



General Certificate of Education

**English Language and Literature
1726**

Specification B

**ELLB2 Themes in Language and
Literature**

Report on the Examination

2010 examination - January series

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The majority of candidates for this January entry were taking the opportunity to resubmit work from summer 2009. While it is not possible to comment on the extent of the changes these candidates may have made in reworking their submissions, moderators commented on the many folders that showed fluent writing, well informed and focused discussion and interesting creative pieces. There were, however, a considerable number of entries that did not meet the criteria laid down in the specification and in which the basic rubrics for the coursework unit were flouted.

A number of supervising teachers appear to be unfamiliar with the basic requirements, even to the point of allowing candidates to submit work for which there are no chosen extracts. They have not made use of the Principal Moderator's Report 2009 to clarify essential points from the specification. A number of issues raised in that report are still matters of concern.

Part A- the investigation task based on two selected extracts

The better candidates had no doubt revisited their chosen extracts to produce a fuller or more engaging discussion. As in the summer entry 2009, the weakest submissions made only limited reference to the chosen extracts, relying on their knowledge of the stories and the background to the set texts. A surprisingly large number of candidates refer to the use of filmed versions of the novels in their preparation. It is to be hoped that this is not being used as a substitute for having read the set texts.

Choosing extracts for Part A

Writing successfully in Part A is highly dependent on teachers' and candidates' understanding of the principles underpinning the coursework task. Some candidates did not work with extracts, either because they did not choose them or, having chosen them, they proceeded to ignore them. Candidates who select from across whole chapters or even across the whole text should be heavily penalised. Some candidates did not make use of the set theme as the principal starting point for discussion. Some centres draw attention to these shortcomings but persist in over-rewarding the candidates' work.

Part B - the creative task

Candidates' work for Part B continues to bring out some exceptionally creative ideas and some very pedestrian re-working of the original text. Some candidates did little more than re-tell the story, supposedly from another point of view, but without creating a credible voice for the character. However, these pieces do at least work within the coursework brief.

Unfortunately, some supervising teachers are still unaware that the creative piece for Part B is required to illuminate the original text or texts. A horror story that has no bearing on either *Frankenstein* or *In Cold Blood* is not working within the brief. Moreover, a number of pieces failed to take their starting point in the set theme.

Annotation and accuracy in the award of marks

It is still the case that much internal assessment tends to focus on strengths and ignores weakness but there were many examples of thoughtful and evaluative annotation.

The following criteria might be helpful to centres in assessing the appropriateness of their annotation practice.

The most effective annotation:

- *comments appropriately on the unique features of each individual submission*
- *highlights effective analysis of chosen extracts*
- *is not unduly reliant on the wording from the mark band descriptors*
- *offers judgements that are perceptive and evaluative*
- *identifies both strengths and weaknesses*
- *uses the marking criteria*
- *matches the marks awarded.*

Word limits

Candidates are required to indicate the word counts for each piece. A useful formula proved to be something on the following lines: Part A - *1,674 words, including 200 words of permitted quotation from the extracts and from the wider set texts*; Part B - *750 words*. This should be standard practice in future submissions.

Photocopies of chosen extracts

From January 2010, it is obligatory for candidates to include photocopies of the extracts they have chosen, with START and FINISH clearly marked. Photocopies are better suited for the purpose of moderation than word-processed copies because they also supply the moderator with page references and deter candidates from injudicious editing of the text.

Evidence of Planning (the candidate's brief handwritten declaration that introduces the two tasks) is not assessed but allows the candidate to explain to the reader how the tasks are being approached. This gives the candidate the opportunity to demonstrate that the work is genuinely his or her own and supports the statement on the *Candidate Record Form*. Several centres provided other robust evidence of their anti-plagiarism policies.

Administration

Centres are thanked for their work in ensuring that submissions were neatly presented and accessible. Instances of neglectful preparation were rare but these did include extracts that did not relate to the candidate's work and word counts that were misleadingly inaccurate.

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

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