

Examiners' Report  
June 2014

GCE English Literature 6ET01 01

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## Introduction

Centres continue to prepare students effectively for this exam, though there appear to be some messages that were expressed in previous reports that have gone unheeded by individuals and groups of candidates. All parties are reminded that the primary focuses for Unit 1 are AO1, AO2 and AO3 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 characterisation, there remains a tendency amongst a significant proportion to opt for narration and description, particularly in Sections B and C.

The tendency amongst some centres to take the 'other readers' injunction expressed in the specification to mean 'discuss schools of criticism' continues to lead some candidates down blind alleys - there is little need for or use in bolted-on comments beginning 'a Marxist / feminist / structuralist (delete as necessary) would say that...'. Some students can manage to weave theoretical constructs into their writing of course, but they tend to be in the minority. In this case, the 'other reader' is the voice of the question prompt and whilst it would be wrong to discourage teachers or lecturers from exploring wider issues with their students, there needs to be a judicious address of how such material is best used.

For the first time in some years, handwriting seems to have been a more pressing problem. Examiners are instructed to do their best to decode what has been committed to the page and there is plenty of understanding about how the pressures of time mitigate against perfect copper-plate script. However, it was often very difficult to decipher what some students had written.

## Question 1

Q1(a): This response is in answer to the prompt 'Sound devices are often considered to be an important feature in poetry. Discuss the use and effect of sound devices in this poem.'

The sound device of rhyme in this poem creates a steady pace to this poem. The rhyme scheme of mostly full rhymes creates a secure effect for the reader as it emphasises the steady pace and reassures the reader for the poem. The third person narrative creates a general sound device for the reader, the words 'let us' and 'let others' creates a second sense that the narrator is directly talking to the reader. This creates the effect of engaging the reader and making the poem more intimate. The Caesures within the poem create quite frequent pauses for the reader, creating half sentences and a less continuous sound device. The Volta in the middle of the poem separates the ~~the~~ narrators views towards the poem of love. This sound device creates a sudden change in rhyme from a more negative, with some half rhyme, to a perfect rhyme, intensifying the readers interest.



### ResultsPlus Examiner Comments

Q1(a): Previous feedback on this unit has stressed that what the stem is really after is comment on alliteration, assonance, sibilance, onomatopoeia or consonance for example. Remarks about rhyme are acceptable but need to be supported with specific examples. There has been a lot of discussion in recent years of plosives, fricatives and so on. This too is fine, where it is accurate and relevant. In this answer, hard though they try, the candidate is not scoring for comment on 'third person narrative' (which it isn't), caesura or the volta. The eventual score here was 1 out of 5.

The use of metaphorical imagery, in the ~~of~~ image of 'pour all our passion' adds a sense of movement to the poem and <sup>is an</sup> ~~has~~ unusual collocation as passion is not a physical ~~thing~~ thing, it is not a liquid. Furthermore the use of the term, 'pour' suggests the extent and energy that ~~it~~ is contributed into delivering the "great song". In addition the use of the graphic visual imagery of the 'churning blood the long shuddering quiet' adds a sense of horror and mystery to the poem. Furthermore

(c) In poetry, mood and tone are developed in different ways. <sup>the personification of</sup> ~~the~~ <sup>quiet makes it seem real</sup> ~~and~~ <sup>and the inclusion</sup> ~~of~~ <sup>of 'blood'</sup> ~~the~~ <sup>adds human</sup> ~~poet.~~ <sup>year and tension</sup>



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Examiner Comments

This candidate identifies two examples of imagery, as instructed, and comments to sound purpose. The mark for this script was 5/5.

The tone of this poem is mostly up-lifting. Millay employs the rather unusual first person plural by directly addressing the reader as "us" and "we". This encourages the reader to feel involved with the poem, but also ~~gives~~ makes the poem rather reminiscent of a prayer. ~~or~~ "Let" is used as the first word of three different lines within the poem, which is resonant of the phrase "Let us pray...". This communicates a sense of worship that the narrator holds for "great song", adding passion and excitement to the lines.

This sense of passion is heightened by the author's use of long, enjambed sentences - the entire poem is constructed of only two. This structure, coupled with the use of caesura ("of all the world: the churning blood"), makes the mood and tone of the poem seem quite unpremeditated and more like a natural thought process. This is complemented by the author's rather erratic rhyme scheme (ABBAABBACDCDCD) and eye-rhymes ("tongue/long") and use of blank verse - showing that the intensity of the excitement of the narrator is free from the constraints of poetic convention.



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Examiner Comments

Although the candidate does not necessarily 'nail' the poem's meaning or produce an answer with which everyone would wholly agree as regards to mood and tone, it is plausible and there is a good sense of method. The final comment is insightful and provides a good conclusion to this response. The eventual score here was 9/10.



The main theme in this passage seems to be money and excess. This is established in the first paragraph where we are told about Linda's "chunky inheritance". The adjective "steamed" "chunky" makes it seem as though Linda finds her inheritance to be a burden and something that gets in the way of her ~~to~~ enjoying her life, which shows the reader that Coupland doesn't approve of society's obsession with money and materialism. The next paragraph explains what we may have already deduced. The use of the phrase "lottery prize" suggests that Linda's position in life is down to luck and that hints that whether she finds what she is looking for will be too.

Another theme used is that of ~~sp~~ enlightenment. The passage tells us early on that Linda was "constantly searching for one person, one idea or one place" but at no point do we find out what exactly this is. This creates ~~an~~ excitement and makes the reader want to read on, but also reflects the fact that not even Linda knows what she is looking for. This is a theme that many readers will be able to relate to as plenty of people feel that their life is missing something, creating a sense of empathy between Linda and the reader.

The theme of identity is also important. Linda feels that people see her rather than her money and Coupland uses long bits full of descriptive adjectives, such as "psychedelic" and "velveteen" to create a rich, ~~the~~ luscious image of all

the things Linda has done and seen. However, Linda is only ever physically described as "beautiful" this ~~or~~ shows the reader that ~~a~~ ~~some~~ of identity is defined by the things you do and say. ~~no~~

(Total for Question 2 = 20 marks)



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**Examiner Comments**

This candidate identifies sufficient themes and comments on them effectively. This answer might have been even better if the section on enlightenment had included some comment on the use of 'light' imagery in the passage (without repeating material from Q2(b)). However, the final section does exemplify well. Even though not everyone might agree with the interpretation of the themes in the passage which is presented here, this is a credible and creditworthy answer. It scored full marks.



## Question 2

The use of the past - continuous in the narrative outlines the journey that Linda took and allows the audience to remain involved with the transformation of the character.

Linda became a beautiful but desperately unhappy woman, constantly searching for one person.

The use of the narrative voice as the writer also serves to reinforce the heavily personalised account of Linda's life: 'I'll add something else about Linda here too...'

Thus it is structured as an authorial account of ~~past~~ the character in the past, with the ground whittled to forge a sense of continuity.



### ResultsPlus Examiner Comments

There are some side issues with this answer, notably in terms of its use and exemplification of some grammatical terminology. It is, however, perceptive. Further, it is a model of conciseness - two examples are considered precisely and thoughtfully. An answer doesn't have to be absolutely perfect to score highly - this response was awarded 4/5.

The metaphor "the pinpoint of light trapped within her flesh capsule" creates an image of the human body being a mere container. ~~cap~~ "Flesh capsule" sounds purely perfunctory, as though it serves its purpose of carrying vital organs but does nothing else, and the noun "pinpoint" connotes ~~time~~ something tiny, as though positivity - a connotation of "light" - is only a very small part of her person. This makes a suggestion about the character of Linda and her amiability, and the attitudes of Coupland towards physical appearances and their worth.

~~The Coupland refers~~ In the extract Coupland refers to Linda's "chunky inheritance". The adjective "chunky" carries connotations of something cumbersome and difficult to handle, potentially indicating the money is not so much a help but a hindrance, an idea that could be explored further as Linda's process of self discovery develops.



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Examiner Comments

This is an excellent answer - well written and involved. The candidate was awarded 5/5.

### Question 3 (a)

Innocence is conveyed in "I remember I remember" by the rigid structure and rhyme scheme which not only hints at the perfection of his childhood and highlight the contrast between his current situation but also have a lullaby effect reminiscent of a nursery rhyme that captures the innocence of his youth. This is furthered by the repeated phrase "I remember, I remember". Similarly "The Old Familiar Faces" is reminiscent of a lullaby due to its refrain "All, all are gone, the old familiar faces" and this line is almost present at the end of the majority of stanzas it acts as a refrain which links to the idea of a ballad.



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In this excerpt from a longer response, the candidate structures and extends an argument in a more genuinely comparative way, sustaining a good focus not only on the poems but the techniques employed within them and, crucially, the terms of the task. The eventual mark was AO1: 13, AO2: 5, AO3: 18 (36/40).

### Question 3 (b)

In Michurick's 'The House', we also see a fight against himself and ~~the~~ 'its fifty years' however in a more prominent way than Larkin's. The lexical choices of 'permanence', 'territory' and 'fought' create a semantic field of war and danger, thus generating excitement and action for the reader.

Moreover, the personification of the house at the end of the poem when he suggests 'the house has swallowed me' perhaps instigates empathy from the reader in that the only hope in the 'torchbeam's yellow cylinder' and 'blade of light' has been 'swallowed' into 'darkness'.



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Examiner Comments

This candidate's neat use of quotations and sound, general analysis embodies, in many ways, higher achievement. It is, in short, typical of the sort of writing which has been successful in this exam. The mark awarded was AO1: 14, AO2: 4, AO3: 18 (36/40).

## Question 4 (a)

Even the titles of both poems, though obviously related to land, can be used as representation of the poet's self. Frost's title of 'Desert Places' evokes images of barrenness and desolation, as a reflection of the desolation of spirit of the poet himself. Similarly, 'Crossing the Water' is an ominous title, made more harrowing by the positives in the description of the "black boat". The dangers of this water, symbolic of the dangers present within Platts' mind in her depression, is emphasised by the stillness of the "expressionless Sirens". In Greek mythology the Sirens dragged sailors into their lairs, never for them to return and the gliding sound created by the stillness is reminiscent of the action of the Sirens dragging one in to their caves.



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**Examiner Comments**

Not every Section B answer scored 36/40 of course, but this creative interpretation also did (AO1: 13, AO2: 5, AO3: 18). The candidate's sensible focus on the titles of the poems (often neglected) is well developed into a good discussion of sound devices. The inclusion of some additional knowledge is also a positive feature here - though context is not being assessed, points which are relevant and which indicate a depth of understanding tend to be welcomed.

### Question 4 (b)

For example, in the poem "Crossing the Water" by Sylvia Plath, the reader is presented with a somber and somewhat gothic account of a lake, but because she has chosen to describe not just the physical elements of the lake, but the metaphysical interpretation of the qualities of the lake, we can infer many ~~to~~ abstract themes from it. Such as death and depression.



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**Examiner Comments**

Where possible, it is a good idea to try and take issue with the terms of the task. Here the candidate is not going to lightly agree that the best poems about land tend to deal only with the physical. They express that view in cogent and coherent terms (though it should perhaps be noted that 'gothic' is becoming a slightly over-used phrase in this unit). This answer scored AO1: 14, AO2: 5, AO3: 18 (37/40).

### Question 5 (a)

Irony is a multifaceted term, and not all candidates were comfortable in handling it here. 'The Chimney Sweeper' was widely used, with assessments ranging from biting satire to complete absence of irony. Candidates tended to be on firmer ground with Armitage, Fanthorpe and Zephaniah. There were impressive treatments of 'Haymaking' and 'Shearing at Castlereagh' as unironic celebrations of work. Some Marxist interpretations of Baillie came quite close to being convincing.

### Question 5 (b)

The poems 'Lullaby' and 'The Great Palace of Versailles' both make personal and political statements about work and society and this adds a greater depth and meaning. However I think it is the poems that make a political point but we can make ourselves useful and 'The Great Palace of Versailles' seems to do this a greater extent. Imagery is greatly important in writing and conveying this meaning which comes on each writing.



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**Examiner Comments**

This answer was awarded full marks. Notwithstanding the difficulty occasioned by the handwriting, the candidate lays out a clear programme in this opening paragraph, also suggesting that the essay will offer some useful, language-specific analysis.



## Question 6 (a)

It is a fair argument that the narrative only deals with female concerns, however it could also be argued that the text deals with others as well. Many have stated that Jane is the first advocate for feminism due to her subversive nature and journey throughout the narrative plot. Jane Eyre has been described as a gothic fairy tale as well as an autobiography. A hybrid text or a bridge of genres. Female concerns can be defined as the social and emotional turmoil that the female characters <sup>go through</sup> ~~and~~ as well as reflecting issues that both the intended audience and the modern audience can relate to. Such as the quest for love, social equality & and self discovery.



### ResultsPlus Examiner Comments

Too many answers to this task failed to pay sufficient (or any) attention to what might be meant by 'female concerns'. Here this candidate makes a purposeful start and there is some sense of having attempted to think the issue through. The mark for this essay was AO1: 15, AO2: 25 (40/40).

## Question 6 (b)

It can be argued that Jane does not control her fate due to the gender oppression in the novel. Brontë demonstrates the patriarchal society first and foremost through John Reed, the animalistic schoolboy, who despite having access to education, is introduced by the non-word 'Boh' and uses books as a muscle, in contrast to Jane, <sup>from</sup> whom education has been deprived and yet she escapes in these books and can apply her reading to use as results - she is intelligent. However, John Reed knows well the prohibitions

that come with his gender; he speaks in imperatives and curses Jane saying 'you have no business to take our books', as 'all the house belongs to me'. This patriarchal society, in which only men can own property, is directly mirrored in Uncle Ruggles, where Rochester refers to Antoinette as 'my wife', and says to Christophine 'I assure you the house belongs to me now!'. The patriarchal society is demonstrated through Brocklehurst and St John in Jane Eyre both who use religious blackmail to control Jane and try to determine her fate; Brocklehurst's domineering nature is emphasised through his stern cold description of a 'black pillar' who believes his mission is to 'mortify in these girls the lusts of the flesh', and likewise St John argues that Jane is 'formed for labour not for love' and 'claims her'.



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Examiner Comments

Much writing about this cluster focuses understandably on feminist interpretations of the texts. These can be variable in quality. Though there is a mild element of shoe-horning material into this question about fate and fatefulness, there is overall a good use of this aspect of the critical response to 'Jane Eyre' in particular here. Full marks.

## Question 7 (a)

Pinkie's survival is similar to Hale's in his manipulation of others. Pinkie forms his relationship with Pinkie ~~immediately~~ for fear they will "hang me [him]". He sees the possibility of survival through marriage as "a wife can't give evidence". The use of juratish ~~the~~ term "give evidence"

reflects the language of law, a reminder that Pinkie must survive the courts. The marriage ceremony ~~is~~ simply involves "[Signing] along the dotted line" This ~~is~~ ~~resembling~~ The image of a contract is in stark contrast to the images of a Catholic wedding, which is grand and ~~didactic~~ symbolic - unlike a building of "departments for births and deaths, for motor licences, for taxes and rates". Greene's continuous use of cold, impersonal language is a reminder of Pinkie's desire to survive. The similarities between the language used to describe Hale's survival and Pinkie's ~~survival~~ <sup>physically</sup> suggests the will to live and survive manifests itself the same in everybody - a universal feeling felt by all characters. The language of Rose's spiritual survival is summed up as 'hope', a word of joy and warmth - contrasting her survival from Hale's and Pinkie's.



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Examiner Comments

The passage reproduced here weaves its way through a potentially complex comparison of characters fairly deftly. This sort of approach is preferable to entirely linear discussion which often leads to simple narration of plot events. This essay scored AO1: 13, AO2: 22 (35/40).

## Question 7 (b)

~~On~~ On the lead up to Rose's suicide, Graham Greene demonstrates his many skills of building anticipation ~~for~~ for the character's final outcome. By ~~the~~ using heavy descriptive passages, ~~it~~ keeps the momentum driving forwards, whilst retaining the suspense. This is demonstrated by Graham Greene's use of heightened sensory images: 'A radio played ... motor-bike which roared and spluttered in the darkness,' and 'no light except in three windows.' ~~Immediately~~ ~~later~~ to set the scene for what is to come. He also uses this sensory images to play on what Rose ~~is~~ is feeling at the time; when ~~the~~ Pierre is ready for her to pull the trigger it cuts back to the ~~images~~ of imagery of the radio which 'had stopped' and the motor-bike exploding twice in the garage. ~~This~~ By showing heightened awareness in both Rose and the reader it raises the levels of suspense. As well as creating anticipation by building up gradually to Rose's final decision.



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Examiner Comments

In questions where the task is based on an extract, the kind of sustained attention to detail evident here is always likely to do well AO1: 14, AO2: 24 (38/40).

## Question 8 (a)

There was a lot of interesting writing in response to the 'over-stimulated imagination' prompt. Candidates varied in their opinions, as might have been expected. Some picked on the minor characters in 'Pride & Prejudice' with Lydia & Mrs. Bennet being obvious focuses. Others went straight to Elizabeth, with occasional detours around Darcy, which tended to be less convincing. 'The Yellow Wallpaper' provided ample opportunity to extend the argument - the narrator's extreme imaginings are at the centre of that story of course. There was some movement into how imagination (over-stimulated or otherwise) might have been presented via means other than straightforward characterisation, but these were less common, which seemed like a missed opportunity. Very few candidates dealt with 'The French Lieutenant's Woman' but there was plenty of scope for exploration of this issue in that text.

## Question 8 (b)

The character of Lydia in 'Pride and Prejudice' is also developed through the use of the epistolary style as she writes a letter to Elizabeth which shows just how materialistic and frivolous a character she is. Thinking that she loves Wickham; "if you love Mr Darcy half as well as I do my dear Wickham". Her letter however is mainly concerned with a leit motif of the novel; money. She tells Elizabeth that she would like "some help" expecting Elizabeth to buy her a house "Any place would do" and for ~~an~~ an income "three or four hundred a year". This characterises Lydia to be incredibly selfish.



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Examiner Comments

The epistolary style of 'Pride & Prejudice' features large in many answers. This is, of course, reasonable enough, even though its significance can easily be over-stated. Here the candidate does at least try and direct the comments about this technique towards the question. The eventual mark for this response was AO1: 13, AO2: 23 (36/40).



## Question 9 (a)

~~Heathcliff is a~~ ~~character~~ Brontë's introduction of the character Heathcliff is also a symbol of ~~how~~ <sup>what</sup> it is like to be different. He is a contradiction typified by Heathcliff. He is brought in and introduced as both a threat and a gift clearly showing ~~that~~ <sup>how</sup> his, ~~as~~ <sup>like</sup> Catherine's, fractured and fragmented social identity. We learn of Catherine's split character when ~~she~~ Lockwood discovers her 3 names 'Catherine Earnshaw, Catherine Heathcliff, Catherine Linton' on the headstone before the supernatural encounter. ~~From the start,~~ From the start, Catherine's ~~pe~~ character is unavoidable, it is ~~engraved~~ engraved into the text as well as the story. When Heathcliff arrives, he is given ~~the~~ <sup>the</sup> singular name of 'Heathcliff', clearly marking him as an outsider and as being 'different' from the rest of society. The name is of a black sun, so he ~~is~~ <sup>is seen</sup> ~~as~~ as a replacement. Throughout the novel, he is seen even when compared to the world of Wuthering Heights as being very different. He is fueled by a burning desire for revenge and ~~is~~ <sup>is</sup> commonly uses ~~casual~~ casual violence.



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**Examiner Comments**

This is a very competent answer. However the paragraph excerpted, though it retains a focus on the task, is trying to cover too much ground and it would have been better to concentrate in more depth on a smaller number of ideas. This said, the essay was highly successful, scoring AO1: 13, AO2: 22 (35/40).

## Question 9 (b)

Not very many candidates went for this option, which was something of a pity as there was lots of mileage in discussing drama and dramatic situations in any of the three named novels. Those who did answer on Q9(b) adopted a range of strategies, from spending the vast majority of their answer dealing with the specified extract to touching on it but briefly before embarking on a wider discussion of their chosen texts. Both of these methods can work, but as with all of the passage-based questions, it is probably better to aim for a balanced approach somewhere between these extremes.

## Question 10 (a)

Both these writers use their characters, the social world they evoke and the voices of their narrators to present the theme of progress. As some characters change for the better within the novels (e.g. Helen) but others do not (e.g. Tibby and arguably Henry), the idea of progress being 'inevitable' is not universal. However, ~~the fact that~~ change occurs for the better or for the worse in both novels, and most characters progress in some way. The structures of the novels do seem to suggest <sup>(on the basis of 'Howards End' around the conversion of Henry)</sup> that progress is, indeed, necessary.



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Examiner Comments

In this stylishly written conclusion to their essay on the concept of progress as it appears in the candidate's chosen texts, the argument previously developed is neatly and effectively brought to a close.



### Question 10 (b)

Leonard Bant, in *Howards End* is of lower working class origin but is constantly throughout the novel attempting to better himself through culture and literature but his efforts prove futile as he cannot raise himself any higher than what he is representing the permeability rather than death of these efforts to ~~change the~~ manipulate the class system, which ultimately causes



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Examiner Comments

This well-expressed and resourceful answer moves beyond the very obvious (deaths of characters) and into something a bit more complex. It scores full marks.

## Paper Summary

Once again, examiners were impressed by the resilience of very many of the candidates and the detail of their answers. Crucially, there is often plenty of evidence that those being examined have enjoyed what they have read and are happy to write about it. This is to the credit of all concerned.

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.
- Avoid narrative re-count, plot focus and solely character-driven discussions in Section C.
- At least parts of the response should be on the set passage in Section C if a (b) task is chosen.
- Remember that some part of the answers in Section C need to deal in relatively close detail with the secondary text.
- Ensure that answers are based on the correct named text for the poetry anthology in Section B.
- Quote from the text/s in all sections.
- Use, as a general rule, two examples in Q1(a) and Q1(b) or Q2(a) and Q2(b).
- Make use of appropriate terminology in Section A.

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