



General Certificate of Education

**English Language and Literature
1721**

Specification A

**ELLA1 Integrated Analysis and Text
Production**

Report on the Examination

2010 examination - June series

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General

As usual, 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. Examiners remarked that some candidates produced quite brief answers and wondered if this could be the result of them having insufficient practice under timed conditions.

Most candidates followed the rubric and answered one 'A' and one 'B' question on two set texts and produced relevant answers. There were fewer candidates this year who answered two 'A' or two 'B' questions and who would therefore receive 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

Examiners again 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. It was also noticeable that candidates from some centres tried to make 'meaningful' comments on phonology which were invariably full of wildly inflated or erroneous claims. For example, fricatives were seen to always signify harshness or aggression and plosives (not always correctly identified) signified anger.

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

Once again, there were many pleasing responses to the B questions, with most candidates showing a sound sense of audience, purpose and form. The best responses used the text well and created a sense of the character's voice. Some candidates did not base their response on the specified section of the text. Some candidates resorted to lifting, mainly in responses to the older texts. Lack of technical accuracy remains an issue for a number of candidates. 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
- use of lower case for the word 'i'
- misspelling of 'woman' as 'women'
- the substitution of 'of' for 'have', eg 'it should of never happened.'
- the spelling of 'a lot' as one word.

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 *The Rivals*, The most popular texts were: *The Kite Runner*, *Property*, *Wuthering Heights* and *A Streetcar Named Desire*.

Section A***Things Fall Apart: Chinua Achebe*****01**

There was a tendency for a number of candidates to drift from the question of Okonkwo's relationship with Ikemefuna to Okonkwo's character or his relationship with Nwoye. Some candidates tended to respond to this question with a narrative account. Better answers kept to the topic and included a clear overview of Okonkwo's internal struggle and Ikemefuna's symbolic significance.

Wuthering Heights: Emily Brontë**02**

This was the least popular of the 'Wuthering Heights' questions and was not generally well answered. Many candidates appeared to find this question difficult. There was a tendency, even amongst some of the better candidates, to write about Lockwood's character rather than his attitudes or to discuss other characters' attitudes towards him. Most candidates chose to write about Lockwood's attitudes towards Heathcliff, some concentrating too heavily on this character and therefore producing an unbalanced answer. Some candidates wrote about three characters and their answers therefore lacked any depth. In the better answers, candidates were able to comment on the ways in which Lockwood's attitudes change in the light of Nelly's narrative.

The Kite Runner: Khaled Housseini**03**

This was a very popular question and, on the whole, produced relevant responses with a sound appreciation of narrative viewpoint. Most candidates found the question very accessible although some didn't make Chapter 9 the main focus of their answer. Examiners reported that there was a noticeable variation in quality between responses from different centres. In answers from some centres, most candidates were able to use terminology with some confidence and the better answers showed good engagement with meaning. They were also able to make relevant links with other areas of the text. However, in answers from some other centres, clearly quite able candidates showed a tendency to quote without analysis or revealed a lack of knowledge of terminology.

Property: Valerie Martin**04**

This was a popular question, although answers varied considerably in quality. There were some very good responses that recognised both the subtle shifts in the relationship between Manon and Sarah and what remained unchanged. Better responses focused on details from the final section of the novel and underpinned comments with a secure appreciation of narrative voice. In these responses there was also a sound analysis of Sarah's final direct speech and Manon's response to it. Weaker responses wrote about Manon's attitudes towards Sarah rather than about their relationship. Some tried to argue unconvincingly that the relationship was very much changed. Many weaker responses didn't explore language or narrative viewpoint.

Close Range: Annie Proulx**05**

This is not a very popular text, although examiners reported that those students who answered on it showed engagement and enthusiasm. This was by far the most popular question on 'Close Range' and candidates showed sensitivity to the relationship between Ennis and Jack and all it entailed, particularly the denial and evasiveness. Fewer responses delineated the very different men they were or the different ways in which they expressed themselves.

The History Boys: Alan Bennett**06**

This proved to be a straightforward question which allowed candidates at all levels to write relevant responses. Most candidates were able to give a good overview of the character of the Headmaster and made accurate points about his behaviour in a range of appropriate scenes. Most picked out his obsession with league tables and his views about Hector and Mrs Lintott. The use of expletives was almost universally noted. Most candidates made some comments about language features but a rather disappointing range of examples was included by many. Some candidates were inclined to view the Headmaster in the way he is presented as viewing himself and missed a lot of the humour.

Murmuring Judges: David Hare**07**

Examiners commented that many candidates did not appear to find this question easy. Candidates usually picked out Barry's appearance, racism and, to some extent, his humour although detailed language points were often lacking. There were comments on his relationship with Sandra. Surprisingly, most did not comment on his corruption.

The Rivals: Richard Sheridan**08**

Examiners commented that the relatively few responses that were seen on this question were not generally well answered. There was not enough illustrative material on Mrs. Malaprop or investigation of the language features of her comedy despite plenty being available. Some even failed to mention malapropisms. There was some awareness of function in the broader narrative accounts.

The Importance of Being Earnest: Oscar Wilde**09**

Answers to this question tended to vary between centres. Candidates from some centres were able to develop a clear line of argument about Gwendolen's dominance and Victorian social conventions, based on sound evidence from the play. However, some candidates overlooked rather obvious issues such as Gwendolen's fixation on the name Ernest. Most did not differentiate between the levels of sincerity each of the characters shows in the play. The range of points covered was generally not very comprehensive. Some candidates were able to make general comments on language but had difficulty in finding and commenting on appropriate examples. Others were able to offer quotations but did not use them to show clear features of character. Many candidates did not get past Scene 1, so overview tended to be rather limited. There tended to be limited comment on dramatic techniques.

A Streetcar Named Desire: Tennessee Williams**10**

This question was mostly well answered. Even weaker candidates were able to make relevant, illustrated points. Better responses provided a thorough overview, recognised Stella's conflicted feelings for Stanley and Blanche and explored a range of ways in which Williams conveys the relationship between Stella and Stanley. Weaker responses were limited by broad and general comments and a lack of subtlety in interpretation. For example, some claimed that Stanley is always obnoxious to Stella and that there is no more to their relationship than the traditional marriage of the time. Candidates from some centres restricted their language comments almost exclusively to sentence functions and what these reveal, which led to some very superficial analysis. Some lost focus on the relationship and drifted into a character study of Stanley.

Section B**Things Fall Apart: Chinua Achebe****11**

Candidates generally handled Nwoye's narrative quite well and there were some very thoughtful and perceptive responses, with some ambitious use of imagery in the style of the novel. Weaker responses tended to speak only about Nwoye's relationship with Okonkwo (even addressing him directly) and neglected the missionary experience and conversion. A few candidates even thought he'd convert his father with just a little persuasion.

Wuthering Heights: Emily Brontë**12**

There were some good responses to this question. Many candidates were able to convey at least some sense of Heathcliff's voice, some very successfully. Content was often well chosen but was sometimes dominated by material from the wrong part of the text. Better responses tended to provide some 'distance' from events and have an adult Heathcliff narrating events with the benefit of some hindsight. Some answers were more of a rant against Hindley and/or Edgar than a reflection on the events and these tended to lack relevant content. On the whole, candidates seemed to find this an accessible task, one which was generally handled well. In weaker responses there was a tendency to lift from the text and include some noticeable anachronisms.

The Kite Runner: Khaled Housseini**13**

Baba's letter to Rahim Khan was handled well by many candidates. The best answers achieved a good sense of Baba's voice with a judicious use of Afghan words to add authenticity. Many contained a range of detail about Baba's life in America, together with some references to Afghanistan and Hassan. However, some answers consisted nearly entirely of reminiscence and their content was therefore thin. Most handled the letter form well.

Property: Valerie Martin**14**

This was another popular question which was often imaginatively dealt with. Candidates clearly found this an accessible task. There were some very good answers. A number of candidates were able to represent the doctor's voice well, with an awareness of appropriate register and good use of content. There was a range of views ascribed to the doctor from complete support to utter condemnation. Most candidates had a good grasp of the journal form though a few began, 'Dear Diary' & ended 'Yours sincerely'. Quite a few anachronisms were included. Weaker responses tended to paraphrase the scene, without exploring Dr Sanchez's opinions or attitudes. Some weaker responses revealed a lack of knowledge of the text; one repeated error being the assertion that Manon had long been a patient of Dr Sanchez or that she was a good friend of his.

Close Range: Annie Proulx**15**

There were very few answers seen on this question.

The History Boys: Alan Bennett**16**

This question generally tended to produce better responses than the A question. Some candidates achieved a convincing sense of Dakin's voice, incorporating features of his language (e.g. war metaphors) into his speech and most included relevant material, commenting on both Hector and Irwin. Nearly all included the effect of the wheelchair on Dakin's feelings towards Irwin. The best responses created an effective sense of voice through mixing Dakin's more intellectual side with a judicious amount of swearing and sexual references. Weaker responses overdid the latter aspects. Some misjudged the starting point for the task, with Dakin much later in life. Some had difficulties with the timescale of events after the accident.

Murmuring Judges: David Hare**17**

Most candidates were able to handle the scenario and the play script quite well, although some did not use play script form. There were some letters, diaries and telephone calls, all without another character for Irina to interact with. Dramatic monologues were just about acceptable, even though in the question candidates are instructed to invent a character to use. Irina's feelings about Gerard's situation were generally included but there was not much content relating to the legal system. Irina's voice was fairly well represented by most, although, in a few cases, the register was too colloquial and did not adequately reflect Irina as she is depicted in the play. There was also evidence that some students struggle to understand the events of the play; for example, some thought Gerard is innocent, rather than over-harshly sentenced. Another weakness was the tendency to invent material, especially about Irina's background and experiences. Candidates need to ensure that invention is kept to a minimum and the creative piece does not stray far beyond the information and attitudes presented in the text.

The Rivals: Richard Sheridan**18**

Responses to this question were generally much better than the essays. There were some lively and enjoyable attempts at voice. The better answers made us aware of the relationship between the two women which extended beyond Ensign Beverley.

The Importance of Being Earnest: Oscar Wilde**19**

This question was generally handled more successfully than the 'A' question for this text. There were some genuinely amusing scripts which used appropriate language and developed witty conversations. Some candidates judiciously lifted the odd expression to add authenticity. However, some resorted to lifting a considerable amount and did not rely on using their own words. Many candidates were able to create a generally convincing voice for Jack, although anachronisms sometimes detracted. Weaker candidates struggled to capture the language of the period. Most handled the play script form well, although a number of candidates spent so much time passing round the cucumber sandwiches and muffins, that they could only give a brief and often rather garbled account of Jack's parentage.

A Streetcar Named Desire: Tennessee Williams**20**

On the whole, candidates responded well to this task. Most showed at least some sense of Blanche's voice and attitudes. Better responses successfully captured Blanche's nervous exuberance and achieved a sound balance in attitudes at this point in the play: excited at seeing Stella but disappointed in her living conditions; wary of Stanley; wondering how it would all turn out. Weaker responses often portrayed Blanche's attitudes in an unconvincing way. A number of candidates seemed to drop easily into a 1st person narrative style, with dots to indicate hesitation or ellipsis, laughter (ha, ha!), unintended repetitions or other features of speech. Another problem (which partly stemmed from a careless reading of the question) was to include in Blanche's diary entry more than she reasonably could have been aware of by the end of Scene 1. In the worst cases this included Blanche's responses to Stella's pregnancy, Mitch and the poker game, but usually revealed itself in too strong an antipathy to Stanley too soon in the play. Many candidates chose to begin their responses with 'Dear Diary' which often turned the piece into a letter with valedictions and signature at the end.

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

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