English Language and Literature

Advanced GCE **A2 H473**

Advanced Subsidiary GCE **AS H073**

OCR Report to Centres

June 2012

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Advanced GCE English Language and Literature (H473)

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OCR REPORT TO CENTRES

F671 Speaking Voices

General Comments

This was the fourth June session of F671, and the first 'outing' for the second wave of texts.

A preliminary point of interest was whether any one of the new texts would achieve the 'market share' enjoyed from January 2009 to January 2012 by *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time* in Section A and *The Great Gatsby* in Section B.

In the event, *Paddy Clarke Ha Ha Ha* was the most frequently-chosen text in Section A, with fewer Centres selecting *The Remains of the Day* and fewer still *Oranges are Not the Only Fruit.* In Section B, the majority choice – just – was *The Child in Time*, but both *A Handful of Dust* and *Persuasion* were chosen by a substantial number.

The quality of engagement shown by the candidates with whatever texts they had studied from the new selection was, if anything, stronger and more thoughtful than previously, a tribute to the hard work of their teachers. It may well be that, despite the many pressures on their time, teachers were glad of a change.

All questions generated a range of responses and worked well to differentiate. Both Section A and B provided ample opportunity for candidates to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding of both language/communication 'models' or 'frameworks' and literary analysis.

The *Comments on Individual Questions* below will strive to identify productive approaches to texts and tasks, to unravel what candidates are doing which they might better not do, and to suggest alternative – more helpful – angles.

Comments on Individual Questions

The transcripts (Passage A) of spoken English seemed to prompt more detailed analysis than the extracts (Passage B) from the set texts, and many candidates gave the former more attention.

More successful candidates began with the evidence in front of them and built a careful reading of the passages, making good use of the combined linguistic and literary approaches which they had learned, and referring to well-chosen examples from elsewhere in their set text.

Less successful candidates tended towards 'psychologising' the behavioural dynamics and paralinguistics, and speculating beyond the texts. When it came to Passage B, they sometimes seemed to forget that the focus should still be on 'speaking voices', and instead offered general character analysis, often asserting the importance of how Jeanette or Mr Stevens or Paddy "change" during the course of the novel.

Question 1: *Oranges are Not the Only Fruit*

Some candidates struggled with Dave the relationship counsellor and his students in Passage A. Often this was because they were determined to find a power struggle, and therefore missed the ways in which his utterances and overlaps are to encourage and clarify rather than to "seize the floor". They also missed the sense in which he is pursuing a semi-prepared agenda, which causes him to have to apologise and radically re-cast his final utterance.

Some candidates tied themselves in knots by trying to apply Grice's Maxims rigidly to Passage B. This was especially difficult for those who seemed not to appreciate the difference between direct and reported speech. In fact, Mother does *all* the direct-speech talking in the passage, and the narrator's contribution to the interaction appears only as reported speech: *I begged her to finish the story*. Any attempt to find a Gricean flout of quantity was therefore doomed, because it made no sense to ask whether mother talked too much or too little; and she was, in any case, telling a story.

It's important not to be afraid of the jokes in this novel. Winterson's narrative voice is rich in comedy, and the twin question-prompts of *construction* and *effects* should be pointing candidates towards textual details. For example, students are often keen on the 'tricolon', and in this passage were offered a wonderful instance of how the 'normal' effect of a rhetorical feature (syntactic parallelism) – namely, to heighten emotion – is completely undermined by Winterson: *She had lived off the Rue St Germain, eaten croissants and lived a clean life*.

While it would be an unhelpful over-simplification to argue that Winterson *always* undermines her narrator's Mother in this way, an examination of how it's done might be a helpful starting point for candidates in learning how to analyse exactly how specific features of syntax, lexis and register construct the narrative here and elsewhere.

The mark-scheme offers some further examples of this and other potentially useful areas of discussion.

Question 2: *The Remains of the Day*

While a careful reading is always likely to produce higher marks than a hasty skim, a quick glance at Passage A should reveal that co-operation rather than conflict is the mood. Four of Valerie's utterances begin with an obvious agreement: *of course … yes … yes … exactly …* The next two show clear signs of what some theorists call "sympathetic circularity": *there's no one like that … that's expensive …*

Less successful answers under-estimated the level of co-operation in Passage A and wasted time looking for non-existent attempts to seize the floor. More successful answers understood the relationship between the speakers and located it precisely in textual details, such as Wendy supplying the word *isolation* to finish Valerie's sentence.

Understandably, candidates will have been taught that some features of spoken language – for example, contractions – are more common in informal than formal exchanges. They do need to be careful, however, not to assume that there will always be a direct correlation where contractions=informality and absence of contractions=formality. This equation may seem to work for Passage B, but there are other (AO2 and AO3) factors at work too.

In the case of Valerie and Wendy, their speech here is fairly 'correct' and conforms quite closely to what might be called spoken Standard English. There's barely a sign of colloquial lexis (or 'slang') beyond *Mum* and *kids*; syntax is mostly complete, with a high degree of fluency; some auxiliary verbs are contracted (*one thing that's really important …*) and some are not (*there is no one for us who is just around the corner …*).

The mark-scheme warns against making glib assumptions about a speaker's social class or education, but candidates might legitimately have argued for a certain level of Middle-England-respectability in the exchanges between Valerie and Wendy **if** they rooted their discussion in the transcript detail. So answers which identified the way the speakers began easily in quite complex abstractions – *twenty first century living … rising divorce rate … family network* – and then moved from the general to the personal ended up with a much more accurate reading than those who tried to find signs of deep personal trauma in Wendy's family circumstances.

Careful readers understood the poignant significance of the exchange in Passage B, and explained how the participants' emotions could be inferred from Miss Kenton's increasingly desperate attempts to provoke a 'real' response from Mr Stevens, and by his shorter and shorter answers, and repetition of the word *Indeed*. A lexical detail which proved helpful was Miss Kenton's reference to *my acquaintance*, which candidates suggested was a term more often used for a person only slightly known than for a prospective life-partner.

Less secure candidates tended to make assertions about the level of stilted ("frozen") formality and elaborate politeness between Mr Stevens and Miss Kenton – which is fine as far as it goes – though they were often not clear about the exact details of the working relationship between the two.

Some candidates had evidently been taught that Miss Kenton's speech style is "passive-aggressive", which seems a potentially helpful label. But like all labels – and, indeed, all concepts and terminology – this one needs to be supported by apt textual detail, which in turn needs to be explored once it's been located. For example, one might argue that Miss Kenton's formulation of *We did agree to my taking this evening off a fortnight ago, Mr Stevens* as a declarative works in at least two ways: as a defence against any suggestion that she's neglecting her responsibilities, and as an attack on his memory/efficiency. Forming the past tense with the auxiliary construction *we did agree* rather than the simple past *we agreed* adds emphasis and anticipates/forestalls the unspoken interrogative *Did we agree that?*

The mark-scheme provides many other examples of features of language which candidates might with profit have identified and explored.

Question 3: *Paddy Clarke Ha Ha Ha*

Many candidates seemed keen – almost desperate – to use concepts and approaches which they had evidently learned in relation to power dynamics and the idea of negative and positive "Face" in interaction. This worked to a certain extent with Passage A in analysis (AO2) of the dynamic between the Lawyer and the Agent, though weaker answers tended to over-state the idea of a 'relationship' between the two speakers, and to make it 'personal'.

Candidates generally understood the importance (AO3) of the context, namely that this was a courtroom, and showed a sound grasp of the adversarial situation and the lawyer's impatience, pressurising tactics and sarcasm. The construction (AO2) of the latter is hard to explain, but many answers made a brave attempt at doing so, noticing the Lawyer's re-casting of the question *would it have been fruitless* to [*speaking slowly*] *would it have been a waste of time* and explaining how both the emphatic stresses on <u>waste</u> of <u>time</u> and the paralinguistic feature of [*speaking slowly*] were techniques of child-directed speech, so the Lawyer was talking to the Agent as if he were a child.

It was especially disappointing, therefore, to see Passage B rather poorly dealt with by quite a number of candidates, who had evidently prepared themselves to write about Paddy's boundless curiosity and the features of Irish dialect in the narrative, neither of which was particularly helpful for this passage. Less helpful still is the insistence on seeing this novel – or indeed any novel – as a *Bildungsroman*, an approach which limits answers to searching for (non-existent) features of character-development.

Candidates must deal with what's actually there in the Passage. And here in Passage B, one striking feature is the fact that Paddy only speaks twice, in each case with a single mono-syllable. Good answers picked this up and built a reading from careful (AO2) attention to what the interlocutors actually do say to each other, for example Da's semi-recovery of "Face" after he asks Paddy about the magnifying glass:
- *Who gave you this?*

- *You.*
- *Oh, that's right; I did. He handed it back.*
- *Good man.*

This last utterance genuinely is a feature of Irish dialect; and developed answers went on to compare it with other genuine Irish-isms, such as the use of the indefinite *your man* to signify some person of whom the parties have shared knowledge – like the English colloquial *whatsisname.* They also made useful comparison with other episodes in the novel involving father-son interactions, some of them less co-operative than this one and characterised by Paddy painstakingly imparting factual information which his Da more or less ignores. A few astute readers noticed parallels between the situation with the magnifying glass and the episode in which Da pretends that he had queued for George Best's authentic autograph.

The mark-scheme offers examples of other potentially fruitful avenues for exploration.

Section B

Question 4: *A Handful of Dust*

The task in this question was to *examine ways in which Waugh presents judgement being affected by emotions.* A number of candidates took this to mean the (moral) judgement of the author/narrator and/or the reader rather than the ability of (a) character(s) to make sensible decisions, and wrote about how Waugh invites us to censure behaviour. (In this respect, condemnations of Brenda for her reaction to John Andrew's death have replaced Daisy Buchanan sobbing over Gatsby's shirts in the 'most vilified female character' category.)

Many of the actions of various characters could be attributed to emotion of some kind, so the question proved accessible at all levels. Candidates tended to argue that boredom and helplessness were the main emotions experienced by Brenda, and that Tony's judgement was impaired by his *habit of loving and trusting Brenda*. Confident candidates were prepared to take issue with the question and to argue that it was hard to find any genuine emotion in the book; and there were some productive contextual investigations of the culture of brittle sophistication and emotional shallowness so effectively presented by Waugh in the novel.

More successful answers showed a good understanding of the novel's non-interventionist narrative style and got quite a lot out of the cue-quotation itself. Less successful candidates generally asserted parallels between the situation described in Passage A and Brenda's affair with the worthless Beaver, and understood that some kind of emotions and/or bad judgements might be involved in both. More developed answers explored the effects of the linguistic choices, for example the semantic field of foolishness (*mad … stupid …foolish … insane …*) and noticed that the singer/speaker was, like Brenda, aware and even *ashamed*.

Candidates found it harder to explore the **construction and effects of the voice** of King Edward VIII in Passage B. (Although this is a Section A question-wording, it's always a useful 'combined' approach.) There's a tendency to take all such non-fiction passages at face value: they must be 'true' because they're not fiction ... Only a few candidates picked up the linguistic features which betray the speaker's (or speechwriter's?) concern to be thought sincere – *But I want you to understand … But you must believe me when I tell you … And I want you to know …*

Question 5: *The Child in Time*

This question invited discussion of *how McEwan presents adult views of childhood* in the novel. Candidates were so well-prepared – and keen – to discuss childhood in general terms that they often ignored the words *adult views of …*

More successful candidates wrote thoughtful accounts of Stephen's developing understanding of childhood and its significance throughout the novel, often with careful textual reference and an intelligent awareness of narrative techniques. Many analysed Charles's regression to childhood, as well as the chapter epigraphs taken from the Authorised Handbook, which were mostly well-remembered and appropriately understood.

Contextual understanding was, however, damagingly uncertain. Many candidates assumed that the political dimension of the novel was purely and simply an account of what they called "Thatcher's Britain". Aspects which McEwan had invented, for example the licensed-beggar scheme, were assumed to be 'real' features of Thatcherism. Such an approach led less successful candidates to abandon careful attention to the novel in favour of a generalised and assertive account of what they saw as a right-wing-Thatcherite attitude to childhood.

Clearly, candidates engaged strongly with the emotional impact of Kate's loss on Stephen and Julie. They also seemed fascinated by McEwan's treatment of time in the novel. However, for future sessions of the examination, and in future revision, they need a much more secure knowledge of the text, and an approach to contextual factors which begins *in* the text.

The best answers read the cue-quotation carefully, avoiding the error of attributing the views expressed here to either Stephen or McEwan, and contrasting Charles Darke's views here not only with his later *Just William* persona but also with his authorship of the Handbook. They also made the most of Passage A, noticing how the speaker/singer who *saw a magpie in the rainbow* is not very far from Stephen and his *magical thinking* in the novel.

The mark-scheme offers further suggestions along these lines.

Question 6: *Persuasion*

This question invited *examination of Austen's presentation of ways in which women are viewed*. A number of candidates interpreted this to mean *women's views* (in general, of everything) but most wrote sensibly about how Austen uses the contrasts between Anne, Mrs Smith and Lady Russell on the strong/sensible side and Mary, Elizabeth and Louisa on the weak/helpless side.

AO3 often featured over-simplification of the context: patriarchal society, women at home doing the cooking and cleaning and looking after the children. On then other hand, quite a few good answers revealed detailed knowledge of Admiral and Mrs Croft and their style of living – and carriage-driving in particular.

As always, discussions of contextual factors which start **in the text** are much less likely to mis-lead candidates; and this applies to their revision as well as to their writing in the examination. So, for example, rather than making blanket assertions about Mary being a bad mother, it is much more accurate to begin with the exchange between Anne and Mary when Charles has decided he might as well go out to dinner, since he can be of no use in a child's sick-room.

In response to Mary's complaint that *he is to go away and enjoy himself, and because I am the poor mother, I am not to be allowed to stir,* Anne says:
Nursing does not belong to a man; it is not his province. A sick child is always the mother's property: her own feelings generally make it so.
Jane Austen does not seem to be presenting this view ironically, so it is fairly safe to assume that this at least is how things were seen at the time of the novel.

It's not safe, however, to assume – as many candidates did – that the introduction to the supplementary passage(s) will tell them all they need to know. Passage A was prefaced with the information that Mary Wollstonecraft's book *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* had been

influential in arguing for equality of opportunity for women and men; but *equality of opportunity* was emphatically **not** the focus of the whole question, nor indeed the point of the passage.

An interesting – and tellingly common – misunderstanding arose over the noun phrase *rational creatures*, used by both Sophia Croft and Mary Wollstonecraft. Many candidates began with the noun rather than the pre-modifying adjective, and argued that *creatures* is a pejorative term with negative connotations of being animal rather than human. And, on the basis that the ability to reason is what marks the human from the animal, they then read *rational* as meaning its exact opposite. Sophia Croft and Mary Wollstonecraft were therefore often seen as arguing that women were *irrational*.

Such a line of argument was not necessarily completely disastrous, since candidates were able to find examples of women behaving "irrationally" – Mary's demands are often unreasonable; Louisa's leap from The Cobb is unthinking – and each of these examples (and others too) could usefully be contrasted with Anne's more thoughtful, measured behaviour. And candidates did indeed offer details of these contrasts, developing an answer which saw how Austen's presentation of Anne depends on how different she is not only from her sisters but also from the male Elliots.

However, this is a Language and Literature specification. It is much more useful for students to develop an awareness that ideas and beliefs are linguistic constructs dependent on the way in which words were understood at the time than to absorb broad generalisations about "what people in 1815 thought".

Careful readers of Mary Wollstonecraft's linguistic choices appreciated that the apparent qualities in the four-for-the-price- of-three 'tricolon' *soft phrases, susceptibility of heart, delicacy of sentiment, and refinement of taste* were being presented as defects, faults to be avoided. They also appreciated that *objects* (*objects of pity … objects of contempt …*) did not at that time carry the same connotations as the modern "sex object".

The mark-scheme offers more ideas in both AO2 and AO3 dimensions.

F672 Changing Texts

General Comments

It is always interesting to see the wide variety of approaches taken by centres and their candidates to this unit and again in this session there were a large number of different texts studied and a great variety of creative responses submitted. At its best this unit can generate work of exceptional quality across a range of high level skills: close reading; detailed analysis; mastery of technical language; comparison; creativity and originality; reflection and evaluation. Much of this work stands as testament to the excellent levels of learning undertaken by candidates and facilitated by their teachers in preparation for the unit. The majority of the candidates who undertake the unit are one year on from GCSE and to have developed the skills that are demonstrated in the strongest work is very impressive. To be able to employ, as some candidates do, a repertoire of linguistic terminology to explore texts not only reflects sustained learning but also stands them in very good stead for high level achievement in the other three units of this A Level.

As has been mentioned in previous reports the choices of text, and text combinations studied by candidates has developed as the unit has progressed and the specification has become more established. In the early sessions there was a tendency for many centres to have all their candidates study the same written and multimodal text pairing, but now a growing number of centres are impressively managing an entry where each candidate responds to a different text combination. For some centres this diversity of text choice has also been reflected in the range of different multimodal forms produced by candidates for Task 2. This series saw a wide variety of such texts produced including storyboards, news reports, magazine articles, pin boards, graphic novels, children's books, screenplays, blog sites, theatre programmes, illustrated lectures, psychiatrist's reports and many others. It has also been pleasing to see in this session candidates writing about texts that have not appeared before, including recently published novels and previously non-canonical texts, suggesting centres and candidates are engaging with new writing and the ways multimodal transformation of texts is an integral part of the creative process.

Task 1

The June 2011 report for this unit explored some of the ways in which Task 1, the Analytical Study, can be approached and as was stated there, and is perhaps worth reiterating here, we want the unit to be as accessible as it can be to candidates of a wide range of abilities. It is perfectly legitimate to approach the Analytical Study in a straightforward way by pointing out what has changed in the journey from written to multimodal text, to illustrate this with some examples and begin to explore some of the reasons as to why these changes have happened. The best of these approaches will focus on some key moments from each text around which this discussion can be shaped. This kind of approach can produce some interesting discussion and candidates often demonstrate great enthusiasm for the texts they have studied, particularly if they have been given some autonomy in the selection of these texts. These responses are likely to be assessed by centres as meeting the criteria for marks in Bands 1 to 3 of the mark scheme. Candidates meeting the criteria for marks in Bands 4 and 5 will also be exploring these straightforward relationships between the two texts but in addition will be looking more closely at the language of the two texts and utilising a range of linguistic terminology in order to do this. Being able to employ a range of critical terminology is an important aspect of AO1 and AO2. In Band 5 for AO1 this terminology should be 'accurately and consistently used' and in AO2 they should analyse '*ways* in which structure, form and *language* are used'. To achieve Bands 4 and 5, moderators do expect to see detailed textual analysis, of the kind candidates will have been used to undertaking in their work for the examined unit F671. Some of the work that was

assessed as being in these Bands, whilst often being engaged and thoughtful, did not explore language in detail or demonstrate a mastery of terminology. This limitation is the single biggest reason why moderators would have to scale centre marks downwards for this unit. As well as exploring textual detail, candidates at this level will also be entering more fully into the debate as to *why* texts are transformed as they are, and the factors that govern this. Many candidates did achieve this expected level of achievement for Bands 4 and 5 and in some cases created a superbly sophisticated and well illustrated debate. As was the case in June 2011, there was evidence of candidates engaging more thoroughly with the theoretical aspects of multimodal text transformation and, in the words of the specification, exploring 'ways in which literary texts are constantly being reinvented and reinterpreted for different audiences and purposes', that is to go beyond the identification of what is similar and different in the two forms and to consider *how* and *why* and for *what purpose* the text had been transformed. The report for last summer listed some of the interesting questions addressed by candidates about the relationships between texts, and centres may find it helpful to look back at these questions for candidates to use as a springboard for this debate. Radical questions such as whether a brilliant multimodal version of a text could render an original written text obsolete or what might be the place on non-multimodal texts in a digital world are fascinating debating issues for candidates and were very thoughtfully addressed by some candidates in this series.

Task 2

In this task candidates produce their own piece of work in multimodal form with a supporting commentary. As is the case for Task 1, twenty marks are available for this task. As has been pointed out in previous reports, many centres view the mark for the creative writing and the commentary holistically and balance the twenty marks available across the two elements. The 1500 to 2000 word limit for this task can also be shared between the two elements. If the text produced foregrounds modes that are not language based then, within reason, this can be compensated for in terms of the word limit by a longer commentary. Commentaries need to be substantial in their explanation and evaluation of the choices made and should be analytical in approach. Some candidates are still submitting commentaries that focus too heavily on the processes of text production rather than detailed analysis of the effects created. AO1 requires the application of concepts and terminology from integrated linguistic and literary study.
There is still an issue with some of the texts produced by candidates not being genuinely multimodal. The specification requires at least two different modes (writing, spoken language, image, sound) be used. Centres need to ensure that the choice of text produced by candidates can meet this requirement. A script for a television dramatisation including storyboard elements is clearly more multimodal than a script for a stage play. Similarly a graphic novel re-creation of the original text would have no difficulty fulfilling the specification requirement where a more traditional form of narrative fiction might. Some of the pieces produced for Task 2 are still rather too straightforward for this level and if these very simple texts are produced it is difficult for candidates to demonstrate the 'expertise and creativity' required for AO4. For example there can be a problem in producing texts for a very young audience (pre-school children's books, fairy stories etc) as the appropriate register of language for this audience can be inhibiting in terms of the candidate demonstrating sophistication and ambition. A number of candidates did write for such young audiences this year, sometimes producing texts which were more simplistic than appropriately simple. As with all other forms of text that are produced a detailed study of existing, preferably modern, examples of the form needs to precede text production. Too much of this kind of writing is predictable (and usually anthropomorphic) relying as it does on an idea of what constitutes writing for young audiences rather than a researched reality. If such texts are chosen then they should be supported with detailed and rigorous commentaries that analyse the nature of, and reasons for, the linguistic choices made. Candidates would also be advised to avoid producing *faux* transcripts (a character appearing on *The Jeremy Kyle Show* or in the Diary Room of *Big Brother,* for example) and instead to produce scripts rather than would-be spontaneous speech.

The most effective work results from real familiarity with the form being produced. This level of understanding can be achieved through research and through candidates producing texts which they use (and sometimes produce) in their own lives.

General Administration

Centres carried out their administration and presentation of the work well, with occasional exceptions. The moderators made the following points:
- Centres need to ensure that the sample of coursework is received by moderators in advance of the published deadline.
- The sample should be submitted clearly labelled as Task 1, Task 2 and Commentary.
- Staples should be used to secure the work instead of paper clips or plastic folders.
- Coversheets need to be fully filled in with candidate and centre numbers and full details of texts and tasks.
- Each of the sampled scripts should be annotated in detail by teachers to justify the mark awarded.

F673 Dramatic Voices

General Comments

Centres are to be commended for their extensive efforts in the teaching and learning of assimilated approaches to the specific requirements and challenges of this paper. Many candidates have demonstrated an integrated approach to linguistic and literary study with some impressive textual knowledge in a 'closed book' examination. Many candidates chose to address the specific key words of the question when structuring their responses.

The questions provided a consistently fair level of accessibility and provided clear opportunities for differentiation. Many candidates responded by offering a welcome range of relevant interpretations and approaches.

Points to consider

Overcoming 'limiting' factors

Last year's report highlighted the prevalence of limited approaches, often characterised by three underpinning obstacles:
- limited relevance to the task
- limited coherence of argument and expression
- limited editorial and structural grasp of communicating ideas at this level of study; this very often led to essays which were limited by their excessive and digressive length.

"Limited" is the defining criterion of Band 2 in the mark scheme and typifies the qualities of work which is below the required standard for this level of study.

It was very pleasing to see in this series far fewer limited responses that suffered from these obstacles. Teachers and candidates are to be commended for the increased competence in the coherence and relevance of responses as a cohort in this year's examination.

There are still, of course, examples of limited responses and the general pitfalls to avoid are detailed extensively in the report published on the June 2011 examination.

Assessment Objective One

This year, there was a noticeably higher number of candidates attempting to work relevantly with linguistic concepts, research and theories to illuminate the dramatic voices in the text. The use of language and gender theory, Grice, face needs, adjacency pair structures and so on were employed and assimilated with greater confidence and success.

Assessment Objective Two

Again, pleasingly, there was greater engagement with the passages in this series. It remains the case that some candidates did not engage with opportunities for linguistic analysis provided by the passages in Section A or dramatic effects in Section B. In all cases, candidates who focused on the texts as *dramatic voices* - noting dramatic character interaction with each other and the audience, dramatic genre and sub-genres - produced more developed responses than candidates who demonstrated a limited grasp of the texts as a performance/realisable medium.

It is also pleasing to note that this year there were no assertions of *incorrect* or *correct English/language/words/sentences* when attempting to analyse regional, social and historical spoken language varieties, dialect and archaic language. There were more attempts to work within linguistic frameworks to define a character's speech and to avoid descriptions and assertions. Additionally, candidates are advised against a general assertion that there is *a lot of lexis/semantic fields* and so on in the passages.

Assessment Objective Three

Evaluation of contextual influences on the text was handled with varying degrees of success. Developed approaches selected the context that could be evidenced in the text that best answered the themes in the question and served to illuminate the extracts. The least successful offered contextual knowledge as a bolted-on feature of the answer, either in the introduction or the conclusion or in digressive paragraphs within the body of the essay. In these cases, it was substituted for textual analysis and contextual evaluation. In a few cases, in Section B it formed the basis of the answer. It was least successful where the described contexts would not, even if evaluated, illuminate the presentation of the particular theme in the question. This limited approach was less prevalent in this series.

Comments on Individual Questions

Section A

Question 1

This was by far the most popular question.

Successful answers
- addressed the keyword "consequences" as well as "ambition" and linked the relationship between the two
- explored the ways in which Faustus and Miller offered the links between ambition and its consequences to the audience: definitions and symbols, examples and manifestations, ideas and concepts
- used linguistic theory, for example Grice's Maxims and theories of face needs and gender in B, to support the presentation of dramatic voices in the passages
- selected for analysis the stylistic/linguistic devices that illuminated the dramatic voices in each passage
- integrated other readers'/audiences' responses into their own reception of context
- explored/contrasted dramatic presentations: in passage B of Elizabeth and her fears, Proctor and his denial, Abigail and her motives; in passage A of Faustus and his origins/motives, The Chorus and its status/function
- had an integrated grasp of the literary contexts and structures operating within morality plays and Elizabethan/20th century tragedy
- managed a comparative approach.

Less successful answers
- misread the chronological placing of both plays and their settings,
- substituted "ambition" with "power" and wrote about that thematically across the play or twisted the extract to fit that
- inaccurately identified linguistic features and parts of speech
- accurately listed linguistic features and parts of speech outside of a coherent argument or answer framework
- paraphrased the extracts/whole play.

Question 2

Successful answers
- addressed the keywords "ways" "dramatists present" as well as "order and disorder"
- demonstrated a clear grasp of the inter-text
- engaged the concepts of madness and corruption to consider the dramatic effects of the extracts
- analysed comparatively the dramatic presentations and linguistic features that embody order and disorder, of Ophelia and Claudius in A and Ros and Guil in B.

Less successful answers
- asserted or described the actions of each character
- mistook verse for prose in A and vice versa in B
- focused on what happened before each extract and avoided analysis.

Question 3

Successful answers
- examined the many "ways" that "choices and their consequences" are "present[ed]" in the text
- evaluated and applied Feminist readings contextually and critically
- engaged the social class and gender issues through relevant linguistic analysis
- effectively compared presentations/responses of the Duchess and Cariola with Marlene or/and Joyce
- engaged semantic fields of family/children/courtship/sexual relationships
- engaged the function of interruption/overlaps in B.

Less successful answers
- digressed into general choices; especially on A, often foreshadowing the 'abuse of power' in question 6.

Section B

Question 4

The most popular question.

Successful answers
- engaged and maintained focus on the key ideas of "comic and tragic elements"
- argued for or against the plays as tragedies
- explored Marlowe's use of the dramatic voices of the Good and Evil Angels, Mephistopheles, the Old Man, the horse courser and the Pope in the presentation of tragic/comic elements in *Doctor Faustus*
- analysed the language/symbols/allegories/character types of tragic and comic elements across the chosen play: for example, the comic dramatic and narrative significance of Robin and Rafe, Giles Corey, dancing in the forest; for example, the dramatic and narrative significance of Faustus and Proctor as tragic heroes
- analysed the dramatic tensions of scenes presenting either or both comic and tragic elements in either play
- analysed the structural devices used to present tragedy and comedy; for example Marlowe's comic sub-plots, the inference, hyperbole and hysteria in *The Crucible*

- evaluated context at a sophisticated level; for example the Calvinist interpretation of Faustus' tragedy as a challenge/confirmation of religious orthodoxy.

Less successful answers
- tried to cover every scene in either play
- described/narrated/summarised the plot/characters/tragic and comic elements.

Question 5

Some original and highly engaged conceptual work was seen in response to this question.

Successful answers
- confidently addressed the keywords "play-within-the play"
- focused on the techniques and dramatisation of episodes/characters/examples that could illustrate their argument
- engaged the stagecraft of their chosen play; for example, its physical and meta-theatrical boundaries/dimensions in Stoppard's play, the self-consciousness of 'The Mousetrap' in *Hamlet*
- analysed the dramatic use of structural devices; for example the functions of the Player or The Mousetrap
- analysed the language/dramatic representation/symbolism of plays-within-plays in either play
- integrated the contexts of Renaissance religious orthodoxies, gender issues and Jacobean/Classical theatrical conventions into a response to *Hamlet* or Existential philosophical questions and conventions of the Theatre of the Absurd and meta-theatre into a response to Stoppard's play.

Less successful answers
- twisted the keywords "play-within-the-play" beyond what could usefully answer the question.

Question 6

This was the least popular question this series.

Successful responses
- addressed "dramatist presents" as well as "abuse of power" in their chosen play
- evaluated dramatic presentations of the gender and social class implications of Jacobean regal and religious orthodoxies in Webster's play
- analysed the capitalist and Thatcherite principles being dramatised by Churchill
- were alert and sensitive to constructs of character motivation driving the dramatic action
- focused on specific episodes/character interactions/language which supported the chosen line of argument
- analysed in context the complexities of power issues in Act 1.

Less successful responses
- took an assertive, moralistic approach to characters from either play, particularly Marlene in *Top Girls*, which limited response to the dramatic voices, both contextually and linguistically.

F674 Connections Across Texts

General Comments

Most centres are fully aware of the requirements for this unit and they are quick to exploit the opportunities given for candidates to demonstrate what they have learned through literary and linguistic study. Texts are carefully chosen to allow comparison, and there is often acute analysis of structure, form and language in both spoken and written texts. A number of folders would have benefitted from a final proof read: particularly in the top bands it is always a disappointment if there are basic errors because this lessens the ability to meet Assessment Objective 1 which requires 'consistently accurate written expression.'

At times, relationships between texts are explored thematically rather than technically and this can weaken submissions. The weakest areas for the unit lie in the treatment of spoken language and in the second part of Assessment Objective 3, which asks candidates to deal with contextual factors. All too often this emerges in the work as biographical detail about a writer or a summary of a historical or personal situation. A closer focus on genre might help candidates get a stronger grasp of how contexts need to be integrated into arguments, not bolted on. Particularly in the bottom bands, extraneous information can use up the word limit, curtailing the potentially more fruitful discussions of language, form, style and genre that are central to the unit's integrity.

Task 1

Centres are mostly comfortable with the requirements for this task. However, there is still a tendency towards candidates treating all three texts as equal. The specification makes it clear that there should be ONE substantial text at the centre of the work, and this usually gives the clearest focus to the work submitted.

A range of different texts were used, with candidates engaging with suggestions from the specification (Martin Luther King remains popular) or with some of the more controversial literary texts of the last few years (*Clockwork Orange* or *American Psycho*) . Where more controversial texts are chosen, candidates could often engage more fully with issues of genre, particularly when the text chosen (*Bridget Jones's Diary*, for example) actually then creates the rules for others to follow. On the whole, candidates tend to fight shy of substantial texts that are non-literary, except in the case of speeches. This is a shame. When they do attempt such texts, more could often be done to talk about ways in which orthodoxies and attitudes that have grown up around (or as a consequence) of these texts are open to question.

A small number of centres get candidates working on the same texts. This is permitted by the rules, but it can lead to a sense of uniformity in the work, with similar or identical examples used over and over again across the whole centre. It is important that candidates should have a focus that allows them some scope for personal investigation and opinion if they are to reach the top end of the mark scale. If all candidates tackle the same text, differentiation can often be achieved by setting different topics, or by ensuring that each candidate chooses one passage from the substantial text for detailed analysis that has not been worked over in class.

There has been a slight tendency for candidates to take up an issue (violence in the texts, for example) and this can move discussions away from the central discussions required by the unit. Candidates need to be mindful that their interest is in HOW a text says what it says, not particularly in *what* a text says.

Centres perhaps need to be reminded that at some point in the coursework, candidates must deal with spoken language. It is often best done here rather than in Task 2. But this does not simply mean that candidates must include a piece of speech: they must be prepared to analyse it in appropriate terms. Thus, it is perfectly in order for a candidate to write about the presentation of speech in a novel, for example, as long as the candidate also considers how this differs from natural speech whilst pretending to be precisely that. Work on Martin Luther King often made much of his rhetoric without then considering the many (and various) ways in which he attempted to give the speech the appearance of spontaneity.

Task 2

The tasks set here range widely. Monologues continue to be popular, as do newspaper articles, critical opinion pieces and speeches. There is a slightly odd tendency for candidates to invent pieces of spontaneous speech in order to fulfil the requirements, and these come across as rather fake: it's usually far better for candidates to invent something that sounds like real speech but is plainly speech representation and then analyse it in the commentary. If the former option is chosen, then candidates cannot readily focus on any 'approaches from…literary study' (AO1) and this then limits their overall performance both in the work itself and in the commentary. Candidates submitting monologues often fail to give clues about how these might be performed and thus lose opportunities to discuss genre difference between, say, a theatre piece, a televised piece, or something for the radio.

Commentaries are often highly perceptive, though candidates in the lower bands still sometimes think that what is required is a process diary. It is important for candidates to note that with the limited space (and marks) available, commentaries should not aim to be comprehensive. Often a commentary that is limited but intensely focused is clearer and more worthy than one that attempts to cover all the bases.

Administration

Most centres are making good use of the automated systems for mark submission. One or two problems remain, however. As moderators are engaged in a sampling procedure, it is vital that the data they have to work with is accurate. In a number of cases this year, marks recorded on the system did not reflect those on the work itself. A moderator is then in the situation of having to check with a centre. Centres are also reminded that work should be robustly presented so that different elements cannot be separated by accident. Complex binders are not required, but the judicious use of a treasury tag or a staple might be helpful.

For the most part, centres mark the work with great accuracy. There are some instances where Assessment Objectives are not clearly referenced, both on the work itself and on the cover sheets. A full overall assessment on the top sheet helps a moderator to understand a centre's decisions. In contrast, work that has simply been peppered with references to (for example) AO1 is more difficult to assess: in instances like this, qualitative reference to the Assessment Objectives is what is really needed.

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