



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

**English Language and Literature      ELLB2  
B**

**(Specification 2725)**

**Unit 2: Themes in Language and Literature**

***Report on the Examination***

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The majority of folders submitted showed good understanding of the coursework tasks and the requirements of the rubric. Candidates and their teachers are to be congratulated for the many excellent folders demonstrating much interesting and careful work.

Part A, the investigation task based on two selected extracts, is now well understood and there were fewer instances of all candidates writing on the identical extracts. Instances of candidates failing to select extracts and/or neglecting to use them as the basis of their response were very rare. There is still some misunderstanding about the use of research findings. Candidates should be dissuaded from unbalancing their responses by including whole sections devoted to historical and biographical detail that do not illuminate the extracts. There is no need to include factual information on authors' lives unless it has a direct bearing on the analysis of the extracts under discussion.

Annotation by supervising teachers shows that there is good awareness of the importance of the set THEME. There were many thoughtful and perceptive approaches and none of the set themes appeared to present candidates with any difficulties of interpretation or problems in discussion. The requirement to write on the theme helps to ensure that candidates' work is their own and is not merely the regurgitation of secondary sources. Only rarely did candidates ignore the theme completely in Part A. Similarly, there was much productive comparison and the best discussions are those which are structured as comparisons. Overall, centres' assessment of candidates' work is gradually becoming closer to the agreed standard, though much teacher annotation is focused on promoting the work rather than evaluating it. While many centres exercise rigorous control of word limits, there are some that appear to ignore the point altogether, despite reference to appropriate length featuring in each set of mark band descriptors.

Skills in direct analysis and a purposeful discussion of changes in language and style over time are common areas for development in a significant number of centres. Given the nature of the unit, the assessment objectives and the choice of the set pairings, these topics would seem obvious target areas for teaching. Where moderators disagreed with the centre marks, it was often the case that the discussion of content and narrative was much stronger than the comparison of crafting which internal assessment had not taken into account.

Part B - the creative task, continues to produce some excellent work though there has been a rise in the number of centres allowing candidates to 'springboard'. Candidates who produce work which has little or no connection with the original texts are considered to be 'springboarding' into a new piece without considering how they are illuminating the source texts. Many candidates relied on the use of proper names to give credibility to their work but it was all too often in vain. Work for Part B which does not show good understanding of the source text is not acceptable. An example of this was Jane Eyre's speech on behalf of the suffragette movement. It met the requirement to demonstrate the theme of 'independent women' but beyond the use of the name had no credible connection with the novel. There were far too many examples of good writing which did not meet the fundamental requirements of the specification. Supervising teachers should ensure that candidates understand the marking criteria and should apply the marking criteria in their entirety.

Moderators are grateful for the exemplary administration by many centres, but this unfortunately is not always the case; there are still some centres where teachers do not appear to understand the importance of submitting photocopied extracts and demonstrating adherence to word limits. The omission of this information suggests it was not available to the internal assessors, which in turn raises questions about the criteria used to settle upon each candidate's marks. Teachers' annotation occasionally made reference to 'good use of chosen extracts' which could not be supported from a reading of the candidate's work. Centres need to be aware that it is part of the moderator's standard practice to cross-check between candidates' writing and the extracts to confirm that the work is substantially relevant to the chosen extracts. From January 2010, candidates have been required to include photocopies of the extracts they have chosen, with START and FINISH clearly marked.

It is surprising that centre errors in entering and calculating candidates' marks are allowed to pass unnoticed before despatch. Where candidates' marks have been changed during internal moderation the whole folder should be checked to ensure there is consistency between marks.

**Mark Ranges and Award of Grades**

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