitted many other potentially valuable points (AO1/AO2).
- Candidates who did not track through the extract in sequence experienced difficulties when trying to track changes and developments in the presentation of characters, themes and attitudes (AO1/AO2).
- Similarly to Section A, many over-used the terms 'positive' and 'negative' at the expense of more precise analysis (AO2).
- The misspelling of characters' names always creates a poor impression of the candidate's knowledge of the text. In particular, the name 'Hickock' was sometimes rendered as 'Hickhock' or 'Hitchcock'.

Section B(ii)

Characteristics of successful responses:

- Beginning with a short and sharp introduction, including a clearly defined line of argument (AO2/AO3)
- Including some reasonably detailed reference to two or three key episodes from different parts of the text to exemplify/illustrate the line of argument: given the time constraints of this task, this should be realistic for candidates (AO2)
- Referring to specific contextual factors which are relevant to the specific wording of the task, including social/historical and, if appropriate, relevant information about the production of the text (AO3)
- The best responses skilfully interwove specific and relevant contextual information with analysis of meanings, showing a clear grasp of how these contextual factors influenced the production of the text (AO2/AO3)
- Finishing with a meaningful conclusion that sums up the argument and does not simply repeat points already made (AO2/AO3).

Areas for improvement:

- Some candidates ignored the wording of the question and wrote answers that were barely relevant, possibly reflecting a lack of sound knowledge of the text or suggesting that they had memorised a set response.
- Candidates who attempted to adapt such a learnt response were rarely successful: such answers tended to be irrelevant or to have only tenuous links with the question.
- As half the marks for this question are awarded for context, candidates self-penalised if they included no, little or irrelevant contextual material.
- On the other hand, some candidates wrote essays that were context-led, with less detailed textual analysis.
- Again this year, several answers were extremely brief, suggesting that some candidates have issues with timing: it is recommended that they should spend twenty-five minutes on the essay question. A few candidates did not attempt the essay question at all.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE

GCE A LEVEL

Summer 2022

COMPONENT 4 (NEA): CRITICAL AND CREATIVE GENRE STUDY

General Comments

This Component is internally assessed and externally moderated. It gives opportunities for learners to independently select an aspect of prose study that interests them and to study one text (chosen from a list in Appendix A) provided by WJEC Eduqas within that genre. In addition, learners are given the opportunity to select wider reading to inform their studies in this component and to reflect on the learning that has taken place. In reflecting on their studies, learners will then be required to produce original writing related to their chosen genre.

This Component has not been formally assessed since 2019. Moderators saw some excellent work again this year across a range of genres and texts. Assessment was generally secure with only a slight tendency toward generosity in Band 5.

Comments on individual questions/sections

Section A: Genre study

It was pleasing to see the range of texts and tasks in evidence in the work moderated this year. Centres had taken a range of appropriate approaches to Section A this year with the majority of candidates being given the flexibility to choose either their texts for study, their task or both. Some centres had given candidates complete free choice of both genre and texts leading to an entirely independent approach to the component. A minority of centres had prescribed genres and texts offering their candidates limited independence in their study. The latter approach resulted in some fairly uniform approaches as candidates within a centre often referred to the same sections of the text and even the same quotations.

Crime proved to be a popular genre choice this year alongside the ever-popular dystopia and Gothic genres. Responses were seen from all genres within Appendix A. Very little work was seen in the life-writing and journalism genres, however. Certain texts proved popular this year including *The Talented Mr Ripley* and *The Secret History* in the crime genre, *The Handmaid's Tale* and *1984* in the dystopian genre and *The Bloody Chamber* and *The Woman in Black* in the Gothic genre. The strongest pairings allowed candidates to explore genre change or different social or historical perspectives on their chosen topics. Bibliographies included with the work were very useful and demonstrated the care and attention that candidates had given to researching their chosen genre. Collections of short stories such as Carter's provided opportunities for fruitful study. However, it is worth noting that candidates should refer to more than one short story from a collection in order to ensure sufficient breadth and depth in their genre study.

Moderators saw a wide range of tasks this year with the majority of centres offering candidates the flexibility to choose a topic which was of individual interest. This is undoubtedly best practice as a common task tended to result in genre studies with very similar content and a more limited overview of the genre being studied. Moderators saw some excellent work on social control in dystopian texts, flawed heroes in the Gothic genre and human faults and failings in the war and conflict genre. Candidates who chose a narrow focus such as this tended to craft focused and perceptive responses. Some centres provided a critical quotation in the task which candidates were required to engage with when constructing their argument. This approach worked well and allowed candidates to make some perceptive observations. Candidates who responded to tasks which signposted the relevant Assessment Objectives tended to have more structured arguments.

On the whole, there was a noticeable narrowing of the range of terminology seen this year in comparison to previous years. In stronger responses, candidates applied a wide range of literary and linguistic terminology with confidence and precision. Where marks were awarded in Band 5, moderators expected to see candidates engage with language on both word and sentence level. Moderators also noted a lack of precision in the application of terminology in a number of responses seen. Of particular note was the tendency to cite sentences or phrases but then make vague reference to the impact of 'the verb' in the sentence without explicitly identifying that verb. This is an issue which can be easily rectified during the drafting process. AO1 assesses academic register and organisation as well as integrated approaches. Arguments were generally well structured with the strongest responses including a focused introduction, clear comparative topic sentences to open paragraphs and a conclusion which effectively summarised the central argument of the essay. In a minority of cases, introductions and conclusions were generalised and unconnected to the argument being explored. Introductions are not the place to offer a biography of the author or an overview of the genre's history. Effective introductions should, instead, be comparative and offer an overview of the argument which will be explored in the genre study.

As in previous years, AO2 was the strength of most Section A responses seen. On the whole, candidates engaged well with meaning and supported points with appropriate evidence from the texts. The strongest responses integrated AO2 with the other AOs to construct a purposeful argument. Weaker responses tended to lapse into description of key moments within the texts or lacked sufficient textual support for points made.

As this is a genre study, there is an expectation that candidates demonstrate clear awareness of how their chosen texts fit within their genre. Effective task setting and careful selection of wider reading is crucial to this. Stronger responses were able to consider the particular sub-genre their text may fit into and also looked at how their texts subverted or conformed to the stereotypical conventions of their chosen genre. AO3 also encompasses other contextual factors and candidates are required to engage with a range of contextual points. It is imperative that these points are relevant to the task and that they are embedded into the argument. The use of contextual detail was also varied across the work seen. Many candidates were able to make useful references to biographical, historical and cultural factors surrounding their texts. In less successful responses, candidates included whole paragraphs of descriptive contextual points which did not connect to their argument and were, therefore, irrelevant to the demands of this section.

The majority of candidates were able to make clear connections between their chosen texts allowing them to access the range of AO4 marks available. In the most successful responses links were made from the outset and interwoven through the entire genre study. Comparative introductions considering the task and its relevance within the chosen genre were a delight to read. Less successful responses dealt with the texts separately and made only brief reference to the wider reading which had been undertaken. Very few responses of this kind were seen. Candidates should be encouraged to plan their genre studies comparatively in order to ensure that the wider reading illuminates the study of the core text.

Section B: Related creative writing

Candidates are required to submit one literary and one non-literary piece of writing in this section. Short stories and novel openings remain most popular literary pieces, although moderators also saw novel endings, play scripts, monologues and poetry collections. Some of the strongest responses made interesting choices with narrative voice or form which made the writing very engaging. Use of dialogue was variable with the strongest responses producing convincing dialogue which progressed the narrative and aided characterisation. In weaker responses, dialogue was inaccurately written and unconvincing, demonstrating the need for the use of quality writing as a model when preparing for this part of the NEA. Literary work which is a continuation of an existing text or features existing literary characters should be avoided as it limits the originality and flair candidates need to demonstrate.

The quality of non-literary work was variable this year. Moderators saw a range of text types including reviews, speeches and articles. Topics covered were wide-ranging and it was lovely to see that candidates had been able to choose subjects which were of interest to them. From gender roles in modern TV drama to the links between physical and mental health, there was much to enjoy here. There were some issues with the intended audience and purpose of some of the work seen, particularly in the case of articles. As the possible publication points for this type of text are so diverse, it would be beneficial for candidates to provide a brief text descriptor making the intended audience clear. Technical accuracy and the quality of written expression was generally good. on the whole but inaccuracy in the mid and lower ranges was much more prevalent this year. Careful editing and proofreading are a crucial part of the drafting process and candidates should build this into their preparation for the submission of the NEA.

Administration

Administration on this Component was greatly aided by centres' use of the Non-examination Assessment Checklist. Where centres did not supply the checklist, administrative errors such as the omission of a sample list, incorrectly totalled marks, missing signatures, etc. tended to occur. Annotation on the cover sheets was generally very good with the majority of centres providing a very useful overview of how final marks were arrived at. In a minority of cases annotation on the cover sheet and on the work itself was minimal or absent. As indicated on the Non-examination Assessment checklist, centres are required to provide sufficient annotation on the quality of the work being assessed.

Conclusion

Given the challenges of the last few years, centres are to be commended on the high quality of work seen. There was much to celebrate in the work seen this year.

Summary of key points

Candidates should:

- apply a wide range of literary and linguistic terminology (AO1)
- ensure that terminology is applied with precision and accuracy (AO1)
- select terminology from all aspects of the framework, making comments on word, sentence and phonological levels (AO1)
- establish clear links between terminology and meaning - HOW do the identified literary and linguistic features create meaning/effect (AO2)
- support all points with the relevant evidence from the selected texts (AO2)
- make specific reference to the conventions of the chosen genre and how the selected texts fit into that genre (AO3)
- include a range of contextual detail e.g. literary, historical, social, political etc... (AO3)
- ensure all contextual points are relevant to the task being addressed (AO3)
- adopt a comparative approach from the outset (AO4)
- select texts of an appropriate level of challenge for comparison (AO4)
- avoid superficial comparative comments or links which do not address the task (AO4).

Candidates should:

- have clear links to the knowledge gained from the genre study
- show clear awareness of genre by either conforming to or subverting conventions
- use a style which is appropriate for audience, form, genre and purpose
- produce original and engaging writing
- use language choices which reveal detailed knowledge of literary and linguistic features and their impact
- proofread work carefully to ensure a strong degree of technical accuracy, particularly in terms of punctuation of speech
- use wide ranging vocabulary
- select the best genre for their writing. For example, in some cases first person narratives would have been better as monologues
- have a clear sense of audience and purpose.



WJEC
245 Western Avenue
Cardiff CF5 2YX
Tel No 029 2026 5000
Fax 029 2057 5994
E-mail: exams@wjec.co.uk
website: www.wjec.co.uk