



**General Certificate of Education (A-level)
January 2011**

English Literature B

LITB4

(Specification 2745)

Unit 4: Further and Independent Reading

Report on the Examination

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Introduction

The unit's title, *Further and Independent Reading* is a clear statement of where it fits in the concept of the specification as a whole. The unit is designed to encourage candidates to read more widely than the 'set' texts and to respond in personal and individual ways: in doing this they will address the issues of 'stretch and challenge' which are now required at A Level.

From the relatively small number of entries in January 2011, four key issues emerge.

1. Standardising meetings in Autumn 2010 stressed that this specification as a whole favours tasks which require some sort of critical debate. In this way the second part of AO3 *informed by interpretations of other readers* leads the candidate to meaningful work in AOs 2 and 4, realising that they are not dealing with fixed meanings and interpretations. Devising tasks with such debate works well in both parts of this unit.

The task 'Compare the ways authors x and y write about topic z' does not work well. The reasons for this are clear. Candidates often struggle to make presentation (AO2) a main focus, so instead they revert to writing about themes (which does not appear in any of the AOs).

For a full discussion of this issue please see the report for Summer 2010.

2. The moderation process is designed to ensure parity across centres and a fair deal for all candidates. The best folders for moderation purposes were those with clear and critical marginal annotation, clear and critical summative evaluation and some sense of the dialogues that took place within internal standardising. In centres where this is all shown, then moderation is usually very straightforward.

To be critical of a piece of work is not to damn it, yet there are plenty of centres where there seems to be no culture whatsoever of criticising work. Not surprisingly these centres tended to be over-generous with their marking compared to those who were prepared to disclose both positive and negative points. Centres are reminded that the annotation on a script is aimed at the moderator, not the student.

3. While most of the assessment was fair there were some examples where centre marks had to be adjusted. In general terms these took two forms, often linked to the point made in (2) above.

(i) Single re-sit candidates were often treated generously by the centre, perhaps taking the view that this time round the mark had to be better than last – but this is not necessarily the case.

(ii) Some centres entered whole cohorts, but failed to use the whole mark range as applying to their own candidates. So, typically, although the rank order was secure, the centre was unwilling to give appropriate marks to its lower candidates.

4. If centres submit for January coursework modules then they must realise that there are tight post Christmas deadlines which have to be kept. Some work had to be endlessly called for by moderators and arrived unreasonably late.

Those centres who did keep to deadlines, annotated critically and assessed accurately are of course thanked for their exemplary work at a very busy time.

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

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