



GCE AS EXAMINERS' REPORTS

ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE AS

SUMMER 2022

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ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE

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COMPONENT 1: COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS AND CREATIVE WRITING

General Comments

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. Previous reports have stressed the importance of timing and candidates have clearly been well prepared to allow enough time to complete all three parts of Section B. Time is no longer being wasted on over-long creative pieces. Technical accuracy remains a problem. This 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 of expression, most commonly spelling errors, poor sentence control and inaccurate punctuation.

Knowledge and usage of technical terms varied widely. The best candidates were able to draw on a range which covered lexis, syntax, phonology, poetic form and literary techniques. Candidates should be reminded that the correct use of terminology, although worthy of credit, does not amount to analysis. Some candidates who were aware of key features and able to use relevant terms failed to develop analysis by providing examples or exploring meanings. Several responses showed limited or very basic evidence of linguistic and literary study.

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 'Sonnet XIX: On His Blindness' by John Milton, taken from the anthology, was to be compared with a choice of unseen texts: an extract from a talk 'What reality are you creating for yourself?' by Isaac Lidsky (2016) or an extract from an article about the writer Sue Townsend on her experience of going blind, published in 'The Guardian' (2012). All three concerned reactions to blindness and candidates were asked to compare and contrast how the experience of going blind had been presented in the poem and their choice of unseen text.

The extract from Isaac Lidsky's talk was much more popular than 'The Guardian' article. Several better responses produced enthusiastic analysis and made secure links with Milton's sonnet in terms of structure and style as well as the attitudes and priorities of the writer and speaker. Less successful responses demonstrated at least a basic grasp of Lidsky's ideas, although repetitive use of 'positive' and 'negative' over-simplified some comments on attitudes.

Work on the poem reflected a full range of knowledge and analytical ability. Some less successful responses discussed only the opening and therefore took a very narrow view of Milton's experience of blindness. A very common error was to assume a conversation between Milton and God, although God is clearly referred to in the third person. The personified voice of Patience, productively identified by more assured readers, was often entirely overlooked. There were many versions of the poem's form: common errors included confusion between rhythm and rhyme. More than one response referred to paragraphs in the poem. The strongest responses applied a range of knowledge to support their readings of Milton's experience as a spiritual development.

Literary techniques such as Lidsky's tunnel metaphor were often overlooked altogether. Most, understandably, dealt with the poem first. Several, having then written about Lidsky, found that there was little time to address connections between the texts. More successful responses chose to focus on similarities and differences between the poem and the talk as soon as they introduced the second text. Secure and productive links included: bleak views of their situation changing to optimism or acceptance; Milton's focus on God as Maker unlike Lidsky's secular view of the self as creator; their use of the first person; Lidsky's use of the second person and imperatives unlike Milton; their use of interrogatives. It was pleasing to read the work of well-prepared candidates who were able to support such connections accurately.

Secure knowledge of linguistic terminology was very helpful; those without it often failed to support comparisons while some provided relevant quotation without analysis. A sound knowledge of pronoun address and sentence mood, for example, will provide starting points for any pair of texts. Candidates wanting to discuss lexis were at an advantage if they could, for example, identify adjectives in 'this dark world and wide' (Milton) and 'an unremarkable life, small and sad' (Lidsky).

Long generalised introductions were rare this year but sometimes even more successful candidates wasted time by a conclusion to Section A which repeated the comparative points they had already made, rather than extending the range or depth of these links.

Section B: Creative Writing and Commentary

Previous reports have advised against creative pieces which much exceed 200 words and this advice has clearly been heeded. However, in a few responses the creative pieces were very short, little more than half the recommended length. This restricted the range of features and appropriate content which could be included to address AO5. It is easy for candidates to discover how much space around 200 words of their handwriting will occupy and very brief pieces of creative writing are self-penalising. It would be helpful to remind candidates that AO5 also assesses the quality of written expression, which includes technical accuracy. As in Section A, there were many responses with errors of spelling, punctuation and sentence control.

- 2. (a) You have been asked to deliver a motivational speech to 17-year-olds entitled 'Overcoming challenges!' Write an extract from your speech describing a specific challenge and giving advice on how to overcome it. Aim to write approximately 200 words.**
- (b) Write an extract from a promotional leaflet that encourages young people to face a challenge in order to raise money for a specific charity. You should outline the benefits of getting involved. Aim to write approximately 200 words.**

Q2(a) This questions obviously involved the concerns of candidates and their peers. Coping with exams was the most popular choice of challenge. Some less successful speeches outlined too many possible challenges and took too long to focus on one topic. The most successful offered advice which was relevant, practical and easy to absorb and remember. Less helpful were vague exhortations to work hard and hope for the best. It was a pleasure to see some band 5 work, technically accurate with a firm sense of genre and a range of deliberately crafted techniques. Most responses used direct address and some variation of sentence moods. The most successful tended to lead with rhetorical interrogatives and also employed imperatives as well as anaphora, appealing phonology and extended metaphors in the most impressive. These candidates tended to thrive in Question 2(c) as they had deliberately employed techniques to provide them with material for analysis.

Q2(b) This task also engaged the interest of most. Some responses showed awareness of the leaflet genre by breaking up the text into accessible sections, although a surprising number presented a solid block of writing. Candidates need to read the task carefully, including the required content: a few did not name a specific charity which made the leaflet unconvincing. Others were very vague about the element of challenge. Some more successful responses promoted an event which had been set up by the charity, providing time, place and contact details. Others offered a short list of suggestions for readers to organise their own challenge. All Section B tasks will require candidates to make firm decisions about such details before they start to write. The best responses also encouraged readers by outlining a range of benefits for participants as well as recipients of the proceeds for charity.

Q2(c) An analytical commentary
Tasks (a) and (b) were clearly similar in their audiences, themes and purposes. As the dominant AO4 assesses connections, candidates needed to include some stylistic differences when devising their texts. Several responses spent too long on rather general discussion of audience and purpose, offering little more than descriptions of the content of their texts, as well as repeating the tasks set. Task (c) asks for discussion of 'style, form and content' but several dealt only with content. As previous reports have pointed out, analysis needs to be prioritised from the beginning of the commentary. When the texts lacked deliberate crafting to include a range of stylistic features, candidates struggled to find meaningful points to make. Several showed limited or very basic evidence of linguistic and literary study. Repetition was also a common feature which limited achievement.

Again, pronoun use and sentence moods provided starting points for the more successful who had considered these choices when creating the texts. There were some thorough and focussed commentaries which compared throughout and were able to identify a range of techniques in their own work. Productive choices also included: register, emotive language, syntactic patterning, phonology and, in the best responses, imagery. Some candidates were aware of the key features and able to use appropriate terms but failed to provide supporting quotation or made only very general points about the impact of their choices on meanings. Making connections is important in Question 2(c) but a few overlooked this requirement altogether and several made only general unsupported assertions.

Summary of key points

Section A

Characteristics of successful responses:

- Planned comparison and contrast integrated into the body of the response rather than left until the end.
- Selection of a range of material from different sections of the poem and unseen text, not only the beginnings.
- Key features not only identified but supported with brief accurate quotation and discussion of meanings conveyed.

Areas for improvement:

- Avoid closing sections which repeat comparative points already made.
- Learn the basics, such as pronouns and sentence moods, for linguistic starting points.
- Avoid repetition of 'positive' and 'negative' which will restrict the development of analysis and comparisons.

Section B

Characteristics of successful responses:

- Creative pieces of a suitable length with stylistic features chosen to provide material for the commentary.
- A range of comparisons prioritised and supported in the commentary.
- A high degree of technical accuracy in all three tasks, with attention to spellings, punctuation and organisation of material to avoid repetition.

Areas for improvement:

- Consider the visual impact of the written text, where appropriate.
- Read the requirements for each task carefully and make early decisions about your choice of content.
- Remember that you will need to compare and contrast the texts and include a range of stylistic features which will provide structure for the commentary.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE

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COMPONENT 2: DRAMA AND NON-LITERARY TEXTS

General Comments

It was pleasing to read a number of responses this year where candidates clearly engaged with the texts and were able to demonstrate how they had a clear idea of the assessment objectives, which helped them to maintain a focus on the set question. 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 were also a number of candidates who simply relied on narration as part of their response, at the expense of analysis (AO2). Again, in a course which places such heavy weighting and importance on the use of literary and linguistic terminology, it was disappointing to see so many candidates self-penalising through not using this as an integral aspect of their discussion. Without a **range** of terminology, candidates are limiting the marks they can be awarded for AO1, and 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.

There were significant issues with context (AO3) this year. 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.

Comments on individual questions/sections

Section A: Post-1900 drama (open book)

Examiners mark candidate scripts in accordance to 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 marks 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*

Both questions enabled candidates to explore this play widely, with Question 3 being the more popular. The extract in Question 3 allowed candidates to discuss Helga as she prepared Eva to leave for England. Candidates commented on Helga's attempts to maintain some form of normality and routine for Eva, and some were able to also recognise the relevance of the Rattenfanger story. Part (ii) gave candidates scope to discuss contextual aspects of the play and how they contributed to the notion of fear. Many were able to make purposeful connections to the impact of Nazi persecution and aspects of separation.

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*

A popular text which candidates clearly enjoy studying. There were significantly more responses to Question 9 on the presentation of Big Daddy and Brick, and then relationships between parents and children elsewhere in the play. Candidates wrote fairly well on their relationships in the extract and commented on the evident tension, and how the situation affected both characters. When discussing parents and children elsewhere, some candidates chose to discuss Mae and Gooper's parenting style with some success, whilst most candidates focused on Big Daddy and Big Mama's attitude towards their sons.

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 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 an issue, 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 violence and aggression, although a few did attempt Question 18 on towns and cities. Question 17 saw candidates discuss Capote's depiction of the murder scene in particular, and charted Perry's various examples of violence throughout the text. Some candidates were able to make contextual links with ideas about masculinity and aggression, especially exploring how Perry's upbringing may have impacted his violent behaviour.

George Orwell: *Homage to Catalonia*

The more popular question was Question 20 on the presentation of friendship. Most candidates began with a discussion of Orwell and the Italian militia man at the start of the text, progressing through his journeys and experiences in Catalonia. Many commented on how he was helped by his friends when he was shot, and his own bravery when he helped Kopp. 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.

Summary of key points

Section A:

- 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.
- Specify the terminology being discussed.
- Context should be integrated throughout the essay in part (ii) and avoided in part (i).

Section B:

- Selection of relevant material is essential for a successful response as it informs the line of argument.
- Context must be included as an integral aspect of the response.
- Avoid overlong quotations.
- Technical accuracy and correct spelling are essential, as is the use of standard English.
- Linguistic and literary terminology should be used for each quotation.



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