

Examiners' Report Summer 2008

GCSE

GCSE English Literature (1213)

Edexcel is one of the leading examining and awarding bodies in the UK and throughout the world. We provide a wide range of qualifications including academic, vocational, occupational and specific programmes for employers.

Through a network of UK and overseas offices, Edexcel's centres receive the support they need to help them deliver their education and training programmes to learners.

For further information, please call our GCE line on 0844 576 0025, our GCSE team on 0844 576 0027, or visit our website at www.edexcel.org.uk.

Summer 2008

Publications Code UG020134

All the material in this publication is copyright
© Edexcel Ltd 2008

Contents

1.	1213/01	1
2.	1213/2F	3
3.	1213/3H	7
4.	Statistics	11

1213/ 01 Introduction

The entry compared well with previous years, and this is now a very well established qualification: consequently, the great majority of centres are used to the style and structure of the question papers, and few problems arise.

The balance of entries, between Foundation and Higher tiers, was broadly in line with past years.

As in the past, there was a very predictable choice of texts, for both the coursework and the written paper: the 'favourites' do not seem to have lost their appeal, and while there is a wide choice available, it is clear that many candidates benefit greatly from the enthusiasm and expertise of teachers who are loyal to their own tried and tested texts. Once again, the take-up for Section D, on the written paper, was very limited, although there was interesting work from the few candidates who did answer on these texts.

The marking and moderating of the qualification went smoothly. Most centres are now very accurate and realistic in moderating coursework, and the moderators had to make relatively few changes to centres' marks. Standardisation within centres was, by and large, carried out effectively; and procedures for candidate authentication are clearly understood. The marking of scripts on-line is now well established for this specification, and threw up few problems.

Detailed comments on the question papers, on the standard of candidates' performance, and on the characteristics seen at various grades will be offered at 'Feedback' meetings, as part of the National Programme.

In the great majority of cases, centres 'double-up' with GCSE English (1203 or 1204). Many centres stick with assignments which they have developed and refined over the years and these suit the aptitudes of their candidates very well. Some originality is seen in the choice of assignments, particularly in individual collections of poetry, but the familiar 'Romeo and Juliet', 'Macbeth', 'Pride and Prejudice', 'Love and Loss' and so on are still predominant.

Almost all centres have become skilful and accurate in the assessment of candidates' work, and the submission of samples generally works satisfactorily. A small minority of centres still overlook the requirement to send the top and bottom marked work, and to replace any requested folders where candidates have withdrawn.

1213/2F

General Comments

It is evident that many candidates try to use the texts in a detailed and purposeful way to support the points made. Overall, there was a sound response to this paper and none of the questions appeared to present any particular difficulties and the majority of candidates were well-prepared. Some candidates, however, did not manage their time well, spending too long on Section A, thus not allowing adequate time to do themselves justice on the prose, and more frequently, on the Drama. Whilst, on the other hand, some candidates appeared to focus on their response to 'Of Mice and Men' to the detriment of the other responses. The take-up on Section D continues to be very small. Where no comments are offered on particular questions, this is because there were insufficient responses on which to base a generalise comment.

Section A: Modern Poetry.

Collections A and B continue to be the more popular, with rather less take-up for Nature. As always the more successful candidates focused on the questions, and recognised the need for comparison, which is an integral feature of this Section. The use of technical terms appears to have been rather better understood than in previous years and there appears to be a better focus on imagery and its effect on the poetry. Many candidates used the bullet points thoughtfully and constructively, though some perhaps showed an over-reliance on the bullet points for both the structure and content of their responses.

Q1

Both poems appear to have been understood and the more confident candidates were able to empathise with the themes of childhood. Comparisons were offered between the two texts.

Q2

Although this was a less popular choice, there was a wide range of responses across the ability range. This though did tend to produce some very ill matched choices which made it rather difficult to compare the texts. 'Electricity Comes to Cocoa Bottom' and 'Wherever I hang' were the more popular choices.

Q3

The responses to 'Not My Best Side' were varied and many candidates were aware of the original legend picked up on the humour of the poem. The interpretation of 'The Mirror' were less, perhaps less secure, and this influenced rather negatively the whole comparative element of the task.

Q4

This was a very popular question. The most successful responses were those who chose 'Digging' to compare with the set poem and thus focused on not only the theme of relationships, but more importantly on the idea of changing relationships.

Q5

This was not a popular choice. However, those candidates who chose it made sound comparison links. The theme of death was an accessible starting point for all but a very few candidates.

Q6

Very few responses to this question.

Section B: Modern Prose

'Of Mice and Men; continues to be overwhelmingly popular. It is evident that candidates respond with enthusiasm to the text.

Q7

This was by far the more popular of the questions. Candidates displayed a clear understanding of the plot and were able to give details of the central characters and their relationships. The responses were rather more superficial where George's hopes for the future were concerned.

Q8

Although this was a far less popular question the responses it elicited were focused responses. The more confident responses included more than two types of prejudice, although the majority of candidates appeared to focus on sexism and racism.

Q9

Although there were few responses to this question, the candidates did show an engagement with the characters and the writer's aims.

Question 10 - 18

Very few responses to these questions.

Section C: Modern Drama

'An Inspector Calls ' still dominates this section. However, most of the other texts are also taken up, only 'Talking Heads' being rarely offered.

Q19

A large number of candidates selected this question. Some candidates wrote about all the characters in turn and of their interaction in the play. Others were more selective and even considered the effects of Eva's own actions. The most confident responses noted the responsibility of society itself.

Q20

This was also a popular choice. The role of Mr. Birling was often responded to as a character study. However, the more confident candidates focused on the idea of development of Birling's character as the play progressed.

Q21

Candidates clearly enjoyed the study of this play. The answers were quite focused although there was a tendency to be a little too narrative.

Q22

This question resulted in some interesting responses in which candidates tried to answer the question directly rather than outline the plot. The first and last bullet points were the focus of discussion.

Q23

Candidates showed that they knew and understood the text. Most focused on each of the characters in turn and there was some comment on the characters' actions and motivation.

Q24

The responses were on the whole focused and showed a clear understanding of the importance of Marco. The more confident responses displayed a sound level of analytical skills.

Q25 & 26

Very few responses for these questions.

Q27

Some sound responses to this question. Candidates use of the bullet points produced well developed and focused responses.

Q28

Very few responses to this question.

Q29

Some rather general and narrative based responses . Although there were some relatively sound responses on the relationship between Smith and Evans, the third bucket point was often ignored.

Q30

This was a more focused response with candidates displaying a sound knowledge of the text and characters. However, the last bullet point tended to be ignored in favour of the candidates' opinions rather than of the other characters'.

Section D: Modern Literary Non-fiction

Very few responses to this question

1213/3H

Section A

There was a mixed response to the poems in this section. Some candidates attempted comparisons, but these were very often quite superficial and narrow. Candidates showed a sound understanding of techniques and some were able to demonstrate how a technique contributed to an overall effect. Examiners were, however, struck by the brevity of much of the work, and, in general, responses in this section were less developed and supported, and narrower, than those in Sections B and C. There were certainly very marked variations, more so than in previous years, in the quality of responses.

Q1

Technical understanding was sound, although many candidates did not fully grasp the meaning of *Send Off* or the poet's attitude or the soldiers' responses to their fate.

Q2

These were perhaps the strongest responses, with strong thematic understanding and well integrated technical analysis.

Q3

Technical understanding was sound. Some candidates at times overplayed the some aspects of *Death of A Naturalist*, and more could have been made of the death of the poet's innocence in both poems.

Q4 & 5

Very few responses to these questions.

Q6

Responses were well focused and demonstrated clear understanding of how effects had been created. Technical and thematic analysis was well integrated.

Section B

Most candidates chose to write about *Of Mice and Men*. Responses showed detailed understanding of the texts, though not all were well focused on the questions. There was a sense in which candidates seemed to have been over prepared, and many responses were somewhat formulaic and unfocused as a result. It is in this section in particular that candidates need to be reminded of the need for careful consideration of a question's wording and, therefore, requirements

Q7

There were many detailed answers, with good use of the text, but most candidates presented character studies rather than explorations of the roles of Curley and his wife.

Q8

Responses tended to dwell on aspects of character rather than on Slim's impact on others and the novel as a whole. Candidates tended to focus on quite a narrow range of incidents.

Q9

Candidates showed good textual awareness, and answers were well focused. This question was consistently well handled as a result.

Q10

Responses to this question demonstrated very strong evaluative skills and attention to detail - through, for example, reference to the amount of time the jury took to deliver their verdict.

Q11

Few candidates fully grasped the question, although some were able to explore aspects of the form of the novel, and there was possibly too much historical and sociological contextualizing.

Q12

Responses demonstrated clear focus and detailed textual knowledge

Q13

Many responses dealt successfully with the symbolism of the novel without fully addressing the author's intentions and views.

Q14

Very strong character studies were offered. Candidates recognized that the characters were extremes, but references to good and evil tended towards the obvious and superficial.

Q15 - 18

Very few responses to these questions.

Section C

Candidates chose from a wider variety of texts this year, which was very encouraging. Textual knowledge was excellent, but not all responses were well focused on the Questions.

Q19

Most candidates grasped the quite challenging notion of collective responsibility without fully demonstrating **how** the Inspector was used by the writer to explore the issue.

Q20

Well-organized and detailed responses concentrated on character rather than role and impact

Q21 & 22

These questions were consistently well handled, with strong focus and evaluative skills being shown. It was very encouraging to see detailed reference to dramatic and linguistic devices - for example, the importance of Frank's name.

Q23

Responses showed a thorough understanding of Alfieri's role, though most concentrated on him as a chorus rather than catalyst. Again, the "how successfully" aspects of the question were not fully grasped or explored

Q24

Responses suffered from a lack of focus, with most concentrating on Eddie's misdemeanours.

Q25 & 26

Very few responses to these questions.

Q27

Responses demonstrated clear, if narrow, focus on developing tension and the soldiers' responses to events.

Q28 - 30

Very few responses to these questions.

Section D

Very few responses to these questions.

Statistics for GCSE English Literature 1213

Option 1: Coursework, Paper 2F

Grade	Max. Mark	C	D	E	F	G
Boundary Mark	100	55	42	29	17	5

Option 2: Coursework, Paper 3H

Grade	Max. Mark	A*	A	B	C	D	E
Boundary Mark	100	76	67	58	49	38	32

Notes

Boundary Mark: the minimum mark required by a candidate to qualify for a given grade.

Further copies of this publication are available from
Edexcel Publications, Adamsway, Mansfield, Notts, NG18 4FN

Telephone 01623 467467

Fax 01623 450481

Email publications@linneydirect.com

Order Code UG020134

Summer 2008

For more information on Edexcel qualifications, please visit www.edexcel.org.uk/qualifications

Edexcel Limited. Registered in England and Wales no.4496750
Registered Office: One90 High Holborn, London, WC1V 7BH