



General Certificate of Education

English Literature 6746

Specification B

LTB6 Exploring Texts

Mark Scheme

2005 examination – June series

Mark schemes are prepared by the Principal Examiner and considered, together with the relevant questions, by a panel of subject teachers. This mark scheme includes any amendments made at the standardisation meeting attended by all examiners and is the scheme which was used by them in this examination. The standardisation meeting ensures that the mark scheme covers the candidates' responses to questions and that every examiner understands and applies it in the same correct way. As preparation for the standardisation meeting each examiner analyses a number of candidates' scripts: alternative answers not already covered by the mark scheme are discussed at the meeting and legislated for. If, after this meeting, examiners encounter unusual answers which have not been discussed at the meeting they are required to refer these to the Principal Examiner.

It must be stressed that a mark scheme is a working document, in many cases further developed and expanded on the basis of candidates' reactions to a particular paper. Assumptions about future mark schemes on the basis of one year's document should be avoided; whilst the guiding principles of assessment remain constant, details will change, depending on the content of a particular examination paper.

LTB6 Exploring Texts

Skills Descriptors Question 1

BAND 1: MARK RANGE 0 – 5

- AO2ii simple account of content
- AO2ii little sense of comparison across texts
- AO3 very little understanding of genres, language features and structural devices
- AO3 very little discussion of how authors' techniques shape meanings

BAND 2: MARK RANGE 6 – 12

- AO2ii some focus on the task with basic textual understanding; a little illustrative support
- AO2ii some comparison across texts
- AO3 some limited understanding of genres, language features and structural devices
- AO3 some limited discussion of how authors' techniques shape meanings

BAND 3: MARK RANGE 13 – 19

- AO2ii focus on task with some understanding of text; some illustrative support
- AO2ii some consideration of contrasts and comparisons across texts
- AO3 some understanding of genres, language features and structural devices
- AO3 some discussion of how authors' techniques shape meanings

BAND 4: MARK RANGE 20 - 26

- AO2ii clear focus on task with informed understanding of the text : apt supportive references
- AO2ii detailed consideration of contrasts and comparisons across texts
- AO3 consideration of genres, language features and structural devices
- AO3 consideration of how authors' techniques shape meanings
-

BAND 5: MARK RANGE 27 - 33

- AO2ii detailed understanding of the text and task: good selection of supportive references
- AO2ii detailed exploration of contrasts and comparisons across texts
- AO3 exploration of genres, language features and structural devices
- AO3 some evaluation of how authors' techniques shape meanings

BAND 6: MARK RANGE 34 - 40

- AO2ii secure, confident and well informed understanding of the text and task:
excellent selection of supportive reference
- AO2ii detailed and perceptive evaluations of issues raised through contrasts and comparisons
across texts
- AO3 detailed exploration and analysis of genres, key language features and structural devices
- AO3 perceptive evaluation of how authors' techniques shape meanings

Possible Content

Question one: Compare and contrast the ways in which Charles Dickens, in the extract from *Nicholas Nickleby*, and Lorna Sage, in the extract from *Bad Blood*, present experiences of education.

(40 marks)

Assessment objectives tested: AO2ii, AO3

Key differences resulting from genre: Expect students to be aware of differences in language use, register, tone, character revelation and representation, point of view, relationship between reader and subject matter, importance and development of story, setting, structure. Importance of remembering that both texts are extracts.

Candidates should show awareness of the differences between fiction and autobiography and the ways in which that affects the reader. The greater realism of *Bad Blood* largely results from its basis in the writer's personal memory, although the crafting of the writer's personal experience gives it a shape and meaning that take it one remove further from the raw reality of the experience itself. Could be argued that what Dickens describes is based on reality also, but the deliberate crafting of fiction and the uncertainty of what exactly is based on real incident and what is imagined make the presentation of experience more generic and less particular than Sage's. The use of satire and grotesque comedy also distances the experience described to some extent and Dickens's intention is clearly didactic although he also entertains us. Sage seems more intent on recalling and exploring her experience in order to record it than in order to present a moral message to the reader.

Similarities and differences in subject matter and viewpoint: Both texts deal with the educational experience children have, but from different points of view. Much in common in content between Dickens and Sage. Schools both deliberately provide inadequate education, one out of greed, the other in order to preserve the social hierarchy. Different parental attitudes suggested, however. Both show school-children in abject fear of teachers. No pretence at Hanmer of considering education important. Sage shows that this system did not last forever. Dickens is the omniscient narrator but presenting the scene largely from the viewpoint of Nicholas, while Lorna Sage is recalling her own childhood experiences. Whole question of narrative viewpoint interesting here in terms of what is 'real', the unreliable narrator etc. Sage notes uncertainly 'Perhaps I really did...'

Language use: Dickens: Latinate, formal lexis for narrative. Comic effect created by discrepancy between that and the colloquial dialogue. Ironic tone as part of satirical intent. Leisurely visual description of room followed by more emotive description of the boys themselves, which induces emotion in the reader. Much use of emotive lexis and many modifiers, 'Pale and haggard faces...' Cumulative sentences with parallel syntax leading to exclamation 'what an incipient Hell was breeding there!' Much metaphor. However, undercut by reference to 'grotesque features', reference to Mrs Squeers wiping her treacly fingers on a boy's curly head etc. Sentiment gives way to the ludicrous. Shows in use of metaphor, which varies from 'leaden eyes' to porridge 'which looked like diluted pincushions without the covers'. **Sage:** evokes a scene apparently much further back in time than the 1950s, as Sage is aware with reference to 'time warp'. Like Dickens's text this one has much that is visual and sensory. Much more realistic, less of a caricature than in Dickens, although the characterisation has something of Dickens's creation of eccentricity. Lexis less formal than Dickens, mixture of Latinate and colloquial, matter-of-fact. 'Functional illiteracy' side by side with 'out of sync'. In Dickens's passage mingling of Latinate and colloquial highlights the discrepancy between what Squeers pretends to provide and what he actually does provide, what he purports to be and what he is. Sage's use of colloquialisms, 'the real sticks', 'starting to look fishy' also highlights the reality of the situation she describes and her use of sarcasm, 'graciously cheated me through' enhances this. Something of the same effect as that produced by Dickens, of a place where everything is seedy and second hand, 'overpopulated rural slum'; 'cracked oilcloth scroll' etc.

Structure: Dickens: Short section from one chapter but extract crafted to use judicious mix of narrative, description and dialogue. Description makes much use of pairs and lists of three and is often cumulative in effect. Passage works partly through contrast between oppressors and oppressed. Effective rounding off of the passage with ‘and then school began again’. **Sage:** reader’s awareness of two simultaneous and overlapping viewpoints, those of the young and the mature Sage. Narrated largely chronologically, many paragraphs starting with time references. There is interpolation of viewpoint that could only have been arrived at with hindsight and maturity. Candidates need to be aware of both passages as extracts but may note that both passages have some feeling of being self-contained. Unlikely candidates will suffer through problems of contextualisation, despite the Nicholas Nickleby passage coming from a very long novel.

Setting: Both settings classrooms. **Dickens:** The only reference beyond the building is to boys ‘weeding’ or doing other chores of economic value to Squeers rather than of educational benefit to themselves. **Sage:** Evokes a number of different classes but refers beyond the school to changes in the wider world that eventually affected Hanmer. Claustrophobia of the schoolroom reinforced by the in-bred village society described. Evokes the pain of childhood, physical and mental as a ‘small people’s purgatory’. Sage’s effect achieved without much precise reference to the classrooms themselves, beyond reference to the stove for instance. Effective reference to show the reader that cold is the prevailing condition, warmth only achieved through a kind of disfigurement. Dicken’s description of the room much more full and precise, suggestive of the hierarchy and of the teachers’ parsimony being so great that they would sooner endure filth and squalor than spend anything on the school.

**Skills Descriptors
Question 2**

BAND 1: MARK RANGE 0 – 5

- AO1 technical weaknesses which impede the communication of meaning / unclear line of argument
- AO4 little understanding of different interpretative approaches
- AO4 little personal response based on slender evidence or misreading
- AO5ii very limited relevance to texts/context/task

BAND 2: MARK RANGE 6 – 12

- AO1 simple attempt at structuring argument / some use of critical vocabulary but some technical weakness
- AO4 reference to different interpretations of text
- AO4 some evidence of personal response
- AO5ii some limited awareness of links across texts/context/task

BAND 3: MARK RANGE 13 – 19

- AO1 use of critical vocabulary and generally clear expression / some structured argument
- AO4 some consideration of different interpretations of text
- AO4 evidence of personal response with some illustrative support
- AO5ii awareness of links across texts/context/task

BAND 4: MARK RANGE 20 – 26

- AO1 clear expression and use of accurate critical vocabulary / clear line of argument
- AO4 clear consideration of different interpretations of text
- AO4 clear evidence of personal response with illustrative support
- AO5ii clear consideration of links across texts/context/task
-

BAND 5: MARK RANGE 27 – 33

- AO1 accurate expression and effective use of appropriate critical vocabulary / well structured argument
- AO4 clear consideration of different interpretations of text and some evaluation of their strengths and weaknesses
- AO4 clear and detailed evidence of personal response with good selection of supportive references
- AO5ii detailed exploration of links across texts/contexts/task

BAND 6: MARK RANGE 34 - 40

- AO1 technically fluent style and use of appropriate critical vocabulary/ well structured and coherent argument
- AO4 perceptive consideration of different interpretations of text with evaluation of their strengths and weaknesses
- AO4 clear and detailed evidence of confident personal response with excellent selection of supportive reference
- AO5ii perceptive evaluation of links across texts/contexts/task

Question Two: In the light of your reading of Items Two and Three, write about:

- how far at least two of the critical viewpoints in Item Two throw light on the extract from *Nicholas Nickleby* that you have read;
- how far, from your study of English Literature at Advanced level, you agree with Penelope Lively's view that there is an advantage to reading as 'literary innocents'. You should support your answer with reference to texts you are familiar with.

(40 marks)

Bullet one:

The following points may be brought out in relation to: Item Two a):

1. humorous nature of the depiction;
2. denunciatory rhetoric;
3. pathos;
4. how far treatment appropriate;
5. memorable images.

Item Two b):

1. significance, or otherwise, of events and people in fiction being based on real life;
2. Dickens's use of caricature;
3. satire of genuine educational advertisements.

Item Two c):

1. potential conflict between seeing writer as individual and as product of his/her culture;
2. Dickens does not adhere to the stereotype;
3. use of satire and its purpose
4. novel as Marxist exposé or not;
5. autobiographical factors;
6. less conscious aspects of the writer's work;
7. use of comedy;
8. complexity of literature.

Bullet two: A question which invites the candidate to consider his/her individual relationship with text. The major focus is likely to be on the effects of studying textual analysis. Candidates likely in some cases to say that the enjoyment of text is dulled by detailed analysis. This is a valid view but would need to be backed up in detail by specific reference to text in order to score highly. For instance, they might well refer to their childhood reading and the intense pleasure they derived from particular texts at a time when an instinctual response was all that they knew and compare that with their response to a taught text. Their response to early reading would be likely to be predominantly one of empathy or otherwise with the characters, excitement evoked by the story, pleasure in the sound of words and would probably, as with Penelope Lively and her Nanny, be based on a response to characters as real people.

Their response to taught texts should be much more sophisticated, involving a realisation that literary texts are crafted in particular ways in order to manipulate readers in a variety of ways. Candidates would be expected to make reference in some detail to 'crafting' of texts and how it affects them as individual readers. More able students might be expected to see that reading as a 'literary innocent' and as a sophisticated adult both have advantages and disadvantages. They might look at some of the great children's books that work on a variety of levels, in order to show that while they responded to such texts in a simple but intense way as children, they are now able to see them in a different light. Similarly they should be able to see that a study of, say, Jane Austen, enables a reader to respond with knowledge and pleasure to satirical and ironic effects in a way that would be impossible for someone with no understanding of how the text works.

The aspects we might expect them to comment on in relation to the effects of studying a novel are; structure, setting, character; language and tone; themes or issues. They may choose to concentrate on one particular genre, in which case it will probably be fiction. However, they might compare the experience of hearing and chanting nursery rhymes and children's poems with the study of *The Ancient Mariner*, which would enable them to comment on the aspects they have in common while also bringing out the very obvious differences between studying a complex narrative poem and responding to a child's poem.

They might compare the effect of children's plays, pantomime, etc with the experience of Shakespeare in the theatre when seen with a detailed knowledge of how the play has been constructed to create dramatic effect.

Candidates may comment on the particular factors that affect their own personal response, such as: upbringing, education, geographical location, gender, class, race, religion etc. The answers should be judged on:

- the candidates' ability to present a balanced argument, weighing up the 'innocent' and the 'sophisticated' reader;
- how far the candidate shows understanding of contexts, eg the contexts of childhood and of adulthood; the contexts that shape our individual responses at all ages;
- the quality of the argument both in AO1 terms (fluency, structure, terminology) and in terms of the candidate's analytical ability.