



General Certificate of Education

English Language and Literature 1721

Specification A

ELLA1 Integrated Analysis and Text Production

Report on the Examination

2009 examination - January series

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General

This is the first time candidates have sat this exam and the majority had been adequately prepared for the demands of this unit, although examiners commented that the quality of answers tended to vary quite noticeably from centre to centre. Better 'A' question responses made specific comments on relevant literary and linguistic features and included a number of thoughtful points in answer to the question, whereas weaker responses tended to be very generalised, sometimes making very little direct reference to the language of the text. There were some very pleasing, sustained and well written responses, although there were a number of candidates who produced quite brief answers. There is a possibility that this was a consequence of not knowing their set texts in sufficient detail and spending too much time in the exam searching for information. Examiners commented on the number of candidates who made basic technical errors. This was particularly significant in responses to the 'B' questions where technical accuracy is specifically assessed. Failure to recognise sentence boundaries is a problem for a number of candidates, many of whom use commas as a multi-purpose punctuation mark.

Most candidates followed the rubric and answered one 'A' and one 'B' question on two set texts and produced relevant answers. There were a few candidates who answered two 'A' or two 'B' questions and could be awarded marks for only one of their answers. A number of candidates quite sensibly chose to answer the 'B' question first, presumably so that they could make sure that they spent sufficient time on the question that carries most marks.

'A' Questions

There are two marks awarded for this question on the following assessment objectives:

AO1 (15 marks) – Select and apply relevant concepts and approaches from integrated linguistic study, using appropriate terminology and accurate, coherent written expression.

AO2 (15 marks) – Demonstrate detailed critical understanding in analysing ways in which structure, form and language shape meanings in a range of written and spoken texts.

The AO1 mark focuses in particular on the candidate's relevant analysis of literary and linguistic features of the text and the use of literary and linguistic terminology.

The AO2 mark focuses on the candidate's interpretation and ideas in response to the question.

Successful candidates:

- focused on the question
- supported ideas by exploring the language of relevant quotations
- provided a sense of overview
- produced sustained answers
- showed a sound knowledge of literary and linguistic terms
- produced well expressed answers.

Less successful candidates:

- did not adequately address the question
- did not comment on the language or literary techniques of the text
- produced very brief responses with only a few superficially relevant ideas
- produced poorly expressed answers.

'B' Questions

There are two marks awarded for this question on the following assessment objectives:

AO4 (30 marks) – Demonstrate expertise and creativity in using language appropriately for a variety of purposes and audiences, drawing on insights from literary and linguistic studies.

AO1 (15 marks) - Select and apply relevant concepts and approaches from integrated linguistic study, using appropriate terminology and accurate, coherent written expression.

The AO4 mark assesses the candidate's ability to do the following: show awareness of genre; write in an appropriate style for audience and purpose; create a convincing sense of a character's voice; choose appropriate information from the text in order to complete the task. The AO1 mark is solely concerned with the candidate's accuracy in terms of spelling, punctuation, grammar and expression.

Successful candidates:

- showed a sound sense of form / genre
- created a convincing sense of their character's voice
- revealed sound knowledge of the text
- produced sustained responses
- produced well expressed and technically accurate writing.

Less successful candidates:

- showed limited or patchy awareness of form / genre
- used language that was inappropriate for the chosen form or realisation of character
- showed limited awareness of characters' attitudes
- revealed limited knowledge of the text
- revealed errors in understanding of the text
- produced very brief responses
- produced writing that contained technical errors and flaws in expression.

The most popular texts were *The Kite Runner* and *A Streetcar Named Desire*. More detailed comments on the most popular questions are set out below. Responses were seen on most of the set texts, although there were very few on *Close Range* and none on *The Rivals*; therefore, there are no comments below on these texts.

Things Fall Apart: Chinua Achebe

1(A)

This was a generally popular and accessible question. There were some good answers with a range of reference and some sound analysis of how vocabulary and style illuminate attitudes. Most candidates were able to identify a number of ways in which Okonkwo's attitudes towards manliness are conveyed. Weaker responses wrote about Okonkwo's feelings in a more general sense and failed to engage with Achebe's language.

1(B)

This question tended to be less well done. Some candidates lifted passages from the text and showed limited understanding of Mr Brown's response to the Ibo culture. A few candidates were unsure what a memoir was and wrote a journal of ongoing events. Better responses showed a sound understanding of Mr Brown's character and made a good attempt at creating a sense of his prose style.

Wuthering Heights: Emily Brontë

2(A)

There were a few very good answers showing understanding of narrative technique and distinguishing between Heathcliff, Nelly and Isabella's viewpoints. However, some candidates had difficulty in maintaining a focus on how Isabella is presented and drifted instead onto Heathcliff. A number of responses consisted of character studies, with quotations for illustration rather than for analysis. A number of responses did not get beyond considering Isabella's childhood.

2(B)

Responses to this question on *Wuthering Heights* included some creditable attempts to write in a formal style and create a sense of Edgar's voice. Weaker responses tended to struggle with expression or lift passages from the text. Some included inappropriate language such as, 'Dear Diary' or 'See you soon'.

The Kite Runner: Khaled Housseini

3(A)

This was a very popular question and most candidates were able to give a competent character sketch of Ali, with some supporting quotations. The best answers were detailed and commented closely on Houssein's use of language. In a number of responses where there was an attempt to analyse language there was a tendency to identify word classes (sometimes wrongly) with little idea of the effects were achieved by particular language choices. The better answers placed Ali in the context of the writer's narrative plan and dealt with the different relationships he had with Hassan, Amir and Baba. There was also some useful discussion of the class distinctions in the novel and their effect on Ali's relationship with Baba and Amir. Some answers presented a clear, fluent argument and gave a sound overview but made no comment on features of language.

3(B)

This was another very popular question which elicited some very sound responses. The best answers created a strong sense of Farid's voice and attitudes, balancing his early mistrust with growing admiration for Amir. The main problem for a number of candidates was deciding how much information to include. Some opted for too much early detail and didn't leave themselves enough time to deal adequately with the important events surrounding Sohrab's rescue. Most candidates decided to write monologues, the more successful of these creating a sense of Farid addressing his wife. A few opted for first or third person narratives or play scripts. The latter were frequently not successful because the candidates spent too much time including what Farid's wife says and too little on Farid himself. A few candidates did not read the question carefully enough and wrote letters from Farid to his wife.

Property: Valerie Martin

4(A)

This was not a particularly popular question and was generally not well answered. Most candidates who attempted this question tended to comment in general terms on what Joel is like rather than how he is portrayed.

4(B)

This was the more popular question on *Property*. There were some successful responses that captured an appropriate style and created a sense of Sarah's voice and attitudes. However, this task proved to be problematic for some candidates who made little or no attempt to use dialect and wrote entirely in standard English. Weaker responses tended to concentrate on events rather than Sarah's feelings about Manon and her husband at this particular point in the novel.

Close Range: Annie Proulx

5(A)

No answers were seen on this text.

5(B)

No answers were seen on this text.

The History Boys: Alan Bennett

6(A)

This question produced varied responses. There were some good answers which focused on dramatic function, contrasts with other characters, and contradictions within Dakin himself. Weaker responses had difficulty focusing on Dakin and contained very little useful comment on language or dramatic techniques.

6(B)

There were a few well-judged responses that revealed a sophisticated appreciation of form, context and Irwin's character, and which achieved a balance between apology and explanation. However, many candidates struggled to achieve an appropriate style and did not seem to understand or adequately explain Irwin's ideas on teaching for the exam. Examiners were surprised by the number of candidates who showed a weak grasp of the conventions of letter writing. Common salutations included: To whom it may concern; Dear Mr & Mrs Pere; To Posner's parents. Most candidates referred to David as Posner (or Benjamin). Many signed off as Mr Irwin or Irwin, or, rather bizarrely, invented another name entirely. Many candidates struggled to express themselves adequately in this context and there were frequent errors in grammar and expression, together with inappropriate use of vocabulary.

Murmuring Judges: David Hare

7(A)

There were relatively few answers on this question. One examiner noted that responses from one centre contained too much discussion of Gustav Freytag's pyramid at the expense of relevant discussion of the text itself. There were some well written answers but mostly with little quotation or close reference to language.

7(B)

This tended to be the more popular question on *Murmuring Judges*. Nearly all produced drama scripts which broadly fitted the task. Some had difficulty creating in Lester's voice. Most achieved a sense of his moaning but missed his humour and unruffled character. Better responses created a sense of his sarcasm and included an element of banter.

The Rivals: David Hare

8(A)

No answers were seen on this text.

8(B)

No answers were seen on this text.

The Importance of Being Earnest: Oscar Wilde

9(A)

There were relatively few answers to this question and most candidates who did attempt it experienced some difficulty in writing about humour – in some cases not seeing that there was any. There tended to be little focus on language and mostly generalised ideas were offered. There was evidence of some misreading of the character of Lady Bracknell.

9(B)

This was the more popular choice for this text. Better responses caught Lane's formal, discreet style very well and provided clear instructions on food, clothes and visitors. Most included some relevant content but tended to mention only one or two aspects of the role. Weaker responses tended to write in an inappropriate style and some seemed to think a contemptuous dislike of Algernon was an appropriate attitude to adopt.

A *Streetcar Named Desire*: Tennessee Williams

10(A)

This was a very popular question and there were some excellent answers which focused clearly on the task and made a range of sound points. Comments were particularly good on dramatic technique and vocabulary. Most candidates showed they understood the play and had at least some idea about how tension is created. Weaker responses tended to fail to contextualize quotations and references accurately.

10(B)

This was another very popular question and many candidates produced a creditable dramatic scene and created a reasonably convincing relationship between Mitch and his mother. Most candidates gave at least some indication of Mitch's hesitancy and lack of confidence. Some made convincing use of stage directions to recreate the symbolic undertones of Williams's play while others wrote stage directions that could never have been communicated – for example, 'Mitch is thinking about his previous girlfriend' - and set them in the past tense. Too often, the characters were anglicised - Mum (not Mom) was often called Doris or Betty and the making of a cup of tea was central to the scene. Some candidates struggled to find the right dialect. Yorkshire dialects emerged in the work of many candidates from that area, where Mitch tended to use such expressions as, 'Ya know that lass' and Mitch's mother referred to him as a 'lad'. Many candidates had her calling her son 'Mitch' rather than Harold. However, most candidates achieved at least some convincing sense of Mitch's voice and dialect.

Weaker responses gave little information about Blanche beyond her name and whereas most of the mothers were lovingly supportive and physically weak, occasionally, a less convincing dominant mother was created who was insanely jealous of the presence of another woman in Mitch's life.

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

Grade boundaries and cumulative percentage grades are available on the [Results statistics](#) page of the AQA Website.