

ENGLISH LANGUAGE

GCE Advanced Subsidiary Level

Paper 8693/01

Passages for Comment

General comments

There was a sound response to the paper as a whole with candidates displaying promising analytical and creative writing skills, although less confident in one or two areas. There was a good standard of accuracy and fluency. In this second session, it seems apparent that Centres are paying closer attention to the requirements of the paper and preparing candidates in the right manner. Practice of a range of sources and styles is essential to give candidates the confidence and broad base of skills needed.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

Candidates needed to ensure that they read the whole extract before beginning their answers. Too many seemed to realise towards the end of their analysis of style and language that the seeming initial praise of the subject is, in fact, highly charged mockery and criticism. Better answers noted the increasingly blatant and hostile nature of the author's words and how the apparent compliments were indeed insults. As a result, some creative responses seemed to fall into the trap of flattering the subject rather than disguising the praise as in the original.

Question 2

This was a popular choice and produced many excellent analyses and creative responses. Many focused on the inclusive tone, the use of images of light and dark, the application of euphemism and the encouragement of non-violent ideals. Part (b) picked up the flavour of the original with zest and efficiency and succeeded in mirroring the original with some finesse and distinction. Candidates showed here the high standards they can achieve consistently in both parts of the answer.

Question 3

The creative part of this question was handled competently and, at times, proficiently with candidates picking the increasing tension, change of mood and the animal imagery in particular. However, the analysis of style and language was less secure, less focused in general with a lack of really engaged comparative analysis. In the main there was sound work here but fewer responses had the confidence to make the most of the material.

Paper 8693/02

Composition

General comments

There were many enjoyable and pleasing scripts which displayed both imaginative and discursive writing skills in a consistent and secure fashion. Candidates seem to enjoy the opportunity to write at length and better answers show a high level of maturity and originality. Standards of accuracy and fluency are for the most part high. Some candidates fall into the trap of cliché at times (such as on **Question 4**) and should be encouraged to think of original storylines or to play around with generic conventions.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

There were no responses to this title.

Question 2

There were some very strong personal responses here with a good degree of originality and enthusiasm. Candidates showed the ability to adapt and imagine under pressure. One or two answers were too fictional and unreal to sustain the nature of the genre.

Question 3

This was a popular choice and elicited some poetic and sophisticated use of language, which developed and detailed the sense of contrast. Often based on the candidates' own experiences of places, answers were revealing and effective.

Question 4

This was the most popular choice of this section and encouraged some good, imaginative responses; some, however, tended to rely on rather cliché situations [the horror film, the chase] or left the nature of the situation and reason for it unclear. The motive, implicit or explicit, is essential in areas like this.

Question 5

This produced competent and proficient work especially where different ingredients of the subject under review were assessed and explored. Weaker answers tried to substitute narrative or a summary of content for opinion and judgement.

Question 6

This was successfully addressed when candidates took one view rather than trying to offer a balanced response. The rubric of the title asks the writer to take a particular stance [although balanced views are not ineligible] and is designed to allow for a more subjective and personal response rather than an anonymous impersonal distant answer.

Question 7

This was answered quite diligently and illustrated with a good range of examples and scenarios. Better answers also gave a personal response to possibilities and prospects creating livelier and more engaged essays.

Question 8

In the majority of cases the format of the letter was set out clearly and arguments were presented cogently and combined with a friendly, persuasive tone suitable for the purpose.


