

Examiners' Report  
June 2013

GCE English Literature 6ET01 01

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## **Introduction**

In general, centres continue to prepare students effectively for this exam, which is to be expected. All parties are reminded that the primary focuses for 6ET01 are AO1, 2 and 3 and that even then, the first and second of these dominate – only 20 out of the 100 marks available are apportioned to the third.

Accordingly, structure, form and language, concepts and terminology remain the key contributing factors, along with coherent, accurate written expression. Although many of the tasks attempt to support candidates by directing them explicitly towards techniques such as imagery, irony, tone and mood, language choices, dialogue, contrast, setting and characterization, there remains a tendency amongst a significant proportion to opt for narration and description, particularly in Sections B and C.

## Section A: Unseen Poetry and Prose

This part of the exam offers candidates a choice of response. Two unseen texts are set – one poem and one prose extract, followed by three short answer tasks. Candidates choose one or the other passage to answer on. The question is worth 20 marks and assesses AO1 (10 marks overall) and AO2 (10 marks overall).

### Question 1

The poem set was 'Candle at a Wake' by Elena Shvarts, translated by Sasha Dugdale.

**1(a)** This is an example of a candidate's response.

In this poem, the choice of language helps to set a certain mood. Overall, the diction creates an excited but hushed feel. The choice of language is interesting when the speaker says that s/he "singd" his/her eyebrows. The use of this word rather than "burned" or another such verb creates a soft feeling and a vivid mental picture, which fits with the muted tone. Language is also carefully chosen to create alliteration in some places, such as the "flickering... flame" and the implication that <sup>to</sup> whomever the speaker is talking to wishes to "whisper a word". This choice of words creates an echo effect, which again links to the dream-like, soft quality of the poem. The choice of the word "kiss" at the beginning of the poem also helps to highlight the ~~po~~ speaker's <sup>strong</sup> feelings towards fire, which is a prominent idea.



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This response scored full marks.

**1(b)** Surprisingly, given the number of times that it has appeared as a prompt, some candidates struggled with the term 'imagery' which principally means, for the sake of this examination, simile, metaphor and symbol. Accordingly, a lot of marks were missed, though some responses which dealt with the concrete descriptions in the poem were able to score. For those who did understand more fully what was intended, '*like a bud*', '*a band of magic / Thinly rings it*' and '*Their shell*' were all straightforward propositions. Many of the more compelling answers saw the play on '*band*' and '*rings*' or the use of '*fire*' as a motif, for instance.

**1(c)** Again, there were plenty of themes to comment on here and the majority of candidates were able to write about death, love and loss. There were also some interesting discussions of mourning and sadness, as could have been predicted, though some of these tended to get slightly confused about theme, and mood or tone. The supernatural was a popular choice with candidates, as was magic and these were both just about sustainable in the context, as was fragility. All too often, fire was identified as a theme, then considered as a motif (this was also true of light and dark and the candle itself) though from time to time a convincing case was made for its thematic property, especially when the concept of cleansing was more carefully contemplated.

Many students proved adept at handling the ways in which the writer developed theme though there was some repetition of examples used in 1(a) and 1(b) without making distinct points about them.

It was possible to consider one theme in detail here and get a score in the higher range.

## Question 2

The extract set was from 'Tender Is The Night' by F. Scott Fitzgerald.

2(a) This is an example of a candidate's response.

Fitzgerald uses image description of setting to create imagery. By noting the "lanterns asleep in the fig trees" and the "iris tangled at its foot," Fitzgerald evokes a sensory awakening in the reader, which allows them to marvel in the beauty ~~around~~ in the novel. Fitzgerald also describes a well with a "dark and slippery" boarder. This ominous image creates interest for the reader because it ~~creates~~ <sup>evokes</sup> a feeling of evil and is portentous and forboding due to the fact it is dangerous "even on the brightest days." The image of the "confessionner's window" filled with a myriad of colours and "sugar flowers," allows the reader to feel a child-like excitement at the vast array of choices. It is through the ~~innocent~~ <sup>innocent</sup> image and child-like ~~innocence~~ <sup>wonder</sup> that the reader becomes immersed in a beautiful world full of colour and hope; a perfect concept to have before the sinister well image.



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Examiner Comments

This example scored full marks for its handling of the writer's use of imagery.

2(b) Sound devices were, once again, the focus of the task here and comments from previous reports still precisely pertain: 'despite the oft repeated injunction... a surprising number of students ignored the notion of alliteration, assonance, onomatopoeia and sibilance, which appeared in (sufficient) abundance. There was a lot of pleasant but ultimately under-achieving discussion of "silence"...the requirement for answers to be very specific is entirely valid and there is every chance that it will be made again in this vein.'

2(c) This is an example of a candidate's response.

Fitzgerald describes the character as walking "rather quickly" yet contrasts this by saying how "at times she ... was ... static." These two binary opposite characteristics mean that the reader is unable to form a definite perception of the character therefore rendering the woman an untangible feature of the novel that we are unable incapable of connecting with. Fitzgerald also says that the woman only gives "an impression" of appearing as one thing. By constructing the character in this way, Fitzgerald creates doubt for both reader and character. It is as if the woman in the novel is unsure of her true identity therefore further qualifying the readers' inability to associate and empathise. Fitzgerald states that the woman "knew few words and believed in none." This emphatic statement shows that the woman ~~can~~ <sup>has</sup> no ~~importance~~ regard for oratory because she has no faith or trust in the select words in her vocabulary. Perhaps Fitzgerald's aim was to construct a character so disenchanted with the people of the world and their meaningless words that the only place where she can find solace is in ~~the~~ the <sup>quiet</sup> nature around her. Fitzgerald presents the reader with a woman approaching "meagreness" but who comes alive, much like the nature in which she surrounds herself, when confronted by colour, ~~beauty~~ beauty and serenity. The reader can infer from Fitzgerald's lengthy and vivid description of the landscape with its overlooking "seven hundred feet to the Mediterranean", that the scenery is as much of a character as is the woman. The author takes time to catalogue the "nasturtiums ... iris ... kaleidoscopic peonies [and] mauve-stemmed roses," which reveals that nature is characterised by its features and is as alive as humans.



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Examiner Comments

This response to 2(c) received 5 plus 5 and therefore the maximum available mark of 10.

## Section B: Poetry

### Question 3 (a)

'Home is where the hate is' proved a very popular prompt and fulfilled the desired aims of differentiating effectively and provoking argument: 'Yes it is' wrote some candidates, focusing on 'The New House', 'One Flesh' and 'The Ballad of Rudolph Reed' to name but three. 'No it isn't' argued others, selecting 'Frost at Midnight', 'The Old Familiar Faces' or 'Aunt Julia' say. Yet another group wanted it both ways and this too was fine. As ever, whichever route was taken, the key to achievement tended to lie in the success of the response's focus on the methods which writers used to suggest whatever they were being taken to suggest.

### Question 3 (b)

This is an example of a candidate's response.

The Candle Widdows also uses an interesting shift in narrative voice. The poem takes the form of a Petrarchan sonnet, which is typically a love poem, and could symbolise the love of God. The octave traditionally poses a dilemma, and the sestet offers a solution. In this poem, the sestet is the voice of the candle, symbolising the voice of God. The line 'What hinders' questions what is stopping the persona coming closer, and the fact that it remains unanswered shows that the poet is still conflicted. However, God appears to be presented as the 'solution' to the dilemma.



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Examiner Comments

This candidate scored highly - 13, 5, 17 = 35. In this extract, the comment on narrative voice is precise and effective in responding to the terms of the task.



## Question 4 (a)

This is an example of a candidate's response.

Both poems open with an exclamation. Beving Cliff starts by recalling the passionate joy and love of Hardy's relationship. The ~~with~~ lyrical alliteration of "that wandering western sea," creates not only the movement of the sea, but a bounding <sup>rising</sup> cadence, reflective of the joy seen in the exclamation 'O the eyes!' and the intensity and preciousness of colour in "the sapphire". This also contrasts with the end of the poem where the sea is described as "that wild weird western shore," without joy in a ~~and~~ a slightly alienated landscape. ~~It~~ At the end of this stanza, the joy of the memory is tainted by the use of the simple past tense ("I loved so") which brings a note of sadness as well as foreshadowing her death.



### ResultsPlus Examiner Comments

Here, the candidate's use of quotation and specific AO1 and AO2 focus are positive features of what was in general a strong answer, scoring 14, 5, 18 = 37.

### **Question 4 (b)**

'The best poems about land are the ones which care' – it isn't of course the *poems* which care but their writers or the narrative voices presented in them. Candidates' responses covered plentifully the uses of imagery, language choice, contrast, structure and form, rhythm and metre and narrative voice, with the best answers often focusing on the latter.

The contrary view was less often in evidence here, perhaps unsurprisingly, but there were those who were able to make a good case for poems about land not having to 'care' in order to be effective.

### **Question 5 (a)**

It was hard to find candidates who wholly disagreed that 'there's nothing funny about having to work for a living.' Very many headed straight for '*The Chimney Sweeper*' (which appears in all three 'Work' selections) and made the obvious point that there was absolutely nothing amusing going on there, before choosing another similarly unhappy piece and extending their argument by reference to that. This was a missed opportunity in some respects as there are poems in the anthologies which either deal with the topic in at least a mildly humorous way ('*CV*', '*It's Work*') or explore the possibility that people at work, whilst not rolling on the floor laughing, might at least be being gently amused, or amusing others ('*Hay-making*', '*The Artist*').

Candidates could have dealt with not just the content of the poems but the way in which mood and tone were created, for example.

## Question 5 (b)

This is an example of a candidate's response.

It is true to say that poems about work are often lively and 'full of energy' to represent the hard graft and effort that is required when working. 'The Blacksmiths' is a good example of a poem which embodies ~~the~~ the <sup>large amount of</sup> energy needed to continually work. However, poems don't always go down this route and some highlight the negative effects of this liveliness to great effect. <sup>whilst being more sombre too</sup> Whose to say that ~~as~~ the <sup>very</sup> best poems on work have to be full of energy? Poems such as 'The Chimney Sweeps' argue otherwise to some respects.



### ResultsPlus Examiner Comments

This introduction is highly successful in demonstrating a candidate's sense of wanting to present an argument from the outset. Whilst this strategy is not being presented as a perfect model, it certainly demonstrates a discursive approach and a clear sense of engagement. The response was scored 13, 4, 18 = 35.

## Section C: Prose

The prose section of the paper continues to attract a generally sound or better level of response. Candidates appear to understand what is required of them and there is often evidence in their answers of subtlety, insight and engagement. This said, a tendency to narrate or describe rather than analyse seemed to persist a little more than it had done for a while.

### Question 6 (a)

Social class was a happy hunting ground for a lot of students who had obviously been wholly versed in the status of Victorian governesses, for example. Accordingly quite a lot of contextual detail was presented, not always in a discriminating or relevant fashion. Indeed, there were many simplistic and overly-generalized commentaries on the heroine's position which moved little beyond the early phases of 'Jane Eyre'.

This obtained also for 'Wide Sargasso Sea' where the dense complexities of the social situation were not often thoroughly understood. 'The Magic Toyshop' was equally skimmed in a lot of cases – a bolt-on paragraph about Melanie's class transplant having to suffice when there was much more to say about the social roles of the Irish characters, for instance.

The best answers explored not just characterization but the use of contrast, setting, voice and imagery in approaching the remit of the task. There was relatively little "a Marxist would argue...", but it did appear and in this case was perhaps more relevant than has sometimes been true.

### Question 6 (b)

This is an example of a candidate's response.

... and 'Now... what a strange idea'. Thus the tense and atmosphere and mysterious mood is broken simply, which reduces the effect of the narrative.

However, there are other moments in the novel which consist of great mood and love, even when Brontë continuously shifts it. This can be seen when Jane awaits for Rochester to come back and relates her story to him of the 'speche' to him. The scene begins with a calm, soft love as Jane awaits for her master. Yet the mood gradually shifts to become more mysterious and this is done as Jane refers to the reader 'stay till he sees reader' and words like 'secret' and 'confidence'. The love becomes sombre because of the weather 'the winds

drifted... mass on mass' and this pathetic fallacy reflects the inner turmoils that Jane is experiencing, which readers do not get know of, thus ~~highlighting~~ increasing the feeling of uneasiness. This time, when the mood and tone shifts we welcome it, because the build up ~~anxiety~~ is resolved with the return of Rochester which shifts the mood to become lighter. This is seen with ~~the~~ the sentence structure: 'It was he', 'He saw me'. The short sentences ~~do~~ show Jane's relief, and so the reader understands that the mood now has been changed to become slightly more positive.



**ResultsPlus**  
Examiner Comments

This answer was given 13, 22 = 35. Here, the candidate maintains a strong focus on the question and makes purposeful use of both texts in extending the argument successfully.

## Question 7 (a)

This is an example of a candidate's response.

Similarly Greene also creates interest through his description of other mob members such as Spicer. He is described as 'dark, pallid and spotty', and the use of these ~~adjectives~~ adjectives ~~do~~ create interest, as the reader wishes to see how such a ~~bad~~ seemingly weak man survives in a mob environment. Spicer's description is bleak, however, by Greene making him one of the more moral characters in the novel, as despite ~~to~~ being partially forced to by Pinkie he would be, 'glad to be gone' from Brighton, and through this use of dialogue, Greene offers hope ~~at the end~~ in the bleak, depressing novel, which creates narrative interest.



**ResultsPlus**  
Examiner Comments

This extract indicates ways in which candidates can discuss a character without narrating - the focus here is on language and there is also clear addressing of the terms of the question. The eventual mark for this response was 13, 21 = 33.

## **Question 7 (b)**

Although the third person omniscient voice of the narrator predominates in '*Brighton Rock*', Pinkie, Rose, Ida and Corleoni are all given life through their dialogue or suggestions of their interior monologues. There was, then, room for a focused and technically-specific discussion starting with the extract from the end of the novel. Not many candidates wanted to have it. Those who did often had a good sense of how the voices were being presented and to what purpose (to provide variation, to develop character, to enhance setting, to extend theme and so on). There were those also, of course, who did not get far beyond simple recount.

As might have been predicted, those who chose '*A Clockwork Orange*' had a lot to offer in terms of their discussion of Alex and Nadsat. Sometimes, their analysis of this even outweighed their comments on the core text and this was perfectly acceptable as long as '*Brighton Rock*' was not fully swallowed up.

Those who had studied '*Lies of Silence*' were less numerous, as always, but there was some strong writing about the very specific voices of the novel and the relevance of them especially given the socio-political, historical and geographical settings of that narrative.

## **Question 8 (a)**

The theme of change in '*Pride and Prejudice*' held a strong appeal for many students though all too often what ensued was a blow by blow account of some of the most easily recognizable shifts in Elizabeth and Darcy. Not enough time was spent in many cases in looking at how the theme was presented and developed beyond plot and characterization. There was even less focus on whether or not change is not just central but actually 'at the heart of' the novel's interest. Whilst it is not intended that candidates side-step the task by saying 'No it isn't and I'm going now to write about what is...' there was more room for debate here than was generally allowed.

'*The Yellow Wallpaper*' sees a significant change in the mentality of the narrator, obviously, and once more, there was a rush to delineate this without any real sense of the more subtle aspects of mood and tone, for example.

'*The French Lieutenant's Woman*' was little touched upon here, which was a shame given the extent and richness of the change which is presented – Sarah's transformation alone would have potentially been sufficient material for an entire essay on this subject, had that been permissible.



## Question 8 (b)

This is an example of a candidate's response.

In this extract Austen, ~~highlight~~ also creates humour by highlighting Mrs Bennet's apparent lack of self knowledge when Mr Bennet comments that 'After a woman has not so much beauty to think of.' The lack of ~~knowledge~~ knowledge in characters such as Mr Collins also creates a comical effect for the reader as despite being a mixture of pride and obsequiousness, '...he had a very good opinion of himself.' This characterization of Collins is ~~an~~ comical effect created by this characterization of Collins is ~~is~~ reinforced through his dialogue as Collins's dialogue ~~is~~ speech ~~is~~ resembles a business proposal with his reference to figures: 'and that one thousand in the 4 per cent' 4 percents.' His desire to marry is due to pragmatic reasons ~~and~~ ~~as~~, he wishes to financial reasons. Although Mr Collins's practicality and obsequious nature ~~are~~ are comical to the reader, in the Yellow Wallpaper, John who is a pragmatist in



in the above, this fuels the narrator's descent into madness, with his rigid control on her life: 'She controls the medicines I take...' His practical nature and by contently infantilizing her with terms of endearment, 'little goose' means that the narrator begins to feel almost suffocated by his rigid structure.



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**Examiner Comments**

This response achieved a mark of 13, 33 = 36. In this excerpt, the candidate shifts neatly from the prescribed extract to the second text.

## Question 9 (a)

This is an example of a candidate's response.

The decision of self improvement correlates directly with the development of relationships in *Wuthering Heights*. For example, Heathcliff's decision to escape from *Wuthering Heights* and return with an improved social status has a profound effect on the relationship between himself and Catherine. As Nelly states, Catherine is 'heart broken' when Heathcliff leaves, to such an extent that she becomes ill. This use of illness is a device often repeated in the structure of the novel, indicating the extent of Catherine's grief. Nelly also states that 'his return will make a jubilee to her', which leads to much conflict within the marriage of Catherine and Edgar, as Heathcliff becomes the central source of Catherine's joy rather than her own husband.



**ResultsPlus**  
Examiner Comments

This is the introduction to an answer which scored full marks. From the outset it is strongly indicative of engagement with the texts and the task.

## Question 9 (b)

The prompt 'Irony and ironic situations' directed candidates straight towards AO1 and AO2. A very small proportion of the entry chose to get there via this route. There were plenty of opportunities for discussion, however, as all three texts are replete with irony and it could be argued that for the intelligent reader, this may well create the narrative energy. The tendency to go for recount was not absent in this case but there was perhaps slightly more purpose to it and a sense that student engagement was commencing from a higher base.

## Question 10 (a)

'Pride and Prejudice' had already gone as a title by the time Forster commenced 'Howards End', as everyone knew. The proposition was a happy enough one for most candidates, however – they were able to start with the Wilcoxes in many cases and move outward into the general fabric of the novel, with some noting the greater intricacies of Helen's position in the narrative, for example.

Stevens is certainly proud, in 'Remains of the Day' and, some argued, prejudiced. The use of narrative voice was of particular significance here and there was the usual amount of commentary about its reliability in this book. Some of this was pertinent and focused; some appeared to be ticking an aspect of a checklist.

There was, as ever, little discussion of 'The Shooting Party', but this too presented plenty of opportunity by which candidates could extend their argument.

## Question 10 (b)

This is an example of a candidate's response.

In Chapter 4 we are given a description of the tragedy that Leonard undergoes after getting Helen pregnant. Forster chooses to personify and emphasize (by capitalizing) another emotion; Remorse. It is represented as a fencer and a knife that "cuts away healthy tissue with the poisoned". Forster's metaphor is deliberately violent and conveys imagery of suffering and torment. This, and the earlier metaphor "a sword stabbed him" are both foreshadowing his death after being struck by Charles with the ~~point~~<sup>flat</sup> of a sword. The tragedy of Leonard is extended by Forster's description "Leonard had been ruined absolutely". The language choices of "ruined" and "absolutely" convey images of "the Abyss" that Leonard had been so close to. He has now fallen into it. Forster's choice of structure, a several long and detailed paragraphs, can be seen to represent the long, winding hopelessness of Leonard's existence. Leonard's ~~is~~ thought, that "There is nothing to choose between us, after all" encapsulates the tragedy of what has happened to him. He no longer

She sees herself as being someone aspiring to improve herself through art; instead he is crude and simple, a

reflection of what he perceives himself to have done to Helen "Some picture in the National Gallery slotted out of its frame".

In ~~the~~ *The Shooting Party*, Colgate begins with foregrounding the tragedy that the novel builds up to "It was an error of judgement which resulted in a death". Her language choice shows that "a death" can either be trivialised due to being caused by a mere "error of judgement" (a dismissive term) or as a statement made in anger, that a death could be caused by an error of judgement. As such, tragedy in *The Shooting Party* can typically be understood only through the plot and structure as unlike ~~for~~ Forster she is detached and this comment represents one of the rare points that ~~she~~ she uses an authorial voice.



### ResultsPlus Examiner Comments

This candidate writes with precision and clarity in discussing both *'Howards End'* and *'The Shooting Party'*. The final mark awarded was 14, 23 = 37.

## Paper Summary

Based on their performance on this paper, candidates are offered the following advice:

- Address the terms of the task as precisely as possible in Section A.
- Make use of appropriate terminology in Section A.
- Use, as a general rule, two examples in 1a and 1b or 2a and 2b.
- Quote from the text/s in all sections.
- Ensure that answers are based on the correct named text for the poetry anthology in Section B.
- Remember some part of answers in Section C need to deal in relatively close detail with the secondary text.
- At least parts of the response should be on the set passage in Section C if a (b) task is chosen.
- Avoid narrative re-count, plot focus and solely character-driven discussions in Section C.

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