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# **GCE A LEVEL EXAMINERS' REPORTS**

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## **ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE A LEVEL**

**SUMMER 2017**

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### **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.

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**EDUQAS**

**GCE A LEVEL ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE**

**Summer 2017**

**COMPONENT 1: POETRY AND PROSE**

**General Comments**

This component requires candidates to choose two poems from the Poetry Pre-1914 Anthology to discuss and compare with one of the unprepared texts provided in Section A. While there was some very impressive work at the top of the range, tackling the unseen text proved challenging and, in many centres, work on the studied poems was disappointing. Superficial reading of the unseen text led to difficulties on meanings (AO2) and connections (AO4). The quality of written expression was a serious cause for concern on this paper, particularly in Section A. We expect the titles of poems to have capital letters and poets' names to be spelled correctly.

In Section B part i) candidates analyse an extract from the novel they have studied and then write an essay in part ii) on a question related to the extract. Timing is very important, especially in Section B and it was very clear which centres had provided regular timed practice. Problems also arose when candidates were insufficiently familiar with the Assessment Objectives, especially the double-weighted AO3 for contextual factors on Section B part ii). Clearly, the 'open book' nature of Section B has led some centres (or candidates) to neglect essay planning and analysis practice on the studied novel. Thorough knowledge of the text is essential for effective selection for the chosen question and some detailed analysis of appropriate episodes.

**SECTION A : POETRY**

**AO1: 20 marks AO2: 20 marks AO3: 10 marks AO4: 10 marks**

**Unseen Texts**

**Question 1** on the theme of time was much less popular than Question 2 on the theme of love.

Text A '25-7?', the opening of an article in a business magazine, was widely misunderstood, usually because candidates concentrated on the opening paragraph and overlooked the rest. This led them to overestimate the autobiographical element in the piece and often to claim that Michael Lewis regretted wasting time in his childhood. It is important to get an overview of the unprepared text before choosing poems from the Anthology. The article opening illustrates extreme attitudes to time using anecdotal material and then moves on to question the 'grim fanaticism' of America's business elite. The title suggests that 'workaholism' is his topic.

**Anthology choices**

The most successful partner poem was 'Ozymandias', which produced some assured analysis at the top of the range. 'To Virgins. . .' was also popular. A few thoughtful responses used 'To a Child Dancing in the Wind' which had the clearest direct link to Lewis's

observations on childhood. Also popular was 'Leisure', although developed readings were rare.

**Question 2** was very popular and Text B, Wendy Cope's 'After the Lunch' elicited a huge range of responses from the assured to the absurd.

Several misread the rubric, taking b.1945 as the date when the poem was written. This led to much irrelevant and misleading reference to World War 2. Candidates need to be aware of the convention of giving the birth and death dates of writers ( in the Anthology, as well as the question paper) and should not make assumptions about when the work was written based on those dates. If there is no death date given, as in the case of Wendy Cope, it means they are still alive.

Misreading of 'After the Lunch' was frequent, sometimes assuming a war-torn romance, rejection by the lover or even jumping off Waterloo Bridge. Some more interesting and successful observations included the romantic context of the bridge created by The Kinks' song 'Waterloo Sunset'. The most convincing accounts were supported by careful reading of the whole poem, not just the first stanza, and developed through selective discussion of Cope's language, structural choices and imagery.

'After the Lunch' suggests a date, not an anguished final parting. But those who fixed their attention entirely on the opening took a gloomy view of love in the poem, far too often expressed as 'negative'. Another common misreading had the speaker addressing her lover as a fool and sometimes a drunk, having misunderstood the internal debate in stanzas 2 and 3.

It is increasingly common for candidates to over-interpret formal features such as rhyme or metre, suggesting that they convey specific meanings. This often just becomes a covering strategy for making unsupported assertions about the text. Many identified Cope's rhyme scheme correctly but too many claimed that the rhyming couplets express togetherness, which is far from the case: the speaker, reluctant but thrilled, is very much on her own.

### **Anthology choices**

The most popular choices were Sonnet 130, 'The Passionate Shepherd', 'To My Dear and Loving Husband' and Sonnet 43. A small number of responses, usually thoughtful, used 'The Voice' or 'He Wishes for the Cloths of Heaven'. Problematic choices sometimes made relevant linking very difficult. 'There is a Garden in Her Face' and 'She Walks in Beauty' were quite popular, although they feature admiring portraits rather than expressions of love. Less suitable choices included 'Spellbound', 'Song' and 'My Last Duchess' where discussion of the theme of love required unconvincing assertions about meanings.

### **Organisation**

Empty introductions and conclusions waste space and time but gain no marks. Very generalised openings about love or time were unhelpful. Successful introductions always show evidence of thorough reading, focus on the question set and start to address the comparative element of the question in a meaningful way. Candidates can gain credit straight away for organisation (AO1), understanding (AO2) and connections (AO4). Having read their chosen unseen text carefully and used it to guide their choices, candidates needed to re-read their studied poems thoroughly in the light of the question set. This should enable them to comment on connections between the texts' view of the topic in their introduction and choose links to use as an organising strategy.

The framework approach used as an essay plan was often too rigid to allow sufficient focus on meanings. Many candidates who started with form and structure, struggled when trying to make connections and discuss meaning. Organising the essay around similarities and differences makes much more sense and produced many of the most competent responses.

Conclusions also need to avoid wasting space. A meaningful sentence or two, connecting the texts' treatment of the topic and informed by the analysis undertaken, is preferable to a long paragraph repeating what has been said in the essay or offering vague generalisations.

### **Terminology and analysis: range of approaches**

Disappointing performances on AO1 and AO2 are sometimes a result of narrow approaches or unproductive application, especially of linguistic and phonological terms.

Some centres focus exclusively on the recognition and identification of linguistic terms, to the detriment of reading and understanding skills, producing scripts which score well on AO1 but are basic or limited on AO2 and usually superficial on AO4. Analysis does not mean identification of features. It means understanding meaning and exploring how that meaning has been created.

Word classes are difficult to master and easy to get wrong. Effective close analysis requires some accurate word classing but word class labels also take up time and space, which would often be better occupied by widening the range of linguistic and literary approaches. Because it would be technically possible to attach word class labels to every single word on the page, selection is a useful skill to practise. It is rarely useful to specify the class of each word in a quotation but a few centres seem to have encouraged this.

### **Common errors: expression and terminology**

**Here are this year's top complaints. Several apply also to Section B.**

- Many confused 'woman' and 'women', apparently unaware of the difference between singular and plural.
- Use of the verb 'enforced' as in 'this idea is enforced by the use of alliteration'. Laws are enforced. Literary and linguistic effects are created, suggested, implied, highlighted, heightened, but not enforced.
- 'Simplistic' means over-simplified and is usually a criticism. It is not a more impressive version of 'simple'.
- It is unnecessary to use 'This quote. .'. Quotations are indicated by quotation marks.
- 'Furthermore' should be used when a point is being developed, not at the beginning of each new section or paragraph.
- 'Phrase' is often being used inaccurately for a sentence or a clause.
- Starting a sentence with 'similarly' does not in itself constitute a comparison. Some sort of connection needs to follow.
- Unfortunately, 'positive' and 'negative' are still used far too often instead of more precise and meaningful adjectives for attitude.
- 'Connotation' is widely used incorrectly, often to make a simple synonym or paraphrase of the text sound acceptable. 'Connotation' means an additional tone, idea or feeling which a word or phrase suggests, as well as its literal meaning.
- Texts may contrast with each other but they cannot 'juxtapose', which refers to the close placing of two things within a text.
- Poems have 'speakers' but not 'narrators' unless they are narrative poems.
- A 'vocative' is a term of address used directly to someone or something.

- Useful, but rarely seen, was the term ‘addressee’, where someone or something is addressed by the poem’s speaker. Candidates who were aware of this tended to use ‘reader’ which was confusing. Poems with addressees often denote this in the title and include ‘The Passionate Shepherd. .’ and ‘To Virgins. .’.

## Context

In some centres, the requirement to comment on contextual factors was almost entirely overlooked. This suggests that candidates are not sufficiently familiar with the Assessment Objectives, as contextual influences will have been taught with the poems. Where thorough revision had been undertaken, well-informed candidates could evaluate influences convincingly, especially on Shakespeare and Bradstreet. There were, however, some responses which confused Anne Bradstreet with Elizabeth Barrett Browning or showed a limited knowledge of historical period. The biggest single problem was the misapplication of ‘Romantic’ (or romantic), widely used and rarely with accuracy.

Some candidates will be able to apply contextual factors to the unseen texts. A few realised that Michael Lewis, a financial journalist, was embarking on a discussion of time management at work. There were surprisingly few attempts on the modern context of Wendy Cope’s poem, but some apt references to ‘dating culture’ or ‘serial monogamy’. One observed that ‘After the Lunch’ *‘perhaps resonates with a late twentieth century audience, especially women, who struggle with a societal decline in successful marriages and a sharp increase in commitment phobias.’*

## Summary of advice on Section A:

- **Consider Anthology choices when choosing the question.**
- **Read the unseen text very carefully at least twice while planning connections.**
- **Revise poetic form but avoid over-interpretation of its impact.**
- **Make sure that students are thoroughly conversant with the AO weightings.**
- **Promote the use of a wide range of literary and linguistic terminology, not just word classes.**

## SECTION B: PROSE (open book)

*The Color Purple* was the most popular novel, followed by *Jane Eyre* and then *Atonement*. A few centres had studied *Great Expectations* and even fewer chose *The Remains of the Day*.

Major concerns in Section B were timing and the inclusion of contextual factors in part ii). In a small number of centres, the extract analysis responses to part i) were often longer than the essays in part ii). As some candidates had clearly also taken too long on Section A, they risked very low achievement on Section B. Basic arithmetic needs to be applied here: 60 marks (20 + 40) are achievable in 60 minutes. Part i) needs a brisk and focussed approach to the task, in order to complete it in 20 minutes, leaving at least 40 minutes for the longer essay.

### Part i) EXTRACT ANALYSIS

**AO1: 10 marks    AO2: 10 marks**

This section requires clarity, purposeful application of literary and linguistic terms and relevant analysis. Comments on contextual influences should be kept for part ii) as AO3 is not rewarded on part ii). Some included background material which squeezed out analysis and could not gain marks here. There is no need for a general introduction to this shorter response but a sentence or two establishing the internal context of the extract is useful as an opening. There were some errors on internal context which misled candidates and affected the accuracy of their analysis. For example on Q.3 some failed to understand that Jane was talking to herself and answers to Q.7 were confused when some thought that Robbie was still in prison, rather than in France.

The questions on the extract were straightforward and there was very little irrelevance but there was a good deal of repetition and some leisurely approaches which dealt only with the opening of the extract. Candidates need to scan the extract in the light of the question, to determine the most productive material. While a chronological approach was adopted by most, the question itself will sometimes suggest other ways of organising the analysis. For example, Q. 11 referred to characters and successful responses often dealt with each character in turn, starting with Sofia and Mr\_\_\_\_, who dominated the extract. When applying terminology, candidates should aim for range and consider, before identifying any feature, whether they have something worthwhile to say about it.

### **Part ii) ESSAY**

The quality and range of comment on contextual factors was the most important ingredient for success in this task because of the double-weighted AO3. Other problems involved the failure of some to use any terminology and a tendency, very marked in some centres, to offer rather general overviews of themes rather than selecting relevant parts of the novel to analyse. None of the questions will have a requirement to work through the novel from the beginning but this approach, which usually included patches of narrative, was far too common. The requirement to draw material from 'elsewhere in the novel' appears in each question. A few responses wasted time by repeating points which had been made in part i) and quoting from the extract they had just written about.

### **Addressing the AOs**

Including a range of **contextual factors (AO3)** was essential for a respectable mark on Section B. Clearly, in some centres, this had been impressed upon candidates and reinforced until every response had at least some basic reference to context and the strongest featured integrated informed evaluation at every stage of the response. But there is a balance to be achieved here. In some centres, answers were so full of historical/social information that there was minimal analysis and few references to the text. One of the effects of this is to conflate history and fiction, losing all sense of literary craft. The characters and events tend to be treated as examples of the social and historical phenomena, not as literary constructs. Context might account for half of the marks but should not be taking up more space than analysis of the text and needs to be firmly connected to the topic under discussion.

In a few centres, only one or two mentioned any contextual factors at all. Overlooking the context altogether meant that even if they wrote and analysed well they could not possibly gain more than half marks. A candidate achieving a secure band 4 for AO1 and AO2 would end up with a disappointing 22/60. The contextual material has to be learned and candidates should be reminded of its importance, preferably through having practice essays AO marked. Contextual topics will have been introduced alongside the teaching of the text. Practise integrating different contextual factors with the analysis of key episodes in the

novel. Insist on introductions which link the topic with at least one contextual factor. Ensure that knowledge of dates is accurate. 'When it was written' or 'in that time' will not do.

There is a list of starting points for each specimen question in the AO3 section of the Specimen Assessment Materials. Many centres have clearly been using this.

**Evidence of integrated study (AO1)** was limited in a significant minority of responses and very sketchy in many others. Those showing sound knowledge of terminology in Section A sometimes failed to use it in Section B part ii) or used only very general terms. Although close analysis as sustained as in Section A is not expected, candidates need to choose quotations in support of relevant arguments so that they can cover a range of literary devices and linguistic choices in their analysis. Earlier remarks on word class are relevant here: with such a range of studied material to hand, it is disappointing to see candidates who only label individual words. Successful centres make sure that literary techniques are thoroughly discussed and revised, so that the focus is kept on linguistic **and** literary approaches.

**Useful approaches** are partly determined by the novel studied. Taking the most popular choice as an example, we would expect to see some discussion of dialect in *The Color Purple*. It was pleasing to see that there was little irrelevant discussion of Walker's use of dialect features. Many candidates, however, did not mention it at all and some discussion is productive as it is directly linked contextually to the setting in the U.S. state of Georgia.

### ***Jane Eyre***

Q.3 (presentation of Jane's inner struggles as a Victorian female) was very popular and produced some confident, perceptive work at the very top of the range. In one centre, however, several candidates were led into digression by following what seemed to be a rehearsed answer on Jane's conflicts with male authority figures, so that the topic of 'inner struggles' was left behind. A few devoted so much space to context that little remained in which to analyse relevant episodes from the novel. There were very few responses to Q.4 on attitudes to marriage.

### ***Great Expectations***

Q.5 (the way Dickens uses contrasts to highlight inequality) was popular. Candidates tended to focus on contrasting characters, often Pip and Estella as children or the roles of Bidly and Estella in Pip's life. There were some original angles, such as Drummle and Magwitch in the presentation of privilege and deprivation. Some, however, failed to keep the whole question in view and wrote about inequality, leaving the use of contrasts behind. There were few responses to Q.6 on punishment.

### ***Atonement***

This novel produced the most enormous range in terms of quality, from remarkably erudite responses to Q.8 (the importance of storytelling) to brief and sketchy attempts which struggled to make sense of the storyline. Q.7 (presentation of social status through the role and character of Robbie) was the more popular question. The retreat to Dunkirk in Part Two included particularly useful material but many, working through rather than selecting, failed to reach it. As for Q.8, some were so taken with the idea of Briony being 'the writer' that they lost sight of her as a fictional character.

### ***The Remains of the Day***

This was a minority choice and very few did justice to Ishiguro's work, especially on part ii). Almost all the candidates answered Q.9 (the conflict between love and duty in the

relationship between Stevens and his father). One or two candidates wrote about love and duty but drifted into discussion of Stevens' relationship with Miss Kenton. Most were able to describe the relationship in the question but fewer analysed selected episodes effectively.

### ***The Color Purple***

Both questions were popular and again drew a huge variety of responses from simplified straightforward narrative to tightly organised and confident analysis. Many evidently enjoyed writing about Sofia (Q.11) and dealt thematically with race and gender. Again, those who worked through chronologically were unable to do justice to anything which happened after her arrest. Responses to Q.12 (attitudes to religion) included some of the best work on the paper, particularly from those who planned well and selected material from Nettie's experiences in Africa. Celie's first and last letters were sometimes used well to frame the response.

### **Summary of advice for Section B**

- **Make sure that students are thoroughly conversant with the AO weightings.**
- **Timed practice is strongly recommended, using a 20 + 40 minute structure.**
- **Contextual factors should appear only in part ii).**
- **Advise candidates to select at least two key episodes for closer analysis in part ii).**
- **Practise integrating different contextual factors with the analysis of key episodes in the novel.**

**EDUQAS**  
**GCE A LEVEL ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE**  
**Summer 2017**  
**COMPONENT 2: DRAMA**

**General Comments**

Section A of this unit requires candidates to respond to a given extract on the set Shakespeare play they have studied and to write one essay (from a choice of two). Section B requires students to write one essay (from a choice of two) on a modern drama text. For the first examination of this unit, it was pleasing to see that all the set texts had been attempted. *Othello* appeared to be the most popular Shakespeare text studied. *Cat On A Hot Tin Roof* and *Kindertransport* were popular choices for the modern drama text.

As a closed text examination, this paper is challenging for candidates and it was encouraging to note that many centres had thoroughly prepared candidates for this examination. Overall, candidates engaged with the set texts and examiners read many insightful and perceptive responses to the set questions. The best responses evaluated literary and linguistic features (AO1), confidently linking language and meaning (AO2). The essay response for Section A and Section B required candidates to provide relevant contextual detail (AO3) and link it meaningfully to the set text they had studied. The best responses saw this context being *applied* to the Shakespeare text and modern drama

There were, however, some centres where the depth and thought behind candidates' analysis was limited and knowledge and understanding of terminology was very uneven. Candidates need to be reminded that discussion of a range of literary and linguistic terminology is essential in an integrated course. AO1 is assessed for all the questions on this paper and terminology should be at the forefront of teaching for this unit.

**Section A: Shakespeare**

Responses were seen on all the texts on the specification, with *Othello* being the most popular.

**Extract Analysis**

**AO1:** 12 marks    **AO2:** 12 marks

For Section A part a), candidates are required to respond to an extract on the set text they have studied. This extract is printed on the paper itself. The advice is to spend 30 minutes responding to extract. This requires the candidates to read, think and write at speed. Although they will select detail from within the extract itself, candidates are expected to provide coverage of the whole extract. Some candidates only referred to the first half of the extract and completely ignored the ending. Better responses provided sustained analysis of the extract itself, covering a range of points and exploring language/meaning in detail. Many of the responses were very brief. Responses that were a side or less rarely scored well. They were too brief, failing to cover the extract in enough depth. Candidates should also be reminded that they must focus on discussing the specified extract rather than other parts of the play

Given that candidates have studied the play in its entirety for this unit, it is expected that they should be able to respond to the extract with knowledge and insight. There were instances where candidates seemed to be treating the extract as an unseen text and showed limited knowledge of the text they had supposedly studied. There were also a number of cases where mis-readings occurred and candidates were unable to place the extract in the context of the play itself.

Examiners expect to see a range of literary and linguistic terms being correctly identified. The extract is printed on the examination paper and the extract question is a key opportunity for candidates to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding of terminology. The best responses saw a wide range of terminology being meaningfully applied and there were some thoughtful readings offered. Some candidates, however, did not use any terminology at all and, as this is a language and literature qualification, this severely impacted upon the AO1 mark awarded.

Candidates should be encouraged to use specific terminology for each quotation they cite. There were too many occasions when candidates would use a quotation and label it the 'verb'/'modal verb'/'noun' etc, without identifying which word they were attempting to analyse - they must be specific in their identification of terms. Some candidates resorted to feature spotting where they listed lots of terms without linking the language to meaning. These responses tended to score poorly for AO1 as the terms were not being purposefully applied.

Context (AO3) is not explicitly assessed in Section A. It is possible to credit contextual information if a candidate has used relevant detail to inform their reading (AO2) of the extract. However, a number of candidates included irrelevant contextual detail at the expense of close focused literary and linguistic analysis (AO1) when discussing meaning (AO2).

Candidates need to be reminded of the importance of reading the set question and shaping their response to address the requirements of the question asked. Some candidates wrote generalised responses to the extract, completely ignoring the question itself and this was self-penalising.

### ***Antony and Cleopatra***

The majority of responses seen were competent and candidates offered insightful observations on how Cleopatra was presented.

### ***King Lear***

There were some excellent responses to this question. A number of candidates, however, ignored the set question completely, focusing on the presentation of Lear rather than dramatic tension. Better responses had a real grasp of the Fool's role in creating dramatic tension.

### ***Much Ado About Nothing***

The best responses here focused clearly on the question, exploring how Shakespeare presented the characters and situation. Some candidates, however, discussed the presentation of Leonato rather than considering the set question. A number of candidates failed to get to the end of the extract, which was a pity given that Dogberry's lines provided plenty of opportunity for useful discussion.

### ***Othello***

There were some competent responses to this extract and the better candidates had a real grasp of how Othello was presented. The best responses had a perceptive overview of the extract and provided sound insight into Othello's attitudes to Desdemona. There was also, however, some mis-reading of Othello's attitudes to Desdemona.

### ***The Tempest***

On the whole, this extract was very well handled. Candidates were able to explore with some confidence how comedy was created. The best responses had a real grasp of the staging as well as the action and dialogue. There were, however, centres where candidates were very competent on AO2 but used limited or no terminology at all.

### **Summary of key points – extract analysis**

- Read the question carefully and make sure candidates answer the question that has been set
- Terminology must be applied accurately
- Terminology needs to be wide-ranging
- Candidates should refer to at least one term per cited example – this term should be specifically supported by the example
- Avoid description/narration – candidates should be encouraged to adopt the SEA approach
- Candidates should demonstrate clear understanding of the given extract – this is not an unseen text
- Include a brief introductory sentence placing the extract in the context of the play

### **Shakespeare Essay**

**AO1:** 12 marks    **AO2:** 12 marks    **AO3:** 24 marks

Candidates need to produce one essay from a choice of two on their chosen Shakespeare text. In answering their chosen essay title, candidates are expected to show wider knowledge of the text as a whole. It is acceptable for candidates to refer to a selection of key episodes in detail as long as they place them within the context of the whole text and they are relevant to the actual response. The selection of examples to support their argument also addresses AO1, as this Assessment Objective considers their line of argument and the organisation of their response.

The best responses were shaped and the candidates' arguments were clearly constructed. Work needed to be sustained and some responses were too brief at only two pages. However, there were also examples of work where the essays were very long and lacked organisation. These were often descriptive and had no real focus on the set question. Some candidates chose to ignore the question completely and wrote about what they liked. This is clearly not advisable.

Given the fact that this is a closed text examination, in order to fully access AO1 students needed to have prepared thoroughly and learned a sufficient number of relevant quotations. They needed to apply a range of literary and linguistic terms to access the marks available. Some candidates offered superb responses which utilised sophisticated terms. However, as with the extract analysis, many candidates needed to be far more specific in identifying language. For example:

*The use of the conjunction 'My oblivion is a very Antony/And I am all forgotten.'...*

*The modal verb "O ere I'll weep"...*

*The declarative "more sinn'd against than sinning"*

*The noun phrase 'By accident most strange, bountiful Fortune'...*

Students often used the term declarative and quoted part of the sentence. Verb and noun phrases were used in abundance with students quoting whole sentences. It is essential that students are more precise in their application of terminology.

Students need to be reminded of the importance of quoting accurately from the play. There were many examples of students making quotations up which clearly could not be credited.

Context (AO3) is clearly important in responding to the essay question. However, some candidates provided generalised context which had little relevance to the set task. Too frequently, context was addressed through irrelevant biographical information relating to the author. Some responses read more like 'history' essays and there was limited discussion of the play itself. It is essential that in their responses candidates lead with the play itself and embed relevant contextual detail in their analysis. Candidates should work outwards from the text and relevant context should be used to illuminate the candidate's argument. The best responses applied context to their reading of the text and provided thoughtful interpretations of the play. Candidates who wrote mini-biographies, random historical detail or who included context as a 'bolt-on' at the end of a paragraph performed less successfully than those who meaningfully embedded contextual detail into their responses.

In terms of organisation, students need to be reminded of the importance of paragraphing. The correct spelling of Shakespeare and character names must also be stressed.

### ***Antony and Cleopatra***

There were a limited number of centres studying this text. Question b) focused on male power and Question c) on attitudes to love. Better responses to both questions constructed a clear argument and considered the concept of male power/attitudes to love within the context of the text. Some candidates adopted a character based approach – these responses tended to be more descriptive.

### ***King Lear***

Question c) – *King Lear* as a tragedy of human life – was a very popular choice. Candidates who constructed a clear argument here provided competent responses. Some responses were character based which tended to lead to more descriptive response. Some candidates based their response on a single character and this was insufficient. Question b) asked candidates to consider the dramatic functions of Edgar in the play. Best responses considered Edgar as a construct rather a person. Weaker responses tended to provide generalised character descriptions without considering the impact of Edgar's role within the play.

### ***Much Ado About Nothing***

Question b) asked candidates to explore attitudes to women. The best responses considered a range of points, looking at Hero, Beatrice and male attitudes to women within a patriarchal society. Candidates who shaped a clear argument and considered the relevant contextual factors tended to perform well. Some candidates ignored the question completely and wrote descriptively about Hero or Beatrice. Question c) focused on title of the play. This tended to elicit a character based response which was heavily descriptive in some cases. Better candidates considered the language of the play, characterisation and plot structure.

### ***Othello***

Question b) was on the theme of betrayal. Better responses constructed a clear argument and considered the concept of betrayal within the context of the text. Some candidates adopted a character based approach – these responses tended to be more descriptive. Some candidates had not read the question properly. The quotation at the start of the question stated ‘Love never betrays. People do.’ and a minority of candidates, who had clearly not read the whole question, responded on the theme of love rather than betrayal. Question c) was a popular choice and asked candidates to consider Iago in the light of the statement, ‘He has no moral code, only a passion for destruction.’ There were some descriptive responses which ignored the statement altogether. However, a number of excellent responses were seen which fully engaged with the task. In the very best response, candidates had clearly thought about the statement/character and provided shaped and perceptive responses.

### ***The Tempest***

For question b), better response engaged with the set question and provided insightful discussions of Prospero’s relationship with Miranda. At the highest level, context was fully embedded. Weaker responses tended to provide character descriptions of Miranda and Prospero. Question c) asked candidates to consider the themes of deception and trickery. Better responses considered these themes conceptually. Some candidates selected a character approach to this topic which led to more descriptive responses.

### **Summary of key points**

- Please see end of report

## **Section B**

### **Essay on modern drama**

**AO1:** 16 marks    **AO2:** 16 marks    **AO3:** 16 marks

Responses were seen on all the texts on the specification, with *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof* and *Kindertransport* being the most popular.

Candidates need to produce one essay from a choice of two on their chosen modern drama text. As with the essay for Section A, candidates are expected to show wider knowledge of the text as a whole. It is acceptable for candidates to refer to a selection of key episodes in detail as long as they place them within the context of the whole text and they are relevant to the actual response. The selection of examples to support their argument also addresses AO1, as this Assessment Objective considers their line of argument and the organisation of their response.

The best responses were shaped and the candidates’ arguments were clearly constructed. Work needed to be sustained and some responses were too brief at only two pages. However, there were also examples of work where the essays were very long and lacked organisation. These were often descriptive and had no real focus on the set question. Some candidates chose to ignore the question completely and wrote about what they liked. This is clearly not advisable.

Given the fact that this is a closed text examination, in order to fully access AO1 students needed to have prepared thoroughly and learned a sufficient number of relevant quotations. They needed to apply a range of literary and linguistic terms to access the marks available.

Some candidates offered superb responses which utilised sophisticated terms. However, as with Section A, many candidates needed to be far more specific in identifying language. Students often used the term declarative and quoted part of the sentence. Verb and noun phrases were used in abundance with students quoting whole sentences. It is essential that students are more precise in their application of terminology.

As with Section A, students need to be reminded of the importance of quoting accurately from the play. There were many examples of students making quotations up which clearly could not be credited.

Context (AO3) is clearly important in responding to the essay question. However, some candidates provided generalised context which had little relevance to the set task. Too frequently, context was addressed through irrelevant biographical information relating to the author. Some responses read more like 'history' essays and there was limited discussion of the play itself. It is essential that in their responses candidates lead with the play itself and embed relevant contextual detail in their analysis. As with Section A, candidates should work outwards from the text and relevant context should be used to illuminate the candidate's argument. The best responses applied context to their reading of the text and provided thoughtful interpretations of the play. Candidates who wrote mini-biographies, random historical detail or who included context as a 'bolt-on' at the end of a paragraph performed less successfully than those who meaningfully embedded contextual detail into their responses.

In terms of organisation, students need to be reminded of the importance of paragraphing and spelling.

### ***Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?***

Question 6 asked candidates to consider how far Martha was used to explore the social and professional constrictions placed upon women by society. Better responses fully embedded context and considered what Martha represented in the both private/public domains. Weaker responses were largely descriptive. Question 7 required candidates to explore how the play reflected issues in 1960s America. Again, candidates who had a real grasp of contextual issues and could apply that context to the play itself did better than those candidates who resorted to describing characters.

### ***The History Boys***

Question 8 asked candidates to consider class prejudice within the play. Most candidates who selected this question engaged with the task and were able to provide relevant contextual detail. Question 9 required candidates to discuss masculinity within the play. Where this was done well, candidates considered different representations of masculinity and drew on a range of examples from the play. Some candidates, however, really struggled with the concept of masculinity and showed limited understanding of what it meant.

### ***Translations***

Question 10 was the most popular choice on this text with the majority of candidates being able to discuss lost identity with some success. Better responses had a clear overview of the play and relevant contextual factors. Male faults and failings tended to illicit more descriptive responses with candidates adopting a character by character based approach. When discussing male faults and failings, candidates who had a sound grasp of context and masculinity underpinning their responses tended to score better.

### ***Kindertransport***

This was a popular choice of text and examiners saw a range of excellent responses to both questions. Question 12 asked candidates to consider the dramatic functions of the Ratcatcher. Candidates really engaged with this question at all levels of response. At the top end of the range, some outstanding responses were seen where candidates explored the symbolism, language, plot structure, staging and dramatic presentation of the character. Equally successful was Question 13 which asked candidates to consider the impact of the past on the present. At the lower end of the range, responses were more narrative/descriptive but candidates were able to make relevant selections from the text. The best responses had a perceptive overview of the text and a real grasp of narrative structure.

### ***Cat on a Hot Tin Roof***

This was a popular choice of text and examiners saw a range of excellent responses on both questions. Question 14 asked candidates to consider the interpretation that within *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof*, 'Williams presents an American society that does not value love.' Weaker responses tended to select the various relationships – or in some cases one relationship – and to provide descriptive comments. Candidates who had a clear overview of contextual factors generally provided competent responses. Question 15 required candidates to write about truth and illusion in the play. Candidate who opted for this engaged with the task and had much to say. Better responses selected relevant detail from the play embedding contextual detail. They approached the question from a conceptual perspective and had a confident overview of the text. Weaker responses tended to describe lies that had been told in the play. At the bottom end of the range there was a limited grasp of what an illusion meant.

### **Summary of key points for essay questions – Shakespeare and modern drama**

- Answer the set question
- Candidates need to shape their response into a coherent argument
- Terminology must be applied accurately
- Terminology needs to be wide-ranging
- Candidates should refer to at least one term per cited example – this term should be specifically supported by the example
- Avoid description/narration – candidates should be encouraged to adopt the SEA approach
- Candidates should show understanding of the whole text
- Where specific extracts have been used to construct the response, candidates should demonstrate understanding of how these are relevant to the play as a whole
- Candidates need to put the text at the centre of their response and apply relevant context (rather than vice-versa)
- Context should be applied and embedded into the candidate's response
- Context should be meaningful
- Centres should prepare their candidates with a wide and broad understanding of the social, political, historical and cultural context of their chosen text
- Centres should also encourage candidates to consider how their chosen texts can be interpreted in contemporary and modern societies.

## EDUQAS

### GCE A LEVEL ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE

Summer 2017

#### COMPONENT 3: NON-LITERARY TEXTS

##### General Comments

This was the first time that this component had been sat by candidates in England and it was encouraging to read so many thoughtful and perceptive responses both to the unseen spoken extracts and the set texts. It was clear that nearly all centres had prepared their candidates carefully for this component, and that candidates had engaged positively with the material. The best responses made precise comments on how meanings were created (AO2) through the use of a wide variety of linguistic and literary techniques (AO1), linked this to relevant context (AO3) in the essay response, and made some valid and illuminating comparisons and contrasts between unseen spoken texts in Section A (AO4). However, knowledge and application of terminology was uneven: in some centres, candidates used a restricted range of technical terms and sometimes applied them inaccurately. To score a high mark on AO1, candidates need to use a **range** of terminology covering both literary and linguistic features. On many occasions candidates would cite a quotation – sometimes more than one sentence – and then discuss (for example) ‘adjectives’ without identifying which words they were attempting to analyse. Even at this level, many candidates showed confusion about word classes and their definitions, with some using incorrect terms such as ‘abstract verb’.

AO1 is assessed in the answers to the unseen spoken texts (Section A) and the extract question (Section B). This AO covers technical accuracy, and examiners saw many examples of basic errors in spelling and expression. Common spelling errors included: ‘sentance’, ‘similie’, ‘sence’ and ‘metaphore’.

The application of contextual knowledge (AO3) was also highly variable. In their essay responses to the set texts, the strongest candidates were able to cite relevant contextual factors and integrate this contextual knowledge with their analysis of meaning. Some were able to cite an impressive range of relevant factors, including the circumstances influencing the author, social and historical features, and comments on how the texts have received both at the time of original publication and in the present day. Many, however, included contextual information simply as an ‘extra’ with little or no relation to the essay topic while others made no explicit contextual references at all. To reiterate the advice given on the principal examiner’s report for Component 2 in 2016, centres need to ensure that they are giving their candidates a wide and broad understanding of the social, political, historical and cultural context of their chosen text and how this can be interpreted in contemporary society. It is also important for centres to teach candidates how to integrate this understanding with their analysis of how the author creates meaning through the portrayal of characters, relationships and themes.

##### SECTION A

In this section, candidates are required to respond to three unseen spoken language texts of different genres on the same topic, comparing and contrasting how the speakers create meaning through their deployment of literary, linguistic and spoken language techniques.

This is a demanding task and the best responses were very impressive in the range of features they discussed and the depth of their analysis. Many candidates, however, focused on a very limited range of points from each text and this approach will be self-penalising. Several wrote an introductory paragraph which essentially repeated the background information on the examination paper, which will score no marks and wastes valuable time. Others wrote very lengthy overviews – sometimes over a page – making only very general points about meaning and not including any quotations for analysis. The most effective approach is a short and sharp introduction, identifying the purposes and key ideas of each text, before quickly moving on to closer analysis.

The extract from Winston Churchill's iconic speech to the House of Commons was rich in literary and linguistic features and offered candidates the opportunity to discuss a wide variety of points. Nearly all identified the main purpose of the speech as motivational and inspirational, with most candidates citing the repetition of 'we shall...' as evidence that Churchill is attempting to unite the nation in a common cause. However, a large number identified 'we' as a 'collective pronoun' (or sometimes a 'collective noun') rather than as a plural, and many mistakenly described the sentence beginning 'We shall...' as an imperative. It was encouraging to see that some candidates were applying rhetorical terms such as 'anaphora' and intelligently discussing the impact of such techniques.

At least one of the extracts will always be a transcript, and in this inaugural examination Text B included prosodic features such as stress and intonation. This text, an eyewitness account of a bombing raid from the viewpoint of a journalist accompanying a bomber crew, presented many candidates with difficulties – for example, there was often confusion about where the speaker was actually located, with some suggesting that he and the aircrew were themselves the targets of the bombers. In contrast to Text A, this text offered a close-quarters account of warfare and some of its effects and many candidates drew a productive link with the speech by comparing the ways in which both texts would increase the morale of listeners. Several were able to make productive points about the impact of features such as the rising intonation on 'suddenly' but many only made very broad and general observations about prosodic markers (such as timed pauses giving time for the speaker to think of what to say next), without relating these comments to the presentation of the Second World War.

In contrast, Text C was the only one of the three from the viewpoint of a direct participant in the war. Most candidates were able to identify the speaker's thoughts and feelings about his experiences and several suggested that his hesitancy in places, indicated by ellipses and false starts, may be the result of memory lapses or alternatively of his reluctance to discuss such disturbing experiences even at a distance of some 60 years. Several answers treated Text C in a sketchy and brief fashion, perhaps suggesting that some candidates were running out of time.

Context (AO3) is not assessed in this section so examiners were unable to give any credit to those candidates who demonstrated their wider knowledge of the Second World War by including information that was not mentioned in the texts themselves or in the descriptor paragraphs on the paper. It is also vitally important for candidates to include as many points of comparison and contrast as possible, as AO4 is worth half the marks for this section. Examiners saw many responses which, while showing sound evidence of integrated study (AO1) and making many intelligent points about meaning (AO2), included very few links. This significantly affected the overall mark for Section A.

Many candidates also wasted time by exploring what was not in the extracts (e.g. 'as this is a prepared speech, there are no fillers or micropauses'). Additionally, there was much confusion about the nature of transcripts and non-transcribed texts, with several answers referring to 'utterances', stress, pace and volume when discussing Texts A and C while

treating Text B as a written text by referring to ‘sentences’ and largely ignoring the prosodic features and the ways in which they influence meaning.

## **SECTION B**

In this section, *In Cold Blood* was by far the most popular text, followed by *Once in a House on Fire*. A relatively small number of responses were seen on *A Heartbreaking Work of Staggering Genius* and *Homage to Catalonia*. There were no responses seen on *Skating to Antarctica*.

This section of the exam tests candidates on their ability to engage in close analysis of an extract and on their wider knowledge and understanding of the whole text, including the significance of contextual factors. The most successful extract responses tracked through the passage systematically, identified a wide range of specific points, attached a technical term to each one and made frequent reference back to the question. Less successful answers tended to adopt a less structured approach, made infrequent use of terminology or only employed a narrow range, and/or commented on only a few parts of the extract while ignoring other important points.

Examiners saw a very wide range of approaches to the essay question. The most successful ones focused on two or three specific episodes from different parts of the text in order to build up a clear line of argument, discussing each one in a reasonable amount of detail and exploring how the author creates meanings. These responses also made frequent reference to relevant contextual factors (AO3) and the very best ones confidently used contextual points to inform their analysis of how meanings were created. Less successful answers were restricted in their range of points from the text, with some candidates offering only isolated and decontextualised quotations as evidence and others including no quotations at all. Many responses made only passing reference to very general contextual factors and/or included contextual points that were not relevant to the question. Bearing in mind that AO3 accounts for half of the marks on this question, such approaches will be severely self-penalising. It also appeared that some candidates had learned a standardised prepared response which they then attempted to adapt to the specific question. It is strongly recommended that this approach should be avoided as the vast majority find it too difficult to accomplish successfully, thereby limiting their mark and preventing them from accessing the highest bands.

### **Andrea Ashworth: Once in a House on Fire**

The extract question offered candidates plenty of opportunities to analyse how Ashworth uses linguistic and literary techniques to convey both how Terry uses violence on Andrea and on how she reacts to it, with many identifying this episode as something of a turning-point as Andrea has now found the courage to face up to her stepfather. The essay question gave candidates the opportunity to draw on a range of possible episodes from the text, with the best answers covering different parts of the text and also looking at different types of abuse – emotional and psychological as well as physical. Contextually, most were able to identify that agencies such as the police are presented as not taking domestic abuse seriously, increasing the reader’s sympathy for Andrea and her family.

### **Jenny Diski: Skating to Antarctica**

No responses were seen on this text.

## **Dave Eggers: A Heartbreaking Work of Staggering Genius**

The extract enabled candidates to discuss Eggers's presentation of his relationship with Toph, a central concern of the text. Many made sensible points about how Eggers is presented as caring and thoughtful, with some seeing that with the benefit of hindsight he feels he may have been 'overcompensating' for the trauma of their parents' death. There were plenty of possible episodes to refer to in the essay question and contextually many candidates started to explore attitudes to family life in the United States.

## **Truman Capote: In Cold Blood**

Most candidates recognised that Dick and Perry's relationship is presented as dysfunctional in the extract, with many commenting on the way in which Dick is presented as something of a predator, for example when 'eyeing' Perry's food, and focusing on how the dialogue between the two suggests tensions in the relationship. The details in the newspaper report offered some counterpoints to this, with the pair being presented as ruthless killers – however, several candidates did not make any reference to the details of the newspaper article. In the essay response, many candidates focused on the homoerotic nature of the relationship and scored marks for AO3 by considering attitudes to same-sex relationships in 1950s America in addition to Capote's own sexuality and its possible bearing on his presentation of Perry and Dick.

## **George Orwell: Homage to Catalonia**

The extract gave candidates the opportunity to discuss in detail Orwell's reactions to being shot, with many recognising that some of his responses are unexpected, such as the lack of pain. In the essay answer, some were able to refer to a number of episodes of physical privation in the text but contextual comments often tended to focus on the political background of Spain at the time and Orwell's motivation for going there rather than on the specific requirements of the question.

### **Key points to note for future examinations:**

- In Sections A and B(i) candidates need to include a wide range of terminology in order to access the highest marks for AO1: in many centres they are only looking at word classes or sentence moods.
- Errors noted this summer included confusion between syndetic and asyndetic listing, misidentification of basic word class terms and misidentification of sentence moods and types.
- The quality of written expression is also a factor in AO1: this year some candidates occasionally adopted an overly informal style. The accuracy of spelling and punctuation is also an issue for some.
- In Section A, candidates need to be clear about the differences between transcripts and non-transcribed texts. Terms such as 'utterance', 'micropause' etc. should only be used when referring to transcripts.
- To access the highest marks for AO4, candidates need to make frequent, specific points of comparison and contrast throughout their answer.

- In the essay on the set text, candidates must ensure that any contextual points are specific to the question being asked and are used to illuminate their analysis of meaning.
- In all sections, candidates should avoid narration and description.
- The best essay responses feature a clear line of argument backed up by reference to a couple of key episodes from different parts of the text.

## EDUQAS

### GCE A LEVEL ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE

Summer 2017

#### COMPONENT 4: CRITICAL AND CREATIVE GENRE STUDY

##### General Comments

Non-exam assessment: 3200-3500 word folder

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.

##### Section A: Genre study

Centres had taken a range of valid approaches to this part of the non-examination assessment folder. The majority of centres had given candidates access to a range of texts within one or two genres. Some centres had given candidates complete free choice of both genre and texts leading to an entirely independent approach to the Unit. A minority of centres had prescribed genres and texts offering their candidates limited independence in their study. A few had 'taught' extracts from texts and given candidates a common task. This led to virtually identical content across the sample and is not in the spirit of the Unit. The genre study should provide candidates with the opportunity to explore an area of individual interest and to engage with challenging and interesting texts. Bibliographies included with the work were very useful and demonstrated the care and attention that candidates had given to researching their chosen genre. Many had read texts other than those analysed in their genre study and had undertaken critical reading which they engaged with effectively in their responses.

Work was seen from almost all of the genres on offer in this component. Gothic and dystopia were the most popular genres with romance and identity/the outsider also featuring heavily in the samples of work seen. Nearly all candidates chose prose texts from Appendix A in the specification, although one centre chose *The Color Purple* as the main text for study despite the fact that it does not feature in the texts listed in Appendix A. This is a rubric infringement and a rigorous vetting process is needed to ensure that texts for study are appropriate. Some texts proved very popular indeed such as *Dracula*, *The Strange Case of Doctor Jekyll and Mr Hyde*, *The Great Gatsby*, *The Handmaid's Tale* and *Wuthering Heights*. Wider reading was generally appropriate and moderators saw an impressive range of texts. A minority of texts were not sufficiently challenging for A2 study. Texts such as *The Hunger Games* and *Cinder* are better suited to study at earlier Key Stages and candidates should be encouraged to engage with more challenging material for the genre study. Centres should also avoid texts which are examined elsewhere on the specification such as *In Cold Blood*. A minority of candidates used films such as *9 to 5* and plays such as *Macbeth* as their wider reading. The specification outlines that this Unit is a study of prose genres and so only prose texts should be referred to in the essay.

The majority of centres had offered candidates a wide range of tasks allowing for an appropriate level of independent study. 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. Tasks on gender and power proved to be popular as did tasks which focused on setting and the role of the hero. 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. Phrasing of tasks was occasionally problematic. Candidates who responded to tasks which signposted the relevant Assessment Objectives tended to have more structured arguments. Broad tasks such as 'How do your chosen texts establish they are in the gothic genre?' and 'Compare and contrast your chosen texts' did not offer sufficient guidance to candidates and resulted in rather generic responses which covered a wide range of points briefly rather than three or four areas of focus in detail.

Use of terminology was varied across the work seen by moderators. 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. In a minority of centres, the range of terminology across the sample of work submitted was too narrow and in rare cases, was entirely absent. This heavily impacted candidates' access to both AO1 and AO2 marks as the identification of terminology should always be linked to meaning. This resulted in some generosity in the assessment of AO1, particularly in Band 4 and 5. There were some errors in the application of terminology. Syndetic and asyndetic listing were often confused and there was some misunderstanding over the use of vocatives. There was also a heavy reliance on straightforward terms such as declarative, imagery and lexical set. Whilst these terms provide a useful starting point, candidates should be interrogating quotations in much more detail. Stronger responses adhered closely to the Statement/Evidence/Analysis approach and applied terminology to all quotations. Arguments were generally well structured with the strongest responses including a focused introduction, clear topic sentences on paragraphs and a conclusion which effectively summarised points. Detailed exploration of a small number of key points in both the core and wider reading texts resulted in a focused response which consistently engaged with the task set. Where candidates had tried to cover a wide range of ideas, this resulted in rather undeveloped responses.

The use of contextual detail was also varied across the work seen. The strongest responses dealt with the conventions of their chosen genre, and the typicality of their texts within it, in some detail. This was a very effective approach and allowed candidates to demonstrate the knowledge they had gained from critical and literary research. Some candidates made very little reference to the genre of their texts. As this is a genre study, candidates should explore their chosen theme or issue and its significance within the chosen genre, not just within the texts themselves. Many candidates were also able to make useful references to biographical, historical and cultural factors surrounding their texts. References to critical readings of texts and reader responses, when used to illuminate the argument, also proved very beneficial. 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. There was a tendency toward generosity in the assessment of AO3 where candidates did not embed contextual detail or did not include sufficient reference for the number of marks available. Nearly all candidates included comparisons in their responses. Best practice was seen in centres where a comparative approach was adopted throughout and was signposted by comparative topic sentences. Fully integrated links between the core text and wider reading resulted in some very fruitful veins of argument. Weaker responses on AO4 tended to be characterised by a lack of comparisons through the body of the essay, instead leaving all comparisons to the

introduction and conclusion. Where this approach was adopted, there was sometimes generosity on the assessment of AO4.

### **Summary of key points:**

#### **Candidates should:**

- apply a wide range of literary and linguistic terminology (AO1)
- avoid a lack of precision when applying terminology e.g. referring to a verb but then quoting an entire sentence (AO1)
- avoid general terms such as 'word', 'lexis' etc..., instead applying precise terminology at phoneme, word and sentence level (AO1)
- write in an appropriate academic style (AO1)
- clearly structure the argument including topic sentences to aid with organisation of ideas (AO1)
- establish clear links between terminology and meaning - HOW do the identified literary and linguistic features create meaning/effect (AO2)
- use the Statement/Evidence/Analysis approach to structure the analysis of key quotations (AO2)
- integrate contextual details (AO3)
- make specific reference to the conventions of the chosen genre and how the selected texts fit into that genre (AO3)
- consider reader responses to the chosen texts (AO3)
- embed contextual detail into the argument (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)
- make detailed reference to the 'core' text and wider reference to one or two other texts (AO4)
- avoid superficial comparative comments or links which do not address the task (AO4)

### **Section B: Related creative writing**

Candidates were required to submit one literary and one non-literary piece of writing in this section.

Nearly all of the writing pieces seen by moderators had obvious links to the genre study and it was clear that candidates were able to apply their knowledge to their own writing. Some candidates included a brief preface with their writing which explained the link. This was particularly useful when candidates were using non-literary work or when they had chosen to focus on a specific aspect of the author's style rather than mirroring the conventions of their chosen genre. Technical accuracy and the quality of written expression was generally very good. In some cases, technical errors marred the quality of the work. Thorough proof reading and editing during the drafting process would allow candidates to craft more polished writing pieces.

Nearly all candidates submitted short stories or story openings as their literary pieces. These stories showed that candidates had been well prepared by centres as there was a secure understanding of effective characterisation and use of setting. Some candidates also showed some originality in the structure of their stories using appropriate techniques such as the epistolary form, multiple narrative voices or time shifts. In some cases, there was a clear

effort to mirror a particular author's literary style. A minority of candidates submitted monologues or poetry anthologies. The anthologies worked well when prefixed with an introduction which explained their link to the genre study. Monologues proved very effective indeed, although some candidates would have benefitted from including further conventions of the genre to show a clearer sense of the performance elements of the piece. A minority of candidates submitted work which was a continuation of an existing text. This approach is self-limiting as it impacts upon flair and originality.

In terms of the non-literary pieces, moderators saw a range of different text types such as reviews, articles, speeches, TED talks, travel writing and editorials for literary magazines. Most showed awareness of audience and purpose but in the case of some work seen, the audience and purpose were unclear. In a minority of pieces, the content of the non-literary work was fictional and this is an approach which should be avoided. Using existing fictional characters or the content from the literary piece takes away some of the realism of the non-literary genre. There is no requirement for the two writing pieces to be linked, although some candidates chose to take this approach.

### **Summary of key points:**

#### **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
- proof read 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

### **Administration**

Administration on this Unit was greatly aided by centres' use of the Non-examination Assessment Checklist. Annotation on the cover sheets was generally excellent with the majority of centres providing a very useful overview of how final marks were arrived at. A minority of candidate and teacher signatures were missing from the cover sheets provided with folders. It is a requirement of the specification that all work is authenticated by both the teacher and the candidate.

### **Conclusion**

Moderators saw a great deal of excellent work in this Unit. Successful folders included thorough comparative essays which showed a real engagement with the selected genre and engaging writing pieces which showed flair and originality. Centres should be commended on the hard work that had clearly gone into preparing candidates for this Unit - it was a pleasure to read the work submitted in this year's moderation process.



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