



**General Certificate of Education**

**English Language and Literature  
2721**

*Specification A*

**ELLA4      Comparative Analysis through  
Independent Study**

**Report on the Examination**

*2010 examination - January series*

Further copies of this Report are available to download from the AQA Website: [www.aqa.org.uk](http://www.aqa.org.uk)

Copyright © 2010 AQA and its licensors. All rights reserved.

#### COPYRIGHT

AQA retains the copyright on all its publications. However, registered centres for AQA are permitted to copy material from this booklet for their own internal use, with the following important exception: AQA cannot give permission to centres to photocopy any material that is acknowledged to a third party even for internal use within the centre.

Set and published by the Assessment and Qualifications Alliance.

The Assessment and Qualifications Alliance (AQA) is a company limited by guarantee registered in England and Wales (company number 3644723) and a registered charity (registered charity number 1073334). Registered address: AQA, Devas Street, Manchester M15 6EX  
*Dr Michael Cresswell Director General.*

## Principal Moderator's Report

A small number of centres entered the first coursework assessment in January and, despite some lack of experience at this stage, produced some excellent essays. Advice was generally against early entry for the following reasons: it was thought too soon for most candidates to have prepared adequately and the prospect of having to significantly rework a poor January submission in time for the June entry was thought too arduous and dispiriting. Evidence showed, however, that no candidate entered in January misjudged the demands of the coursework task and, in quite a few cases, produced work of the highest quality.

The requirements of the coursework task are:

- to establish a clear and interesting thesis in the opening paragraph and sustain a logical investigation of that thesis throughout the essay
- to sustain a balanced comparison of the methods of the two writers and relate that clearly to the theme chosen
- to select and analyse appropriate poems / passages for the task
- to contextualise the material chosen intelligently
- to select from a range of literary and linguistic terms in order to analyse the texts and demonstrate how the writers have created their effects
- to achieve a balanced argument within the word limit of 2,500 words.

The best essays achieved all six of these demands although the challenge for the better candidates was sometimes to do this within the word limit. No candidate allowed excessive biographical or contextual detail to intrude although a kind of speculative paraphrase did sometimes replace close analysis. Comparisons were generally an appropriately balanced investigation of attitude and technique. Occasionally, the comparative mode was too doggedly sustained in rather a mechanical way when a free and fuller examination of effects created by one or other of the chosen writers might have been more fruitful. The 'tool kit' of literary and linguistic terms was used thoughtfully by most candidates and a real priority given to the meaning of words as a preface to further analysis. Chosen themes were a mix of the predictable and the slightly eccentric but there were good essays that came out of both approaches.

It was a great pleasure to see how thoroughly teachers adhered to the appropriate mark grid descriptors in their comments while still finding space to note the individual qualities of each particular essay. Sometimes, annotation could have challenged wayward ideas more and made more acknowledgement of worthy technical analysis. A consistent approach to marking is of enormous help to moderators. It would also be most helpful in future submissions if the work of each candidate were bound together in some simple way (paper clip, open plastic folder, treasury tag etc.). However, it should be noted that the presentation of work was excellent with the most helpful ordering being: Candidate Record Form, essay, first draft, photocopied extracts / poems. Some centres used an additional assessment sheet of their own on which comments were written against each Assessment Objective. Though not a requirement, this was frequently very helpful. There was a tendency to overmark, particularly at the top end where elegance of expression was sometimes more evident than close analysis. Attention should be drawn to the word count and a statement of this at the end of the essay, though not essential, is nevertheless very helpful.

## Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

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