

# Examiners' Report Summer 2009

GCSE

## GCSE English Literature (1213)

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## GCSE English Literature: 1213 01

Performance was very closely matched to previous years. The great majority of candidates gave a good account of themselves, and almost all Centres have a thorough grip on the requirements of the folder submission.

Almost all Centres are thorough and accurate in the assessment of candidates' work, and internal standardisation is generally carried out well. Some Centres still overlook the requirement to send the top and bottom marked work and to replace the requested folders where candidates have withdrawn.

The Shakespeare piece was often based on 'Romeo and Juliet' or 'Macbeth'. These pieces were usually well developed. However, Centres choosing assignments which focused on one scene will need to bear in mind the requirement that reference should be made to the text as a whole.

Pre 1914 prose pieces often lent on short stories, such as 'The Red Room', 'The Monkey's Paw', and 'The Signalman'. Longer texts were also offered, with 'Pride and Prejudice' by far the most popular. Where these pieces lacked depth, a tendency to summarise the story took the place of worthwhile analysis.

The poetry pieces were good, in some cases, with mature analysis of language and thoughtful interpretation: weaker pieces, however, offered little more than a commentary on the narrative of the poems, with very little meaningful comparison. This unit remains the weakest of the three, for many students.

The usual full programme of Assessment Support Meetings will be held in the Autumn Term, as advertised in the National Programme.



## GCSE English Literature: 1213 2F

It is clearly evident that many candidates try to use the 'clean texts' in a detailed and purposeful way to support the points made. There was the predictable choice of texts for the 1213 2F paper, particularly in the Prose Section. 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. Not all candidates, however, managed their time particularly well, perhaps spending too long on Section A. Hence they did not allow themselves adequate time to do justice to the Prose, and more frequently, the Drama. Some candidates, on the other hand, appeared to 'put in all their energy' into '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 generalised 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 showed a real focus 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, with reference to attitude and message, appear to have been understood. The more confident candidates were able to offer sound comparisons between the two texts capturing the disillusionment of Dulce et Decorum Est and the sadness of The Send-off.

Q2. This was a popular choice, there was a wide range of responses across the ability range. There appeared to have been no ill matched choices, Yellow and Brendon Gallagher being the most popular. The more confident candidates were able to compare and discuss childhood memories. Less developed responses offered little more than a narrative of both texts.

Q3. This was the most popular response. Responses to Mid-Term Break were varied and many candidates were able to pick up on the element of suspense leading up to the tragic and dramatic ending. The interpretations of 'The Barn were perhaps less secure, and this influenced rather negatively the whole comparative element of the task.

Q4. This was popular question, on a par with question 2. The choices for the second poem were wide ranging: Warning, Follower, Once Upon a Time, served as worthwhile comparisons. There appeared to have been no ill matched choices. Candidates who attempted the slightly less obvious choices such as Mirror and At Grass were able to compare successfully their choice with the set text.

Q5. This was not a popular choice. However, those candidates who chose it made sound comparison links. The theme of the force and power of nature was an accessible starting point for all but a very few candidates.

Q6. Very few responses

## Section B: Modern Prose

'Of Mice and Men' continues to be overwhelmingly popular. It is evident that candidates respond with enthusiasm to the text and 'have plenty to say' about it.

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 Lennie's character as shown through his behaviour and his relationship with George. Less confident responses simply retold Lennie's story and death. More confident candidates picked up on the element of escalating violence in Lennie's character.

Q8. Although this was a less popular question the responses it elicited were generally focused. The candidates did show an engagement with their choice of characters. The more confident responses discussed the reasons why the characters had these dreams and why the dreams could never have succeeded.

Q9. There were very few responses to this question.

Q10. Although this was not a popular choice, candidates who attempted this, did display an understanding of the character. The more confident candidates were able to look at the writer's skill in presenting the character of Bob Ewell. There were very few responses to the other questions in this section

## 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. The most popular choice was Sheila and then Eric, as these two characters lent themselves most obviously to the response. Those who attempted to discuss Mr. or Mrs. Birling were not as successful in putting their point across. The less confident responses were narrative based. There was little in the way of comparing the chosen character with one or two of the others.

Q20. This was also a popular choice. The role of Gerald was often responded to as a character study. However, the more confident candidates focused on the idea of development of Gerald's character as the play progressed, and discussed his ultimate failure to take on board the Inspector's message..

Q21. Candidates clearly enjoyed the study of this play (or viewing the video; which was frequently referred to...) The answers were quite focused although there was a tendency to be a little too narrative.

Q22. This was the more popular question and resulted in some interesting responses in which candidates tried to answer the question directly rather than outline the plot. The second and last bullet points formed the focus of most of the discussions.

Q23. Candidates showed that they knew and understood the text and the concept of honour and goodness. Basic responses were little more than a character study in narrative form. The more confident responses assessed and judged Eddie's behaviour within his cultural context.

Q24. This was a less popular choice. The responses were on the whole focused and showed a clear understanding of the importance of family relationships. The more confident responses displayed a sound level of analytical skills.



Q25 & 26. Very few responses to these questions.

Q27. Some sound responses to this question. Candidates' use of the bullet points produced well developed and focused responses. Less developed responses offered a descriptive or narrative approach to Raleigh's character. More confident candidates explored his sense of misplaced and youthful heroism .

Q28. Very few responses to this question.

Q29. There were very few responses to this question

Q30. This question provided some focused responses 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**

There were few responses in this section.



## GCSE English Literature: 1213 3H

In general, examiners noted wider variations in the quality of responses than in previous years. However, it was pleasing to see a larger number of completed responses,

In most cases, candidates wrote at greater length than last year. Focus on the questions appeared to be clearer, and the vast majority of candidates showed a more detailed knowledge of the various texts.

### Section A

Candidates attempted a range of questions, though Questions 1-4 proved to be more popular.

Responses demonstrated confident knowledge of the poems, though few candidates were able to combine technical analysis with comment on the poets' purposes and intentions. Candidate seemed to be clearer on themes.

Q1. Responses were very detailed, with contextual references being perhaps overlong. Although few candidates grasped the precise nature of the threat and humiliation, many attempted a comparison of themes. Again, few approached the technical analysis of language and device with any degree of detail or confidence.

Q2. This question attracted more technical analysis than Q1

Q3. There were some excellent references to language in these responses

Q4. These responses demonstrated a great deal of clarity about themes, but there was little comment on language or structure.

Q5 and Q6. were attempted by few candidates.

### Section B

Qs 7, 8, 9 and 10. proved to be more popular, although the most evaluative and analytical responses were to Q 14. Focus on the questions was a little clearer this year, with fewer candidates simply writing everything they knew about a text.

Qs 7 and 8. These questions were answered in roughly equal numbers. Many responses to Q7 were methodical, though without making connections between events. Few candidates were able to develop a view on the inevitability of the denouement, and many Responses eventually became valid studies of Lennie's character. In Q8, most responses showed a detailed understanding of the characters' situations, and their loneliness, in particular, but few dealt explicitly with entrapment. It was pleasing to see closer reference to Curley's position, with many candidates demonstrating a more sympathetic view of his loveless marriage and his dependence on his father. Textual support in the majority of answers was excellent.

Qs 9 and 10. These questions were not as popular as in previous years. However, responses were fluent, methodical and detailed. Most responses to Q9 were very wide ranging, but there was very little discussion of aspects of presentation, while Question 10 elicited some very careful identification of suspenseful incidents, but with, again, little analysis of literary technique and its impact on the reader.

Qs 11 and 12. Question 12 proved to be more popular. Responses were very fluent and closely argued, while the stronger candidates were able to develop a balanced and evaluative argument, showing that guilt was relative.

**Qs 13 and 14.** Responses to both questions were fluent and analytical, with Question 14 eliciting some very balanced and evaluative judgments on the various characters.

**Qs 15 and 16.** There were very few responses to these questions, Question 16 proving to be more popular. These responses demonstrated thorough knowledge of the text and close focus on the questions.

**Qs 17 and 18.** There were few responses to these questions.

### Section C

Again, these responses showed thorough knowledge of the texts. There were few references to dramatic device, and there were many references to film versions, and this made assessment quite challenging at times.

**Qs 19 and 20.** These questions were answered in roughly equal numbers. Responses to Q19 tended towards relevant narrative or character study, but they were well organized and focused on the behaviour and characters of the two women, if offering a somewhat narrow view of their relationship. There were some quite original responses to Question 20, with some well integrated references to the role of the Birlings' maid. Candidates dealt well with concepts such as hypocrisy and class.

**Qs 21 and 22.** Again, these questions were answered in roughly equal numbers. In Question 21 there was over use of evidence from the film version. Reference to the text was in a lot of cases limited. Responses tended towards narrative and characterization, although most candidates noted the role of family. Few responses drew connections between the various characters or noted their effect on Rita's development. Responses to Question 22 were methodical and identified failed relationships but few were able to analyse the causes of failure or, indeed, even to question whether there were "failures".

**Qs 23 and 24.** These questions were answered in roughly equal numbers. In Question 23, candidates strove to achieve some sort of balance, and they made pertinent comments on character but without necessarily coming to terms with the hubristic elements of the play. However, there were clear views on the dynamic of the relationship and the motives of the characters, with some attempt to attribute blame or responsibility. Question 24 encouraged candidates to consider aspects of stagecraft, and most responses succeeded in discussing the symbolism of the chair. Fewer candidates then went on to consider a wider range of dramatic devices, though there were many references to the screwed up newspaper.

**Qs 25 and 26.** Few candidates answered these questions, with most choosing Q26. Responses were detailed and methodical and identified aspects of delusion and dishonesty.

**Qs 27 and 28.** Most candidates chose Question 28 and produced detailed and methodical, if occasionally narrative, studies of character. However, few came to grips with the complexities of, and contradictions in, Stanhope's character.

**Qs 29 and 30.** There were few responses to these questions.

## Section D

Questions in this section proved to be a little more popular this year.

**Qs 31 and 32.** Most candidates chose to answer Q32, and there were many sophisticated, insightful and methodical responses. Most were able to identify aspects of humour but few were able to analyse their impact on the reader and so were prevented from achieving in the very highest mark band.

**Qs 33 and 34.** There were few responses to these questions, with Q24 the more popular. Answers were thorough and focused, and many candidates recognized bias in Anne's views.

**Qs 35 and 26.** There were no responses to these questions.

**Qs 37 and 38** There were few responses to these questions, with Q38 the more popular. Answers were thorough and focused, and many candidates recognized bias in Adeline's views and strove towards a balanced view of Niang's misdemeanours.

**Qs 39 and 40.** Although there were few responses to these questions, answers were focused and fluent with clear references to the writer's attitudes and techniques.

**Qs 40 and 41.** There were no responses to these questions.



## GCSE English Literature: 1213 01 Grade Boundaries

### Option 1

01 COURSEWORK

2F FOUNDATION

Paper No	C	D	E	F	G
Lwr	57	45	33	21	9

### Option 2

01 COURSEWORK

3H HIGHER

Paper No	*	A	B	C	D	E
Lwr	78	69	60	51	42	37

**Note:** Grade boundaries may vary from year to year and from subject to subject, depending on the demands of the question paper.







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