AQA

ASSESSMENT and
QUALIFICATIONS
ALLIANCE

General Certificate of Education

English Language and Literature 1721

Specification A

ELLA2   Analysing Speech and Its

Representation

Report on the Examination

2009 examination - January series

General

Candidates are required to answer two questions. The first question requires an analytical comparison of unseen spoken texts. Candidates are asked to focus on two pieces of speech, one of which is transcribed spontaneous speech, and the other prepared speech or other forms of speech representation from a non-literary context.

The second section of the paper requires candidates to focus on an extract from the set texts they have studied, commenting on the ways in which speech is used and represented, as well as particular stylistic and thematic matters relevant to each text.

These questions test the ability of candidates to:

AO1:   select and apply relevant concepts and approaches from integrated linguistic and literary study, using appropriate terminology and accurate, coherent written expression
(Section B, Questions 2-9)

AO2:   demonstrate detailed critical understanding in analysing the ways in which structure, form and language shape meanings in a range of spoken and written texts
(Section A and Section B)

AO3:   use integrated approaches to explore relationships between texts, analysing and evaluating the significance of contextual factors in their production and reception
(Section A).

Successful responses:

- showed clear and detailed knowledge and understanding of features of speech and their effects
- identified specific features, gave examples of them and explained their communicative effects
- offered an integrated comparison of the two speech texts
- showed detailed analysis of specific features of language and the effects created
- supported their ideas with examples and comment
- used the appropriate terminology to describe the features they identified
- wrote fluently and accurately
- answered the question relevantly.

Less successful responses:

- offered general comments about speech without giving examples or analysing the effects created
- did not compare the texts in Section A
- did not sustain a clear focus on the question
- offered general comments rather than detailed analysis of the text passage
- ignored the set passages or paid them scant regard and wrote about other parts of the text of their own choosing
- did not support or illustrate their comments
- did not use a register and terminology appropriate to literary and linguistic study
- showed basic technical inaccuracies in their writing.

Section A: Analysing Speech

There were some mixed responses to this question. Some candidates were able to range freely between texts A and B and offered integrated comparisons, identifying speech features, giving specific examples from the speech texts and analysing their effects. Such responses generally focused effectively on how views and attitudes are conveyed particularly in consideration of Will's different speech patterns in each. Weaker candidates frequently listed features of speech with no examples, as well as quoting words without revealing the features they were intended to exemplify. Often candidates tackled Text A quite well, using an appropriate vocabulary to identify features and making comments about attitudes and effects but then went on to write very generally about Text B, failing to identify features, give examples or to comment on attitudes and ideas. Some candidates were greatly hampered by lacking the appropriate vocabulary to discuss the features that they were trying to identify. Some candidates tried to apply theories, e.g. Grice's maxims, to the speech texts. At best, candidates' attempts to apply theoretical concepts added nothing to their answers and at worst the theory came between the student and the text. Although theoretical ideas can inform teaching, students often apply half-understood concepts erroneously or attempt to make the text fit the theory. The best answers are those in which theoretical concepts are not mentioned by name but the candidates respond in an informed way to the question, using the correct terminology to identify features and analyse effects. Above all, candidates should focus on the details of language in the extracts, picking out significant phrases and features and commenting on them analytically and evaluatively. So many students make sound comments but do not give an example or illustration.

Section B: Analysing the Representation of Speech

Question 2: *Great Expectations*

The extract provided plenty for candidates to analyse and they were able to focus well. Candidates were often able to comment on other relevant aspects of the novel and make interesting links. Some presented quite extended discussion of other episodes including those focusing on the menacing characters of Orlick, Miss Havisham, Mrs Joe Gargery, and Mr Jaggers. Some spent so much time discussing another episode in the novel that they were very limited in the close textual analysis they were able to offer on the extract itself. Often, though, answers were well-balanced between the extract and elsewhere, though the actual examination of speech and stylistic features needed more precision, detail and exemplification.

Question 3: *Eden Close*

Very few responses were seen on this text.

Question 4: *The Lovely Bones*

Overall the responses showed a sound understanding of how Sebold presents Susie's innocence through her speech. There was close analysis of vocabulary choices, with particular words and phrases identified and commented on. More limited attention, though, was given to features such as the structuring of the adjacency pairings. Some candidates revealed clear understanding of the ways in which the both speech and other stylistic techniques were used to create effects and there was also perceptive comment on the developing tension of the scene, with the sense of underlying menace contrast with Susie's innocence.

Question 5: *Enduring Love*

There were some sound responses on this text and candidates often identified significant features of Parry's interactions with Joe and the ways in which this is revealed both through the speech and other stylistic techniques. Much comment focused on Joe's attempts to dismiss Parry and the clever way in which Parry draws him in, together with the tone of Joe's later responses and the way Parry presses Joe. Various other episodes were referred to, including Jed's letter to Joe.

Question 6: *Waiting for Godot*

Very few answers were seen on this text

Question 7: *The Caretaker*

This text produced some very mixed responses. Some showed a good focus on the question by exploring how speech is used in the extract and another episode to explore 'identity'. Candidates commented on the use of such features as repetition, questions, and the linking of vocabulary (e.g. 'imposter', 'name') to the topic. There were many responses, however, which showed little analysis and consisted mainly of description/narrative interspersed with quotations, often not explained or commented on. Some responses did not mention 'identity' at all. It is very important that candidates address the questions set, identify relevant points and comment on them appropriately.

Question 8: *Othello*

This was a popular question that elicited a wide range of responses. Some showed a close reading of the extract and made some perceptive and relevant comments on language and effects, well supported by appropriate references to the text. Sometimes, though, candidates showed a lack of close reading of the extract, in particular the stage directions, so that some candidates assumed Othello was on stage and Desdemona too was there all the time. There was some detailed and effective analysis of Cassio's use of metaphors while other candidates ignored the metaphors and grappled with unpacking the complex sentences of the blank verse but without really getting to grips with meaning or how Cassio's feelings were presented. There was a serious lack of familiarity with the play in a number of responses, with frequent misinterpretations of Cassio's feelings for Desdemona: namely, assertions about Cassio's ardent love, and lust for Desdemona, his jealousy of Othello as a result and his desire to plot against him, and Iago's tales being true. Comments on the handkerchief episode seemed to relate to a film version in some cases, rather than Shakespeare's text.

Question 9: *Equus*

Very few responses were seen on this text.

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades
Grade boundaries and cumulative percentage grades are available on the **Results statistics** page of the AQA Website.