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## Examiners' Report June 2010

### GCE English Language and Literature 6EL02 01

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## Introduction

Unit 2 provides the opportunity for students to engage in the process of creative writing influenced by personal research and knowledge of literary and linguistic theory. Centres are able to choose their own area or topic as a starting point, and are encouraged to allow students to choose their own stimulus text as an inspiration and influence for their own writing. Students have to consider carefully the intended audience for their work, with one piece aimed at a reading audience and the other at a listening audience.

There was a reasonable spread of folders across the possible topic areas available, although the most popular choices were Gothic and Supernatural and Dystopia. Entrapment was the third most popular, with only a few centres choosing Journeys and Pilgrimages and Women's Life's.

The most successful candidates were those who chose responses which stylistically linked to a clearly defined audience. Less successful folders tended to include responses which were too similar in style and failed to differentiate explicitly enough which audience they were aimed at. So, centres would be wise to avoid the inclusion of a monologue here, for the listening audience work, particularly if included with a first person narrative for the reading audience. There were some particularly successful radio plays offered, as well as some powerful and thought provoking speeches, allowing candidates to deliberately include specific techniques targeting their intended audience.

There were some wonderfully creative and expertly crafted folders this year and the standard generally has definitely (perhaps not surprisingly) improved in this, the second year of the specification. The most successful folders showed the benefits of supported wider reading and were able to match specific texts contextually with their own writing. It is a requirement of the specification to include a bibliography detailing the students' wider reading which quite a number of centres are still not consistently doing.

Successful creative pieces tended to share some particular strengths; a distinct narrative voice, a carefully chosen discourse structure and a thought provoking beginning being the most common attributes of high attaining work. Each of the following, are taken from the start of creative folders:

### Exemplar 1

*'Each tide brought with it dirt. The river once calm, idyllic retreat now was tainted. Old Frank Johnson visited each Sunday after church since he'd been a boy, but many tides had ebbed and flowed since then. This place had lost something, thought Frank, something bright, beautiful and wondrous. Its nature. He found himself changing like the waters: once clear-minded and full of life, now blurry and slow.'*

### Exemplar 2

*'It was a fiery, blood red sun; flippin scorching heat and the ground was like pitchforks on my soles. My uniform was in black pools of icy cold sweat (tugs on t-shirt for emphasis). I thought that that tattoo would have suited me now, especially on those sands. Evening was coming soon, so it meant that things were getting cooler, but not really. It was just the dark that was coming. A regular mop up patrol it was, well, it literally was. Eddy was strolling along in front of the rest of us (approaches nearer the end of the stage, closer to the audience.) No sweat or anything. His mind was somewhere else, like he was expecting summin', just like that day back in the pub. That was at least until it happened. There was a flash bang, bloody blinding lightning and a fucking deathening crack...'*

### Exemplar 3

*'Dear Emma,*

*It seems to me to have been a very long time indeed, since we last saw each other. I am very happy to hear of the birth of your daughter. My life at Norland does seem so far away sometimes, when I stop to reflect. However, my new life here suffices, and we are very fortunate with our neighbours, the Middletons, who are kind and generous, although they do on occasion try my nerves. I believe Marianne is sometimes very vexed but even she will not speak out in front of them, especially as we are invited so often for dinner.'*



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Here we have three quite different voices, yet each distinct and interesting. Each beginning introduces us to both character and plot and each certainly has the effect of drawing us in, making us want to know more. As openings, therefore, each works well and help to demonstrate the students' learning and experimenting with how to craft their work and affect an audience or reader. These students had really learnt from their stimulus text and other reading and were able to bring this text alive within their own work.

## Commentaries

Commentaries had much improved this year. Students still face the challenge of having to write about such an apparently large number of aspects in a comparatively small number of words. However, centres have evidently learnt better how to advise their students on this and many candidates reflected their wide knowledge successfully here.

Balance is a key word with the commentaries. High attaining students were able to balance the differing aspects required of them rather than be pulled exclusively in one particular direction. Successful commentaries showed a very intelligent melding of the literary and linguistic, with often the linguistic dominating somewhat.

Again, the start of the commentary is important. Good practice involved the students using their introduction to mention, briefly, each of the aspects they would go onto discuss in more detail. In doing so, they were able to demonstrate and acknowledge the different skills they had put into practice within their own texts.

### Exemplar 4

*'Wings Spread Wide, Body Undefeated concentrates on the theme of entrapment central to the core text 'LOTF' by William Golding. My text adopts the plot of 'LOTF' to explore the psychological effects on Ralph and employs the theme 'civilisation versus savagery' demonstrating how experiences can manipulate an individual throughout life. The text focuses on the stages gone through to achieve closure. The genre is predominantly mystery fiction and would appeal to an adult audience because of its disordered chronological format.'*

### Exemplar 5

*'My text on the theme of entrapment for a listening audience took the form of a short radio drama. Its purpose is to entertain, but UK from Dignitas after helping a loved one die. It is aimed at adults, especially those with limited knowledge of MS, to help them understand more about it. In my text, Sarah feels trapped within her body; MS sufferers lose control of the functions of their bodies. They are also trapped within the law, as Sarah does not want her husband to be prosecuted, even though she wants him to be with her. Also to provoke thought and awareness on the topic of assisted suicide. I was inspired by hearing about Purdy and her fight to make the law clear about whether people will be prosecuted when returning back to the UK.'*

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Clearly, both these candidates have been well advised on the varying points they need to focus on. Each, without seeming too formulaic, has evidently followed a 'check list' of aspects to include. This would appear to be good practice. Establishing just what aspects need to be covered, and ensuring each is mentioned in a form of introduction, would give candidates a solid grounding for the rest of their commentary.

## Literary and Linguistic Aspects

Students must then focus on the literary and linguistic devices they have deliberately exploited within their own creative pieces. It is vital that both aspects are explored and that students do not merely feature spot with their own texts. They must adequately discuss both what techniques they have included, and also the likely affect of these techniques on their chosen audience.

So, for the literary.

### Exemplar 6

*'I incorporated imagery within the monologue to provide connotations to hell and a dystopian context i.e. "fiery, blood red sun" and "ground was like pitchforks on my soles". Antithesis involving imagery is evident i.e. "spread in black pools of icy cold sweat". The adjectives, "icy" and "fiery", contrast with one another, which convey to the audience a feeling of unrest and disturbance. This, along with the statement, "it was just the dark that was coming" metaphorically foreshadows a potential catalyst.'*



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Here, the candidate has analysed a specific literary technique, quoting from their own text and has gone on to discuss possible affect of this device on their intended audience.

Similarly, with the linguistic.

### Exemplar 7

*'I intended to create an innocent, simple and unintelligent character. Simple sentence types involving monosyllabic and high frequency lexis such as "it was a small room" and "No sweat or anything", show this. A social idiolect is recognised with colloquial and taboo such as "deck", "arse" etc; contraction i.e. "didn't" and "it's" and clichés like "live and let live".. I used these techniques to create an informal register. I based this character on the character Tommy, within the novel 'Never Let Me Go', who is also given an innocent persona through simple sentences, informal lexis and high frequency lexis within dialogue i.e. "I was mixed up in those days".'*

## Stimulus Texts

In addition, students need to make explicit reference to their chosen stimulus text. It was clear during the moderation process that many centres have embraced the freedom allowed within the specification and not been overly prescriptive when advising students of their chosen core/ stimulus text. In general, this should be encouraged, with centres who carefully select texts for candidates perhaps restricting the creative process. Certainly the spirit of the specification is that candidates be independent, and encouraged to research with a good deal of autonomy.

### Exemplar 8

*'The focalised narrative position shifts to Frank's voice through use of free speech and thought which creates contrast between the narrator. I drew inspiration from the source text 'Little Things' where free direct speech is used to create voice and ambiguity, therefore creating contrast between narration and voice of character.'*

## Moderation

There was lots of evidence of good practice by centers, with internal moderation apparent where possible, and such moderation evidenced with relevant and useful summaries of key decisions made. There was some evidence of over-rewarding top folders; however, marking was very accurate across the rest of the range, with few instances of students being over marked at key grade thresholds.

## Administration Issues

Some coursework samples arrived later than the official deadline in May.

Some cover sheets were incomplete with, for example, no signatures or inaccurate word counts. A few samples came with practically no indication of having been marked by the centre first, which is most unsatisfactory.

There were also discrepancies between the marks on individual cover sheets and those on the Optems.

It is most useful if folders are sent with treasury tags and not placed in plastic wallets. Care should also be given to ensuring packaging is secure. Some, which arrived in A4 envelopes, had been badly damaged in the postal system.

## Conclusion

Unit 2 coursework was a pleasure to moderate and reflected excellent practice being demonstrated in the vast majority of centers. Teachers should be proud of the high level of attainment by students at this level and congratulated on the superb work offered by many candidates. It is apparent that the freedom offered within this unit is stimulating real creativity and resulting in work which is a joy to read.

## Grade Boundaries

Grade	Max. Mark	A	B	C	D	E	N	U
Raw boundary mark	80	69	60	51	43	35	27	0
Uniform boundary mark	80	64	56	48	40	32	24	0





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