General Certificate of Education

English Language and Literature 1721
Specification A

ELLA1   **Integrated Analysis and Text Production**

Report on the Examination
2009 examination - June series
This Report on the Examination uses the new numbering system

General

Examiners commented that the vast majority of candidates found this unit accessible and that there was some real engagement with the texts studied. Very few candidates were unable to make at least some reasonable attempt at responding to the questions.

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. Inevitably, if two A questions were chosen, this increased the chance of the candidate not reaching the pass mark for this unit. A number of candidates quite sensibly chose to answer the 'B' question first, so that they could make sure that they spent sufficient time on the question that carries most marks. Some candidates spent too much time writing their A questions first and wrote brief and under-developed responses to the B questions.

'A' Questions

As in the January series, examiners noted that there were definite differences in candidates' responses between centres. In some centres even the better candidates failed to make direct comments on the writer's use of language. Some gave clear, fluent arguments and sound overview but no comment on features of language, whereas in other centres even weaker candidates used framework terms accurately, although there was a tendency for them to feature spot rather than engage with meaning. Some candidates discussed features of speech in a similar way to that required in the questions on texts in Unit 2 which, although acceptable, tended to distract them from a more meaningful discussion of character or theme. A word of advice is needed about the use of quotations. Candidates are advised to use shorter, embedded quotations, rather than overly long ones that do not help them to focus on more precise language analysis. Candidates should also be discouraged from using the beginning and concluding few words of more lengthy quotes, separated by running dots, as these usually do not aid candidates in making clear comments on the writer's language choices. A good rule of thumb is for candidates to use no more than a few, well chosen words or a short sentence to explore in some detail, and use the elliptical technique above only very sparingly and where absolutely necessary..

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 answers that were poorly expressed
• wasted time writing 'conclusions' that merely summarised the points covered.

'B' Questions

There were many pleasing responses to the B questions, with most candidates showing a sound sense of audience and purpose. However, all examiners reported that punctuation was a problem for many candidates. The most noticeable errors were: persistent failure to recognise sentence boundaries; lack of commas to demarcate clauses; lack of apostrophes.

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
• used significant details from the text
• produced sustained responses
• produced writing that was well expressed and technically accurate

Less successful candidates:
• showed limited or patchy awareness of form / genre
• used language that was inappropriate for form or character
• showed limited awareness of characters' attitudes
• revealed limited knowledge of the text
• lifted large extracts from the text, sometimes using quotation marks
• revealed errors in understanding of the text
• produced very brief responses
• produced writing that contained technical errors and flaws in expression

Responses were seen on most of the set texts, although there were very few on *Close Range* and therefore it has not been possible to make meaningful comments below on this text.

Things Fall Apart: Chinua Achebe

01
Candidates mostly responded relevantly to this question although the range of points covered was often fairly restricted. Some accepted Okonkwo's view of Nwoye at face value but others

showed awareness of his sensitivity and of the reasons for his rebellion. More candidates chose the B question for this text.

11
Most candidates were able to at least adequately convey Okonkwo's thoughts and feelings. A number of candidates wrote this as a dialogue rather than a 1st person narrative, sometimes with fairly limited inclusion of words actually spoken by Okonkwo. This tended to restrict the amount of content which could be included although some of these candidates achieved quite a convincing sense of Okonkwo's voice using some of the local vocabulary from the text. Some candidates timed their response at the time of Obierika's first visit, again restricting available content. There were a few candidates who unwisely chose to write in letter form.

Wuthering Heights: Emily Brontë

02
There were some sound answers to this question but some candidates wrote about the relationship or about Catherine's feelings for Heathcliff rather than about Heathcliff's feelings for Catherine. Quite a few focused on a restricted area of the text e.g. Catherine's death or the encounter with the dog at the Grange. Relatively few candidates provided a clear sense of overview.

12
As for 11, some candidates wrote a dialogue but most of these included more of Hareton's speech. The best candidates managed to show the ambivalence of Hareton's feelings and created a believable sense of his voice. Examiners commented that in the better responses there were some delightful references to other characters and digs at Lockwood himself. Most candidates successfully used content from the text. However, there were some more one-dimensional responses that conveyed a one sided view of Heathcliff - as devil or daddy. Some attempted to represent dialect – with varying degrees of success. There were some weaker responses which had a more of a sense of Hindley's voice than Hareton's, and a small number who seemed uncertain about who Hareton was.

The Kite Runner: Khaled Housseini

03
There were some excellent studies of how cruelty in various forms runs through the novel, linking well to the central character's journey. Some examiners noted how well some candidates answered this question by balancing conceptualised overview with close analysis. Many answers covered psychological as well as physical cruelty, some just one or the other. The question invited original responses and was approached by many candidates with interest and enthusiasm.
However, there were weaker answers that listed descriptions of as many examples of cruelty as they could find with simple commentary rather than analysis. Some candidates took a less specific approach and wrote about the rape and abuse as a symbol of Afghanistan's plight but without much detail on the incidents themselves. Some candidates chose episodes that were not best suited to explore this theme.

13
This was a very popular question and there were some very sound answers. There were many successful, agonised letters making wistful, poignant references to theft and loss.
Most responses were in letter form and many were able to convey Baba's voice effectively using Afghan words to support this. There was some good use of the text but also some misinterpretation or invention. Some candidates had difficulty in judging how to make the central revelation – some were too abrupt; some so coy as never to quite reveal anything. There were occasional errors in interpretation and knowledge of the novel. Some candidates had Baba

providing a baby for Ali with his agreement; some said he did this without Ali's knowledge and for the best of motives. In these responses the tone was sometimes too self-congratulatory rather than remorseful. Some candidates included a limited range of content from the text. A few addressed the letter to Amir as a young child, again restricting content possibilities.

Property: Valerie Martin

04

This was the more popular of the questions on *Property*. Better responses provided a clear overview, recognized Manon's biased viewpoint and used a range of relevant quotes with thoughtful language analysis. Some responses were relevant and accurate and illustrated ideas with quotes but included very little direct comment on language. Weaker responses were generally relevant but lacked subtlety in appreciation of Manon's feelings and included little comment on language.

14

This task was generally well handled. Most responses were in monologue form and showed varying awareness of an audience in Joel's friend. A few wrote letters to a friend (which was an acceptable interpretation of this task). A few wrote third-person narratives, usually with insufficient direct speech from Joel, when what was needed was a sustained account from his point of view.

The History Boys: Alan Bennett

06

This was the least popular question on *The History Boys* and was often not well answered. Better answers emerged from candidates who had clearly been taught a 'humour framework'. Without it, many candidates struggled to precisely explain how Bennett creates humour and tended to either rely on allowing the quotes to speak for themselves or simply described humorous episodes. Examiners noted that there were some enjoyable, mature responses that showed a real enjoyment of the play.

16

Many candidates showed a sense of article form and were generally aware of an appropriate style. Most answers were in the form of a eulogy; those that clearly established the form at the outset, with a suitable title, tended to do better. However, there were some glaring misjudgements from some candidates: explicit references to Hector's fondling of the boys on his motorbike; verbally abusing the Headmaster; naming individual boys and making personal comments about them. A number of responses also contained flaws in expression and sometimes there was confusion created through use of tenses. References to Hector in the present tense often made it unclear as to whether he was dead or alive.

Murmuring Judges: David Hare

07

This was generally the more successfully answered of the questions on *Murmuring Judges*. Most candidates were able to identify several aspects of relationship between Irina and Sir Peter and give some overview of it. Most candidates showed an awareness of dramatic techniques but were less confident in commenting on language.

17

Responses to this question were rather patchy. Content from the text was generally quite well selected. However, some candidates seemed unsure what Sandra wanted to see the Chief about, and just complained about paperwork. Some did not represent Sandra's voice entirely appropriately for the situation and for her audience. A few candidates wrote their responses as

a script and included dialogue with the Chief Superintendent which tended to dilute the force of Sandra's speech.

The Rivals: **Richard Sheridan**

08
There were very few answers seen on this question.

18
This question was by far the more popular choice on this text and most answers showed a clear sense of Sir Antony's voice and attitudes. Better responses were able to develop ideas and write sustained speeches. Weaker responses tended to be quite brief and repetitive.

The Importance of Being Earnest: **Oscar Wilde**

09
This was the least popular question on this text and was generally not well answered. Some candidates clearly did not see any humour in the portrayal of the relationship between Algernon and Cecily and so missed the point. One or two were able to analyse the humour of the situation but many commented on the relationship as a serious one and looked at issues such as which character dominates the relationship. Some candidates wanted to write about Jack and Gwendolen so created parallels for every point. Many candidates found analysis of Wilde's language challenging.

19
There were some well written letters in response to this task, giving a secure sense of Jack's voice and opinions and using an effective, formal register. Candidates who adopted Wilde's style wrote very well and clearly enjoyed this task. Some candidates lifted too much from the play rather than using their own words, often simply repeating what Jack had already said in his interview with Lady Bracknell, as if it hadn't happened. Weaker responses tended to allow modern terms to creep into Jack's voice and addressed Lady Bracknell inappropriately. Content from the text was sometimes thin with some candidates preferring to repeat assertions of Jack's undying love for the perfect Gwendolen rather than providing supporting details for his proposal.

A Streetcar Named Desire: **Tennessee Williams**

10
This question tended to be the less popular choice on *Streetcar*. There were some very sound responses that explored in some detail the way Stanley and Mitch are presented and provided an overview, although few responses considered the minor male characters. The best answers contained some detailed consideration of the language of the stage directions as well as the spoken mode styles of Stanley and Mitch. Weaker responses were much more generalised and lacking in language analysis, and frequently focused almost exclusively on Stanley. A surprising number didn't comment on the changes in Mitch's behaviour. In general there was often a lack of focus on the issues of callousness and sensitivity with many candidates ignoring the quote in the question - which would have given them a sense of direction.

20
This was a very popular question but the quality of responses varied enormously. The best responses showed a secure sense of audience, purpose and form and had a convincing sense of Stella's voice in this context. These responses displayed sound judgement in suggesting Stella's worries whilst keeping the focus on explaining Blanche's problems. The main problem for a number of candidates was achieving an appropriate style. Too frequently, letters contained spoken mode features ('kinda', 'sorta', hesitations, ellipsis) and non-standard grammar that Stella never uses in the play. There were some inappropriate salutations ('Hello Sir', 'To whom

it may concern'). Many letters were poorly punctuated, with frequent sentence boundary errors. Some candidates overused the exclamation mark, giving the impression of a near hysterical Stella, more in need of incarceration than Blanche. Some letters were very long and would have benefited from greater selectivity. There were some problems with the timing of some of the letters – for example, Stella writes that she is pregnant but also refers to the rape.

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades
Grade boundaries and cumulative percentage grades are available on the **Results statistics** page of the AQA Website.