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Examiners' Report

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GCE English Language and Literature
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Introduction

In Unit 2 of GCE English Language and Literature (9EL0), titled “Varieties in Language and Literature”, students are expected to apply the skills of close, contextualised, comparative reading, showcasing knowledge of both literary and linguistic terms and concepts. They need to synthesise their learning, integrating language and literature together, in order to analyse both short unseen prose texts, and studied literary works. Their work in both areas is organised thematically: students pursue one of four topics (‘Society and the Individual’; ‘Love and Loss’; ‘Encounters’; ‘Crossing Boundaries’). They are expected to demonstrate evidence of wider reading in, and thinking about, the topic they have studied in their examination answers.

Section A involves the analysis of one unseen extract. Candidates are expected to present an organised, fluent commentary on the writer’s choice of structure, form and language, making inferences on how these authorial choices are shaped by the attitudes, values and ideas detectable in the text, and from their wider knowledge of any contextual forces exerting pressure upon the writing. They should show evidence of broad understanding of their chosen theme in their analysis, using it to enrich the specific discussion of the passage presented for analysis.

Section B assesses candidates’ knowledge of the authorial methods used in, and the readerly reception of, two studied literary texts. The texts must be aptly contextualised, using contextual materials relevant to the question focus. The texts must also be compared and contrasted on points of significant relevance. Many aspects of the works are suitable for comparison, including the manifest content (plot, character, theme, setting, etc.); the literary and linguistic techniques used by the writers; the contextual factors shaping the texts’ production and/or reception, etc. All such contextualisations and comparisons must however strive to be relevant to the specific question asked.

It is vital that centres are aware that Sections A and B do not correspond to Language and Literature exclusively. A significant minority of candidates showed no inclination to deploy terms and concepts drawn from linguistic analysis to aid their analysis of the literary texts studied. The Specification and the Section B Mark Scheme make it very clear that both literary texts should be subjected to an integrated language and literature approach.

Summary of SECTION A:

Stronger answers looked at the unseen text as a whole and were able to discuss it as a complete piece of writing, rather than as a series of techniques to be identified without any developed analysis of the shaping of the piece.

There was evidence of candidates using the rather limiting approach of working chronologically through the extract, sometimes paragraphing their own work in accordance with the structure of the passage and offering an explanation of the content. A further danger of this approach is that, if the candidate is pressed for time, the final paragraphs of the extract are neglected. This was most problematic in the extracts for ‘Society and the Individual’ and ‘Crossing Boundaries’, in which vital clues to the overall mood and tone of the pieces were placed in the concluding paragraphs.

While many lower and lower-middle band candidates are able to detect a fair range of linguistic and literary features in the paragraphs they worked through, and offer mostly accurate definitions of terminology, there was not always evidence of an ability to articulate the effect of such techniques.

The most successful answers discussed the implications of specific lexical and syntactical choices and showed how attitudes could be conveyed precisely through tone. They were able to move beyond feature-spotting and to explore shifts in register, as well as comment on the effect of irony and humour. They were also clearly familiar with the genres of the pieces and how conventions and expectations were exploited for particular effects.

Summary of SECTION B

The best responses were thoroughly integrated and comparative in their approach to answering the question. They were highly selective in the comparisons they chose to make, considered what the specifics of the question might be (framing the opening of their response accordingly), and explored a significant range of literary and linguistic terminology.

However, several examiners expressed concern that very few candidates were able to meet all four AOs fully in their answers.

AOs 1 & 2: There was some concern about the depth and technical precision of some aspects of AOs 1 and 2. One examiner noted, 'I was very frustrated by the number of responses that were articulate, carefully expressed and well-argued but which used absolutely no terminology – literary or linguistic. I questioned whether students were actually being prepared by centres in the correct way for Section B'. Some candidates appear to believe that Section A requires exclusively linguistic analysis, and Section B requires literary analysis only. However, the Mark Schemes are clear that this is not the case. Other examiners noted that discussion of language and literary features specific to poetry (e.g. rhyme scheme, phonological features) rarely appeared; few discussions of the dramatic aspects of the playscripts got beyond stage directions. As a result, AO2 achievement, especially on answers discussing poetry and drama, was somewhat suppressed in this series.

AO3: In comparison to the outgoing 2008 specification's equivalent unit ('6EL03'), this year's new specification saw much less tendency to bolt on huge paragraphs of historical background or memorised quotations from reviews.

The contextual material that was produced tended to be somewhat unbalanced, however. Contexts for textual production (socio-historical details, intertextual relationships, staging/publishing history, authorial biography, etc.) were more often deployed than contexts of reception, though a blend of both tends to produce the richest answers. There was comparatively little use made of contexts of reception (reviews, criticism, cultural influence, personal response).

However, while contextual material was briefer, and more likely to be introduced mid-discussion rather than bolted on at the beginning or end, too often it was introduced with scant regard to the specifics of the chosen question focus.

The best answers ensured that contextual materials were judiciously selected to assist the analysis of language and literary features in the texts. Answers providing fewer contextual factors of relevance outscored answers which included huge amounts of impressively remembered but ultimately irrelevant detail.

AO4: AO4 work was also highly variable between scripts and centres. An examiner reported that "less successful responses commented on one text and then the other, only making cursory or superficial comparisons between the two". As an examiner noted, "answers following the formula *Discuss Text A + 'similarly' + Discuss Text B* restricted themselves on the comparative element as the only real explicit comparison being made was at the beginning

of the following paragraph". Such answers struggled to fulfil the AO4 Level 3 descriptor: 'Identifies relevant connections between texts. Develops an integrated connective approach.'

By contrast, those who compared throughout tended to score better and to have a better developed argument". The most successful candidates were those that could identify rich points of comparison or contrast, including comparisons of language or literary techniques in the two studied texts, or subtle comparisons of relevant contextual factors. The very best candidates spent time picking apart the multiple meanings behind their quotations, creating the depth of argument and then comparing the outcome with their partner text.

Question 1

Although the extract from the article by Nick Page on middle-aged men was engaging and accessible, resulting in very few misinterpretations of the manifest content, most examiners reported that many responses to the text were rather simplistic with few tackling the real heart of the article.

The most confident responses were able to meaningfully interrogate the piece, exploring the idea of modern masculinity, and how this particular individual author investigated how his identity has been shaped by a variety of social and cultural attitudes, for example attitudes to fashion as a social system for displaying identity, and to the relationship between economic success and personal satisfaction. The best answers were able to link these aspects of the content to the article's placing in the *Daily Telegraph*, and to the article's status as a promotional device for a recently published book.

Less successful responses tended to rely on vague speculations regarding the intended reader that provided fruitless discussion, and they often missed the more subtle contexts. Centres should encourage students to be flexible within the unseen genre; often a planned template or mnemonic hindered the quality of responses as they were not exploring the full breadth of the text. Almost all candidates detected the comic elements in the article, but too many candidates went no further than observation: stronger answers were able to use the technical language of comedy: satire / parody / bathos / irony / litotes etc.

Several examiners noted that "particular terms and concepts were commonly misused or misunderstood, such as 'reported speech', 'minor sentence' and 'infer'. A significant minority of candidates used word classes frequently but only as labels, without any real analysis of actual meaning/semantics, or exploration of effects."

Question 2

The mean scores for Questions 1-4 show that candidates answering Question 2 performed significantly better than those for Questions 1, 3 and 4, though it must be noted that the 'Love and Loss' thematic stand was much the least popular, with less than 7% of the cohort opting for it.

Most candidates were familiar with the conventions of letters generally and love letters specifically, and made mostly credible observations on the status and function of letters in a pre-technological era. Some candidates treated the letter as a familiar and platonic correspondence between extremely close friends, though most were alert to a potential secondary interpretation, concerning Dickinson's secretive romantic interest in her friend. This was for the most part handled with sensitivity and subtlety. It was possible to score fully without detecting this potential alternative meaning.

More than any other section, the responses to the Dickinson letter revealed that candidates had dealt with their chosen theme of 'Love and Loss' thoroughly.

American poet Emily Dickinson's 1852 letter to her school friend Susan Gilbert presents the reader with a highly personal and emotive insight into their relationship and into Dickinson's feelings, hopes, and desires concerning her friends' upcoming visit.

The letter follows the conventions of the epistolary genre: it opens with mention of its intended receiver ("Susie") and closes with the name of the sender ("Emilie"). This first name basis ~~is~~ is the first indication of the deeply close relationship between the two women and the subsequently personal nature of the letter itself. The imperative closing phrase "don't let them see" followed by the tag question "will you?" and nickname "Susie" suggests that Emilie was determined for her audience to only be Susan. The tone of

This written work remains relatively formal throughout and ~~also~~ borrows from the Romantic style: the use of nature to express emotion ("woods and fields", "dream of blue-skies", "violets and green lane")

"knightly grass", personification ("my own [heart] goes wandering", "[the violets] begged me to let them go", "[the weeds] must go with their little brothers and sisters"), and parallel syntax to link person and abstract noun ("I have but one thought, (...) that of you, and I have one prayer, (...) that is for you") are all features typical of 19th century Romantic literature. Dickinson's purpose is to communicate her feelings of love for Susan, but also her nostalgia for their childhood days and her sorrow of their separation.

Dickinson's love for Susan is highlighted throughout the text through the expression of "courtly love". First found in Chaucer's collection of stories "The Tales of Canterbury", one of the first British works of literature, Chaucer's idea of love was presented as ~~a~~ chivalrous 'ideal' through secular lexis, religious imagery and formal register. All of these features are used to describe Dickinson's feelings for her friend: "prayer" "blessed" "never slumbers nor sleeps" "Instructor"

"begged" "Oh that you were" "remembrance" "forgive"
"something faithful". This homage to traditional
love serves as a highlight to the sender's
'pure' or 'noble' love for her beloved.

Dickinson also communicates her grief at their
separation and a tragic sense of nostalgia. Her
constant use of the nickname "Susie", her
praise of their school days ("ramble away as
children" "each become a child again"), and her
use of saddened emotional lexis to describe her
present state (the noun phrases "many years, and
these sorrowing cares" introduced by demonstrative
pronouns, the tricolonial polyptoton "sigh" as a verb
and a noun, and her negative sentence structure
"they can't always last" "don't let us forget"
"we would not ask.") evokes a strong feeling
of sorrow for the present day and of absence.
This is further highlighted by Dickinson's talk
of time: she "finds herself alone", she "misses
her biggest heart", but her friends' forthcoming
visit gives her "hope", and she finds
herself "impatient" and "chasing away" the
three weeks until she can "scamper" (a
childish action referring back to their "rambling"
as children) down the lane to her love.
She evokes the image of time as a map or
a globe, with the passing days "going

with their [siblings] to their long home in the west" as the sunsets. She has previously "mourned" their separation and loss of proximity, treating it almost as a death, but her use of future tense ("will have") and conditional modal verbs ("if you were here") showcase her delight, impatience, and desire.

Contextually, it is important to remember that homosexuality in the 19th century was still widely rejected - Oscar Wilde was sent to prison for it - and was seen as "moral degeneracy". This attitude towards same-sex love and the fear it must have evoked in lesbian and gay relationships can be felt through Dickinsons' language. Despite clear romantic intentions ("my heart is full of you" "your hand fast in mine" "I add a kiss") and her endearing use of possessive pronouns to refer to her beloved ("my sissie" "my biggest heart" as a sennedache, "my Darling"), Dickinson reminds her that these intentions are "not for the world" and "shyly" adds her kiss "lest there is somebody there". The imperative "don't let them see" also serves as a harsh reminder of the constraints that traditional social norms would have presented

towards same gender love during the 1800s.

Dickinson's letter effectively communicates vivid and intense emotions of love, desire, and longing, as well as feelings of sorrow, nostalgia, and impatience. This range of emotions is achieved through Romantic and courtly imagery, emotive lexis and use of tenses to evoke an evolution of feelings. Attitudes towards same-gender love also play an important role in Dickinson's presentation of her feelings for Gilbert.



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Examiner Comments

This full answer to Question 2 is particularly impressive, both for the intensity of its analysis of linguistic and literary features in the letter, and for the wide-ranging reading and knowledge that is brought to bear in support of the textual analysis.

Question 3

Most candidates demonstrated a confident understanding of Kipling's admiration of Twain and his great anticipation about meeting him. Candidates were largely able to track Kipling's changing feelings as he journeys to meet his literary hero, namely excitement, nervousness, self-doubt, etc. Candidates were most confident with word level analysis, notably pre/post modification, phrases, verbs, intertextual references, etc. More successful candidates tended to examine the overall discourse, and grammatical constructions, syntax, etc., as well.

There was widespread evidence that candidates understand the sorts of pressure that language comes under during an encounter that surprises / excites / enthrals / terrifies the author. The consideration of context was the more challenging aspect of Question 3. The most successful candidates avoided just a checklist of rather general contextual points at the beginning of responses, and managed to integrate points about time frame, nationality, celebrity status, the readership of the *Allahabad Pioneer*, etc. These were in the minority, however.

Kipling's report offers the purpose of ~~enthralling~~ his audience and informing the audience of his encounter with his "literary hero"; Mark Twain.
The audience of Kipling's report would vary and this could include fans of travel, readers of the *Allahabad Pioneer*, followers of Kipling and Twain or even those who are interested in English language and finding out more about Mark Twain.

Throughout the report, Kipling conveys a shift of tone from beginning to end. This can be noticed through the use of hyphenated phrases "door-sashes" and "window frames"; this is because it implies that Kipling fell at home in India and portrays a more convivial and comfortable tone regarding his feelings towards Emma. Furthermore, this could be reinforced through the use of triadic structure.

"pleasant, fat, little hills" which implies that Kipling is aware of his surroundings in Emira whilst the use of the ~~adjective~~ ^{adjective} "pleasant" connotes connotations of a happy place where he enjoys to be.

~~and~~ This could further be reinforced through the use of the dynamic verbs "minned" and "kopped" implying that there is a lot going on in Emira ~~and~~ whilst also adding to the highly descriptive nature of the report which can be viewed as a generic convention as it explains the details of his journey in full depth, further appealing to the audience of the Allahabad Pioneer as they will also be familiar of the place due to it being published in India.

Moreover, ~~the report~~ the report shifts to a more excited tone as ~~it~~ it progresses. The use of the allusion 'Tom Sawyer' allows us to understand that Kipling is elaborating on Twain's work in order to imply that he means Twain in referral. This interestingly would appeal to fans of novels whom are looking to find out more about Twain as it provides them with context of his work.

Furthermore, there is a frequent exclamative mood ~~as~~ as the report progresses, for example "In a buggy!" and this reinforces the excitement which Kipling may have regarding his journey ~~and~~.

to the United States and the use of the aspirant
"milkation" in a hired hack, up an awful hill"
produces the idea that Kipling is making an attempt
to guide the audience on the journey with him
in order to engage the audience in full depth as
it further connotes a loss of breath on his
journey up the hill. Nevertheless, this is
immediately followed by the juxtaposition of
"Sunflowers blossomed" and this could perhaps be
Kipling's way of explaining that his encounter
with Twain was a journey of mixed emotions,
whilst the personification of 'Crops Waved'
Furber denotes that this encounter was perhaps
dream like and something which Kipling had
always wanted to achieve, regarding the fact that
Twain is his 'literary hero'. In addition, the
idea that Kipling's encounter was filled with
various different emotions may be reinforced through
the end focus of 'refuge' which shortly follows
the personification and this is because the mood
appears to take a sudden shift from ~~ampliative~~
~~ampliative~~ ampliative to pejorative.

As the report progresses further, there is a
shift in tone from excited to nervous and reluctant.
This can be evident through the use of multiple
parenthetical clauses, "after all," and the driver,

which implies that Kipling may be overwhelmed by his surroundings and the situation he is in, regarding

his encounter with Twain due to his nervousness upon meeting him. This could be further reinforced with the interrogative mood implying that Kipling's mind ~~has gone~~ got on top of him due to him appearing to be overthinking the situation "What had I come to do of ~~say~~?"

Moreover, this may be further reinforced through the frequent use of inverted syntax "Speed I had" ~~and~~ "be they never" which may denote that Kipling is not speaking sense due to his nervousness ~~humor~~ conveying a tone of panic as his encounter with Mark Twain draws closer.

In addition, the hyperbole of 'in all the world' connotes a childlike tone and conveys the admiration which Kipling has for Twain which reinforces the way in which Kipling refers to Twain as his hero, appearing over-emphasised. This would further argue that Kipling is describing his encounter as unforgettable and like a dream come true which would further appeal to followers of Twain as they would also be more likely to feel the same way.

Furthermore, the zoomorphism of 'a mare' 'grizzled hair' denotes connotations of Twain

being something remarkable to Kipling, this may interestingly convey his shift ~~and~~ tone and emotions throughout the report as at the beginning of the report he uses the noun 'Cultivation' which is something secure and tame however the wildness of his encounter may reflect something remarkable for Kipling and it resembles a 'once in a life-time opportunity'.



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Examiner Comments

This full answer on Question 3 begins somewhat cautiously but (rather like the extract itself) builds in intensity and is, by the middle of the answer, fully receptive to the ways in which Kipling's text is shaped by the exhilaration and anxiety that the encounter prompts. It scores 15 marks.

Question 4

Some students noted the title of Boland's memoir and used this in their analysis – even trying to pick out poetic language within the prose. The playful, lyrical, sometimes political imagery in the text did lead to some confusions, principally that the author's father had died.

Candidates needed to read the whole of the sentence on lines 9-10 in the Source Booklet, instead of stopping after the first clause – it was concerning that so many students made this mistake, and also went on

link the scenario to post-war austerity, neglecting the many references to the family's high status and the comparative opulence of the house. It is vital that candidates read both the opening preamble, and then read the passage in full, before beginning to write: such mistakes are often the resulting of missing clues to the whole text contained in the final paragraphs. The gagged figures in the fog also led to some extravagant interpretations: from dead soldiers with fog representing poison gas, an interesting if ultimately incorrect attempt at contextualising the piece within the post-WWII period, to ghosts and zombies, and even to a small child's fear of choking on small items. 'Gagging' was also linked, interestingly, to repression of the child's self-expression. Such attempts at interpretation are by no means prohibited, but need to be made more cautiously and provisionally, or preferably with some supporting contextual evidence. Many of the misunderstandings in this instance came from a lack of knowledge of Anglo-Irish relations, and examiners also noted a tendency in candidates studying 'Crossing Boundaries' to make sweeping statements about London, the post-war situation and the status of children within families in the period. Better contextual comments were related to the audience for the memoir.

Most candidates were able to explore the contrast between Boland's description of her homes in Dublin and London, with the more successful answers exploring her lexical choices and use of literary devices such as pathetic fallacy.

In terms of AO1 and AO2, some answers still focused on feature spotting or listing language features. There was a noticeable range in the extent to which linguistic terminology appeared – mostly little, but sometimes packed unnecessarily full. Some picked out any metaphors and focused entirely on these, without a sense of how they fit into the passage as a whole. Better responses were based on reading of the whole passage and especially noticed the shift in tone at the end: those who gave an overview at the start of their answer were half way to success already. Many recognised some forms of repeated sentence/ phrase structures and these were often discussed perceptively.

The memoir written by Eavan Boland describes the contrast between her home in Ireland and the one she moved to in London. It would have appealed to those who were interested in learning about Boland's past and were intrigued by the two locations ^{and what they were like in the 1950s.} The purpose of this text would have been to inform readers about her previous

experiences, which is an important feature of a memoir, but also to keep her readers engaged throughout.

Ewan Boland communicates through almost a child-like tone, ~~providing~~ referencing ~~minute~~ minute and insignificant details "such as the comparison of the two staircases "flight of stone steps" and the "big staircase, with its gilded iron fretwork". These small details show her recalling her experience as a six year old as it's unlikely an adult would notice the difference therefore it emphasises her child-like mind. However the fact she ~~reads~~ ~~uses~~ uses "gilded iron fretwork" brings the audience back to ^{reality} ~~the present~~ as a child wouldn't use those words to describe the stairs so it shows Boland's sense of voice in the present whilst she was writing her memoir as an adult.

Similarly, Boland also creates a child-like sense of voice by talking about her childhood of being ^{told off} ~~scolded~~ "bad it seemed, was dropping soft toys and metal cars down the stairwell". This suggests that Boland had been shouted at as a child for doing that which is why it stayed in her memory.

Boland wasn't aware ~~at~~ she was misbehaving at the time which is why she uses ^{uncertainty} "bad, it seemed" which suggests her parents emphasised to her as a child that it was bad behaviour. Boland uses a rhetorical question "what was bad and what was good?" to remind the readers of her memoir that she was just a young child at the time ~~at~~ which could create sympathy for her as it reminds us ~~that~~ of her innocence.

Almost all of Boland's memoir contains low frequency lexis "brisk and contingent" which could suggest that she was well educated and wanted to ~~write~~ create her own sense of voice to make her memoir more personal and realistic. The small, important details she includes also helps to fulfill her purpose of the memoir which would have been to inform the ~~the~~ readers about her previous experiences.

The use of short sentences which was common in this memoir helped to ~~write~~ ~~write~~ ~~write~~ ~~write~~ show Boland was direct and straight to the point "I wanted simplicity. I craved it". The use of this demonstrative sentence informs readers about her feelings which makes it more personal to her and encourages readers to

want to connect and sympathise with her due to her having a large disruption in her life from moving to London at such a young age.

There are also many personal pronouns used in her memoir which is a typical feature as she would have wanted to make it personal and relevant to her life. The personal inclusive pronoun "we" helps to ~~para~~ describe the events that occurred "we turned the armchairs on their side... called them horses" showing that her and her friends or four of her other siblings used to be univerture and create ways to have fun and be "good" and "invisible". The use of this sentence ^{implies} ~~implies~~ her immaturity and her innocence as they used their imagination to create fun for themselves and almost creates a sense of admiration from the readers as they carried this out "day after day". This could suggest there was a boring and repetitive nature to their lives as children so Boland had to invent new ^{activities} ~~things~~ to escape this dull aspect of her life.

Furthermore, Boland also communicates ~~to~~ through her past tense which continues throughout her memoir and includes asyndetic listing "planted with crocuses, purple, white, yellow."

~~The~~ This listing and use of triadic structure to describe the flowers ~~helps to engage~~ encourages the audience to imagine the spring in the UK and all the flowers, which she is not used to seeing. Therefore this could have engaged the audience as it makes it more realistic for them and creates a sense of imagery of the colours and experiences she is facing.

Finally, the use of deixis "that" and indefinite/definite articles "a, the" are ways for the writer to continue talking about something, assuming the readers are already aware of. Boland uses these a lot throughout her memoir ~~as~~ "that had been family sized" to prevent her from having to repeat herself as the readers will already know what ^{subject} she is talking about.

To conclude, Eavan Boland communicates her experiences of moving away through different ways and creating ^{an} alternative sense of voice from her present one to engage the readers. She also fulfils a purpose of the text as she includes many key details and a child-like tone to keep readers entertained and informed.

when describing the crossing of her physical
boundary.



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Examiner Comments

The full answer reproduced here might instructively be compared with the exemplar used for Question 2: where that answer is brisk, detailed, and thorough, this response to Boland is a somewhat laboured, taking a little too long to explain its points, sometimes reading too much into relatively minor details. Nonetheless, the student works hard to produce an answer that, over its five pages, makes a very commendable range of solid arguments.

Question 5

The overwhelming majority of candidates answered on *The Great Gatsby*, with the most popular comparison texts being *Othello*, and to a lesser extent, Philip Larkin and *Great Expectations*. Those who wrote about women (Daisy and Desdemona, in particular) made some strong comparisons. Most did better on *Gatsby*, and those who answered on *Gatsby* and *Great Expectations* seemed to do well, looking at how *Gatsby* and Pip both sought to better themselves despite social constraints. Answers on Larkin, one examiner noted, "very rarely looked at poetic form/structure in a meaningful way, and few treated the text as an entire collection, preferring to pick out isolated poems for analysis." There were very few answers on *A Raisin in the Sun* or *The Wife of Bath*, and no examiner reported seeing work on *The Bone People*.

The terms of the question were widely, and mostly legitimately, interpreted. though in a small number of cases, there was some misinterpretation of 'constraint'. Some candidates for example wrote about 'adultery' or 'geography' as a social constraint. Most candidates knew their texts well, but spent far too long explaining routine aspects of the plot and (sometimes irrelevant) context, at the expense of specifically focused language and literary analysis. One examiner noted that "links between *Great Expectations* / *Gatsby* / Larkin were often unproductive and unclear – particularly in the choice of poem. Students tended to give reams of information on contextual points on their novel, leaving little room to consider Larkin in the same detail.' The same examiner felt that the most productive combination of texts that she saw was '*Gatsby* and *A Raisin ...* I felt this was because students focused on the issue of constrained outsiders and the facades they are forced to construct, rather than straightforward racism, offering a richer set of links than *Othello* responses."

The two full answers reproduced below demonstrate that there are different ways to achieve an upper-level 4 score.

The first (on *Gatsby* and *Othello*) performs thorough, and at times perceptive, close readings of the literary texts using an integrated approach. The AO1 and AO2 work here is extremely impressive at times, but the candidate might helpfully have done more to contextualise the texts, and ought certainly to have been more expansive in identifying points of contrast and comparison between *Gatsby* and *Othello*. Had s/he done so, the answer would have moved from its placing at the top of Level 4 and into the top band (Level 5). The second answer, on *Gatsby* and Larkin, is a better balanced answer. It contains more frequent contextualisations, and is significantly better than the first at making pertinent comparisons. It has a fair range of technical terminology at its disposal, but crucially it doesn't use it quite so effectively as the first answer to get to the core of the issues raised by the question. Both score in upper reaches Level 4, but the first just has the edge.

Please write the name of your two studied texts below:

Text 1: *Othello, William Shakespeare*

Text 2: *The Great Gatsby, F. Scott Fitzgerald*

There are many social constraints in both texts that almost force individuals to act in a certain

way in order to be accepted. The most obvious is the code of social class - a running theme through both texts. In the Great Gatsby, the protagonist Jay Gatsby is struggling constantly to be accepted by society as he is of 'new money' in the less fashionable 'West Egg' as Nick explains in chapter 1. Ultimately, Gatsby tries to be accepted by the traditional ways of living in New York in the 1920's, however, it was an era of change and freedom, yet characters who were dominating and unwilling to accept this change, such as Tom Buchanan were physical barriers, preventing Gatsby from being allowed to be accepted. In chapter 6, the Sloanes are persuading Gatsby to join them, yet Tom is discouraging this when saying: "My God, I believe the man's coming," said Tom. "Doesn't he know she doesn't want him?" The exclamation 'My God' implies his shock and appalled nature at the fact that Gatsby thinks he is coming, reinforced with the negative repetition of 'doesn't', conveying that he does not fit in and therefore is not wanted. Moreover, as they "trotted quickly down the drive", they leave Gatsby just as he "came out of the front door" - reinforcing through the use of the adverb 'quickly' that Gatsby is not wanted or accepted, no matter how desperately he attempts to fit into society by throwing extravagant parties and acting in a certain manner by using his idiom 'old sport' in

an attempt to read weather, and therefore fit in with those he is trying to impress, e.g. Daisy Buchanan, his love of 5 years prior, who he intends to win over.

Similarly, in Othello, through the Elizabethan chain of being - many characters in the play are treated differently because of their class, causing some, such as Emilia ^{and Othello} to speak out in order to be accepted.

Desdemona, the love interest/wife of Othello is described by Cassio as 'the divine Desdemona', indicating her superiority as she is a beautiful, youthful white Venetian woman, so therefore is deemed to be angelic and pure/valued by many, whilst others have to proclaim their acceptance in order to have the same type of respect. The heightened adjective 'divine' coincides with Othello's later comment, referring to Desdemona's fall as 'Diana's image' - the Goddess of virginity.

However, he has subjective opinions of her now as he continues to say that it is now "begrimed and black as mine own face". The imagery of black here symbolises poisoned attitudes that Othello now perceives of his loyal wife, due to the 'pestilence' that Iago has sown into Othello's ear. This causes him to act irrationally, and change his mood, coinciding with the change of scenery to Sarcenic Cyprus, conveying that Othello never was truly accepting of himself as he recognises that he is an outsider when doubting his

ethnicity: "Happy, for I am black". This internalised voice of Iago changes Othello's own opinions of himself as he begins to believe that he is unworthy of the status that he has achieved as he is ^a black moor, and therefore his behavior changes also through the repetition and variations when he exclaims: "O! Farewell!" as his mental attitude begins to deteriorate as he believes that his ethnicity is the constraint to his successes

There is a patriarchal society in both texts, still portrayed in *The Great Gatsby*, even though it is set in 1922, in an era of social changes due to flapper girls and freedom of speech and choices due to the introduction of voting and contraceptives. Despite of this however, women were still very reliant on men, and left them weak and unable to be heard, unless they give literal cries for help, as Daisy does in chapter 1 when it is revealed that she is a victim of domestic violence: "you did it, Tom" she said accusingly. "That's what I get for marrying a brute of a man, a great, big, hulking physical specimen of a -". Daisy reveals this in front of dinner guests, to make it obvious of the physical endurance she has gone through, as she has no other way of expressing it. The adverb 'accusingly' suggests her tone of discomfort, ~~and~~ ^{as} finally she is confronting him on what he has done // she uses a series of

adjectives to describe his actions and personality towards her such as 'brute' and 'hulking' - reminding the reader of how strong and aggressive he can be, however she cannot leave him as he provides for her and without him, she is helpless. We are again reminded of Tom's powerful face in chapter 2 when Nick describes the violent attack on Myrtle Wilson: "making a short, swift movement, Tom Buchanan broke her nose with his open hand". The adjectives 'short' and 'swift' make it seem as if Tom thinks he is entitled to act in such ways due to his money and status, and that he will get away with it. To a certain extent, he does as in chapter 9, after the events of the novel have unfolded, and 2 people have died, Daisy and Tom "retreated back into their money and vast carelessness (...) and let other people clean up the mess they had made". The verb 'retreated' and 'clean up' suggest cowardice and dishonesty - ~~are~~ common ^{traits} ~~words~~ for rich, powerful individuals to have, especially when they know they can go against the social constraints placed by society due to their entitlement of being rich and wealthy.

Othello thinks to some extent that he can go against the social constraints and abuse women as in Act 3, scene 3, when Desdemona addresses him as 'sweet Othello', his immediate response is the

paralinguistic feature "(striking her) Devil!" Due to Othello describing himself to have come from "necessity of royal siege", ~~status~~ and due to the fact that he is the General of the Venetian Army, he thinks that he has the right to abuse women, particularly his innocent wife, who in fact has done nothing wrong, however, he fails to recognize this. When describing himself in Act One, he says: "My past, my title, and my perfect soul shall manifest me rightly." This tragic structure and heightened adjective 'perfect' reinforce the idea that Othello thinks very highly of himself, and therefore he can do no wrong. This attitude slowly deteriorates throughout the play as his mind becomes weaker, however his anger and pride bring it to the surface, causing him to act out and 'strike' his wife, when all she is trying to do is care for him.

Another social constraint in society that is prevalent in both texts is racism. In Act 1, Iago is racist towards Desdemona and Othello on their wedding night when exclaiming: "Even now, now, very now, an old black ram / Is tupping your white ewe!" The racism here gives Iago the upper hand when talking to Brabantio, putting his plan of revenge into place in the "web that shall ensnare them all". The intensifier, 'very' shown here indicates the immediacy of the event - allowing Brabantio to react in the way that Iago requires. There is

antithesis between 'black' and 'white', conveying the opposite nature of the couple, and how 'black' suggests the devil, darkness and sin, whilst 'white' conveys superiority, innocence and purity, thus conveying the fact that due to Othello being 'black', it is not ethical for him to be with Desdemona as he is the 'moor' and outsider, and therefore it is not acceptable for him to be with a white Venetian woman. Othello realises that he is an outsider, but his pride dominates his behaviour, so he thinks as he is a converted moor to Christianity, that it is fine, and that he has overcome this social constraint of acceptance.

In *The Great Gatsby*, there is a recurrence of racism, especially from the unreliable narrator, Nick Carraway, from which the events are only told from his perspective - therefore it is questionable whether they are accurate or not. In chapter 4, when meeting the 'small, flat nosed Jew' Meyer Wolfsheimer, Nick makes several racist comments about his nose, for example: "Mr Wolfsheimer's nose flashed at me indignantly". The verb 'flashed' connotes that Wolfsheimer is untrustworthy and animalistic, like a wolf due to his mannerisms. Perhaps Nick describes him like this, as there is a sense of jealousy of his successes and monetary value, however it is not evident whether this is the reason Nick does not like him,

it is only implied. Clearly, Nick does not like him as a person as he describes him to 'eat with ferocious delicacy', showing his behaviour to be very animalistic and un-pleasant - perhaps he can see this way due to his corruptive and 'wolf-like' nature, which Nick sees immediately when first meeting him.

Lastly, the effects of alcoholism and prohibition affect the behaviour of individuals entirely in both eras, especially when characters are caught or blamed for this social constraint in society. Cassio is entirely torn apart when he loses his reputation after the brawl with Rodrigo: "Reputation, reputation, reputation! O, I have lost my reputation! I have lost the immortal part of myself, and what remains is bestial". The repetition of this abstract noun, combined with the vocative, 'O', indicate his sadness and disappointment with himself, that he has allowed himself to become a drunken mess, and he has lost the most valid trait to his personality.

Without it, he feels animalistic and appears to have a very low standard of self-appreciation, indicating how alcohol has allowed his behaviour to change drastically for the worst. Although Gatsby himself is not seemingly an alcoholic, he has been running illegal speakeasys and selling illegal bonds over the counter, to which Tom confronts him about in chapter 7, at the Plaza Hotel: "That's one of his little tricks. I picked him for

a bootlegger the first time I saw him". There is synecdoche with the term 'little white' as in fact the business that Gabby had been running was huge, and incorporated many people. It is a false politeness strategy of hedging - as Tom wants to reveal what Gabby has done to try and ^{drive} him away from her, in order to regain control of the power struggle and have her all for himself.

To conclude, the social constraints mentioned obviously, and predominantly have a negative effect on an individual's behaviour - causing them to act out in ways which is abnormal, & deemed to be unacceptable, for example 'striking' and hitting their wives in both texts. This patriarchal society has caused women such as Emilia to be oppressed in the play - a characteristic was abnormal in the 16th century, as women were expected to be 'seen and not heard' - only valued for their beauty and childbirth. Emilia recognises that women too have needs and rights, and are allowed to act in the same way as men do when she proclaims in Act 4: "let husbands know / Their wives have sense like them; they see, and smell and have palates for both sweet and sour / As husbands have". The antithesis between sweet and sour conveys that women also can be manipulative and devious - they just do not do so, as they are loyal and respectful

to their husbands. She feels as if it should be returned from husbands as fair treatment and equality - and that their behaviour should not change regarding regardless of doubt or anger. Perhaps communication to each of the sexes is vital for change and prevention of change in behaviour for individuals.



ResultsPlus
Examiner Comments

Question 5, Answer 1 (*Gatsby* and *Othello*)

Please write the name of your two studied texts below:

Text 1: *The Great Gatsby*, F. Scott Fitzgerald

Text 2: *The Whitsun Weddings*, Phillip Larkin.

In both 'The Great Gatsby', published in 1925 and set in 1922, by the author F. Scott Fitzgerald and 'The Whitsun Weddings' collection of poems written by Phillip Larkin and published in 1964 share a common theme. This theme being that individuals in society are unable to achieve their goals due to social constraints, which as a result affect their behaviour. Fitzgerald successfully achieves the portrayal of this theme through imagery, language, developing the characters, especially Myrtle, Nick and Gatsby, and through the first-person

narrator. Larkin explores this theme in his poems "Essential Beauty", "The Importance of Elsewhere" and "Whitsun Weddings". Both texts also mention how individuals want to regain the past, however due to social constraints and the natural flow of time this is unachievable.

In the novel "The Great Gatsby" Fitzgerald uses imagery to depict Jay Gatsby trying to achieve his goal of being in the upper wealthy class and achieving Daisy. From the beginning Fitzgerald uses the imagery of the houses and their juxtaposition to emphasise class differences within the society America is living in. While Gatsby, "a self-made man" lives on the "West Egg" of Long Island, Daisy and Tom Buchanan live on "East Egg." The two "egg's" symbolise the difference between the two classes, since Gatsby is considered 'new money', having made his wealth whereas Tom and Daisy ~~are as a~~ represent the aristocratic class who inherited their money. Gatsby is described as having "an extraordinary gift of hope" since he strives to achieve the love of Daisy and to be able to be a part of the 'East Egg' upper aristocratic society. However, he is unable to achieve his goal despite being so close to it because of his background. He was born in a poor agricultural

community. The image of Gatsby [✓] "stretch[ing] out his arms towards the dark water in a curious way" ~~introduces~~ symbolises Gatsby trying to reach Daisy's house at the other side of the bay, symbolised by the Green ~~Boat~~ ^{light} at the end of her dock. He is so close to achieving his goal, having made vast amounts of money, which Fitzgerald shows through the method of ~~synthetic~~ ^{asyndetic and} syndetic listing. For example "on buffet tables, garnished with glistening hors d'oeuvre, spiced baked hams crowded against salads of hallowed designs and pastry pigs and turkeys bewitched to a dark gold." The listing emphasises the money he has to spend on luxuries and goods but also implies their meaninglessness, and have little significance. The adjective "glistening" connotes beauty and wealth and dreams, suggesting that this wealthy lifestyle was his dream, ~~but he fails to~~. However, he is unable to complete achieving his dream because of his background, therefore all the objects are meaningless because no matter how much money he has Gatsby will be stopped from achieving his dream due to social constraints. The colour imagery used by Fitzgerald also symbolises the class differences and that despite Gatsby's desperate attempts, he cannot achieve Daisy.

nor be in East Egg society. His ~~car~~ car for example is described as an "off-white colour" symbolising yellow. In contrast Daisy Buchanan is described as a "golden girl". Fitzgerald's alliteration highlights how the colour gold represents the upper, aristocratic society whereas Gatsby's slightly lower class, but still part of the upper class, is described as a fake gold, yellow being similar to gold, but yet still slightly different and not having the same connotations of wealth. This shows that no matter how much money he has social class divides will still perceive him as below the aristocratic class in the social hierarchy, and he cannot climb up the hierarchy anymore. The concept of individuals' backgrounds acting as a social constraint to reaching goals and being in the upper class juxtaposes the promises America emits. In 1776 when America became independent it advertised itself as a place where everyone is ~~is~~ equal. However, Fitzgerald is criticising this, claiming social classes in society have the effect of dividing society, ~~advancing~~ benefiting the upper classes but de-valuing the lower classes. The declaration of independence led to the development of the American Dream through advertising America as a fresh beginning and new land for immigrants.

notably, especially Western America where the American Dream promised that any man who worked hard enough can be successful and wealthy and ultimately happy. Fitzgerald uses imagery of the green light, colour symbolism and the character of Gatsby to personify the American Dream, and criticise how it is unachievable due to social constraints.

In the poem "Essential Beauty", Larkin similarly uses imagery but also structure to highlight social constraints preventing people in society from achieving their dreams and expectations that are falsely promised by advertisements.

Direct links can be seen between America promising a new fresh beginning and better life, with the advertisements promising an idealised luxury lifestyle, which in reality is unachievable ~~by~~ due to social constraints. Firstly, the poem's structure is split into two stanzas which can be interpreted as symbolising the difference between the expectations and lives promised in the advertisements and the reality of life. The enjambment between the two stanzas and change in tone to a negative tone in the last line of the first stanza symbolises how society, in this case the working class are unable to identify the difference between the unachievable lives in the

~~expectat~~ advertisements and the reality of their lives where they're socially constrained by heavily enforced class divides and the lack of money. Like Fitzgerald, Larkin uses colour symbolism to connote the idealised, luxurious lifestyles in the advertisements for example "golden butter" and uses the ~~ester~~ lexis "dark" in the last line as antithesis, which signals the difference between bright colours representing luxury and lavish lifestyles wanted and the "dark" reality of life being miserable and disappointing compared to expectations. ~~L~~ Gatsby attempts to show off his wealth to try and overcome the social constraints, for example his house resembling "Hôtel de Ville in Normandy" which is Gatsby trying to use materials to achieve the illusion that he is inherited money and well-educated, knowing about European history. Likewise, Larkin uses the people's attempts at becoming part of an upper-class shown through them buying advertised products as a way to cover up their reality and background. However, like Larkin, this results in their destruction, shown through the image of a "boy puking his heart out." We presume as readers this is due to him being sold alcohol and the symbol of his heart suggests the social constraints will result in the death of him or alternatively, the death of his

dream of becoming upper society as he realises it is unachievable.

Fitzgerald also shows social constraints affecting behaviour through the first person narrator of Nick. The narrator acts as an observer in the New York Society and his "weather-beaten cardboard bungalow" implies that he is different from the rest of society and the characters. The house juxtaposes the huge mansions in the area, which is in "the consoling proximity of millionaires. Nick is unable to be a part of the same society as the other characters because of his different values and attitudes which are symbolised through the social constraint of his house. The 1920's were a period of decadence and moral deterioration after the first world war. This is shown in the novel through characters breaking the law on several occasions, working as "bootleggers" for example Gatsby. This means they were selling alcohol despite their being an alcohol prohibition from 1920 to 1933. Nick refuses Gatsby's offer as business because he doesn't agree. He is "within and without" society.

In "The Importance of Elsewhere" Larkin describes how he is "separate, ~~but~~ not unworkable. The persona in the poem shows that he shares the

concept of being socially constrained from fitting into society. Larkin moved to Belfast and ~~is~~ claimed he felt different at first.

But eventually, despite him not being Irish he settled in.

The Whitson Wedding poem, similarly shows a voice who is an outsider due to social constraints. The passing of time means the voice believes marriage has become meaningless and lost its tradition. This new excludes him and so makes him behave and see the world pessimistically. ~~That~~ He describes "mothers loud and fat" the pair of adjectives shows his cynical view as a result of being excluded due to his socially unacceptable views.



ResultsPlus
Examiner Comments

Question 5, Answer 2 (Gatsby and Larkin)

Question 6

This was the least popular of the Section B questions, opted for by less than 7% of the cohort. That said, the good performance evident in the corresponding Section A task was repeated in many answers to Question 6, in which contextual knowledge of the history of attitudes to love was evident. *Tess of the D'Urbervilles* was almost universally the chosen 'anchor' text, and was most often partnered with *Much Ado, Betrayal* or, more productively in the answers seen in this series, the poetry of Plath. There were few or no answers on *A Single Man*, *Enduring Love*, or *Metaphysical Poetry*.

Candidates opting for poetry and drama in future series are advised to attend more fully to poetic and dramatic specifics of their chosen texts: answers in this series were marked by a lack of specific relevant discussion of genre specific conventions.

Weaker answers tended to take a convenient but ultimately unproductive shortcut through the terms of the question. The specific question asked required an examination of conflicting attitudes to love and/or loss within each of the two texts, and then a comparison of the two sets of internal conflicts. Some opted to merely point out how Text A conflicted with Text B on specific points of difference within their plots, characterisation, or context. While such material was rewarded fully on its own terms, it did tend to prove somewhat self-limiting, since it prevented candidates from exploring beyond somewhat obvious conflicts. This meant that AO4 achievement was limited to the making of routine/general contrasts, when very often rich comparisons were possible.

Question 7

Question 7 produced quite a range of responses. Most candidates compared *Wuthering Heights* with Romantic poetry, though it was also productively paired with *Hamlet* and *The Bloody Chamber*. Fewer candidates chose *Room with a View* and those that did tended to pair it with *The Bloody Chamber* or Romantic poetry. There were a handful of candidates using *The Waste Land*, and no examiner reported seeing work on *Rock N Roll*.

Overall, students found this question quite difficult. Many either did not discriminate between people, places, and phenomena, writing either very generally or trying to accommodate all three (whether or not their studied texts supported this.) Most candidates were, however, able to manage the idea of the past, interpreting it in a variety of literal and figurative ways, all of which were appropriately rewarded. However, there was also much evidence of candidates resorting to pre-prepared answers, more so than on Questions 5, 6 and 8.

Centres are strongly advised to make candidates aware that general answers on encounters are very unlikely to score highly; to do so, answers must grapple with the precise type of encounter that the question requires. In future series, the question will continue to specify a particular type of, or aspect of, encounter.

Many candidates on *Wuthering Heights* made very good points about the house itself, constructed in 1500 by one 'Hareton Earnshaw', using this detail to comment on Bronte's narrative strategies of repetition, prolepsis/analepsis and circling. Most candidates used Catherine's ghost, the opening of her grave, or Heathcliff's return as examples; the more adventurous moved into the second generation of characters, particularly Catherine Linton's meetings with Linton, Hareton and Heathcliff. Answers on *The Bloody Chamber* were able to identify specific moments in specific stories but few seemed to grasp that Carter's intertextual experimentation with the folk tradition was itself a form of encounter with

the past. The most fertile stories for analysis were 'The Lady of the House of Love' – which almost all students discussed – and the eponymous story, which was less fully covered, surprisingly. Too many candidates resorted to 'The Tiger's Bride' or 'The Courtship of Mr Lyon' and inevitably ended up straying far from the demands of the question. It seems likely that many of these candidates were over prepared for a question that would enable them to discuss encounters between heroines and mythical creatures (also making more than the question really required of Heathcliff's animal qualities in comparison), and inevitably struggled to shoehorn such material into their responses.

Particular Romantic poems leaned themselves well to this question too, notably 'Rime of the Ancient Mariner', but few students attempted it, preferring sonnets by Charlotte Smith (relevant but comparatively flimsy) or Blake lyrics that were not really relevant at all. Several candidates appeared to believe or tried to claim that chimney sweepers were a relic of history in Blake's time.

Room with a View provided a very wide range of answers. Some candidates appeared unwilling to move beyond superficial encounters within the plot, or the more obvious details of the Italian settings. The best candidates were able to see George and Cecil as representing various aspects of the past; in this respect, every meeting of Lucy with her suitors is an encounter with a version of the past which she must use as a guide to her present and future life, and a number of students wrote very subtly about this text in conjunction with the Carter stories in particular.

The best contextual work in the 'Encounters' strand was linked to the gothic genre, with its interest in the past as a way of commenting on present society. Off-the-peg comments about gender or class in the 19th or 20th centuries tended to be less well suited to the question.

Question 8

Dracula and/or *Wide Sargasso Sea*, paired with Rossetti's poems were the most popular combination of texts. There were many fewer candidates opting for the Heaney poems, *Twelfth Night* and *Oleanna*. No examiner reported seeing work on *The Lowland*. Rhys-Rossetti tended to produce the most successful work in this series, and many Rossetti answers bucked the trend in Questions 5, 6 and 7 by attending carefully to the poetic qualities of the poems.

Dracula tended to encourage rather formulaic responses and quite a lot of sweeping generalisation but did appear to engage the students. *Twelfth Night* answers surprisingly struggled with the idea of suffering, since the question focus invited substantial discussion of Malvolio's pains for daring to cross a class boundary, and Viola's for rejecting gendered boundaries after washing ashore in a strange land. As one examiner remarked in her report, "some students didn't seem to be prepared for this topic on this text at all." Examiners reported a general lack of integrated language and literature analysis on *Oleanna*; answers on this play were often also characterised by thin contextual support.

On the whole, there was ample evidence that the theme of crossing boundaries has been supported by teachers in terms of a wide range of reading: candidates were mostly very comfortable in dealing with the literal and figurative possibilities suggested by this title, and this produced some very informed and thoughtful analysis.

Paper Summary

Based on performance on this paper, candidates are offered the following advice:

- Candidates must be able to apply Language and Literature frameworks to both Sections of the exam, and be able to deploy appropriate and relevant concepts and terminology from both linguistic and literary study to further the analysis of the two chosen literary texts in Section B. The integration of language and literature analysis will be at the core of all successful answers. AOs 3 and 4 cannot be fully met unless what is being contextualised and compared is textual analysis using this integrated approach.
- While context is a vital component of a successful answer, candidates should be reminded that the purpose of context is to support the application of language and literature frameworks to literary texts, and that the contextual materials they select for use in their answers should be relevant to the specific question asked. There is significantly less reward for answers which use context as an end in itself (e.g. a long introductory paragraph introducing attitudes to race and gender in Shakespeare's time), or merely to give historical background to aspects of the plot or manifest content (e.g. flapper girls in the 1920s).
- Comparison is rewarded most fully where a variety of comparative structures are deployed. Answers which merely compare using the terms of the question (e.g. 'Another text which discusses social constraints is ...') will obtain little reward for AO4. Only marginally better is comparison which notices superficial similarities of plot/narrative ('Like Pip, Gatsby also becomes very successful'). A more productive strategy is to compare and contrast the use of specific literary or linguistic devices; to compare or contrast specific, relevant aspects of the contexts for the two texts; or to identify subtle aspects of character/theme/setting as appropriate and, crucially, relevant to the question.
- This advice notwithstanding, the vast majority of the 2017 cohort were candidates who learned much from, and thoroughly enjoyed, their study of English Language and Literature. Centres are to be commended for the enthusiastic and thorough teaching of the wide-ranging aspects of the four thematic strands that structure this new unit.

Grade Boundaries

Grade boundaries for this, and all other papers, can be found on the website on this link:

<http://www.edexcel.com/iwantto/Pages/grade-boundaries.aspx>

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