

Examiners' Report Summer 2007

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 Customer Services on + 44 1204 770 696, or visit our website at www.edexcel-international.org.

Summer 2007

Publications Code 019130

All the material in this publication is copyright
© Edexcel Ltd 2007

Contents

1. Introduction	1
2. Coursework Units	3
3. 1213/ 2F - Foundation Tier	5
4. 1213/3F - Higher Tier	9
5. Statistics	13

Introduction

This specification continues to enjoy the popularity of previous years, and centres seem to be very much at ease with the requirements of the syllabus. The balance of entries, between Foundation and Higher tiers, was broadly in line with past years, and the overall entry figure was also similar.

It is now some years since the introduction of 'clean texts', and there is clear evidence, in candidates' scripts, that teaching styles have evolved to respond to this change. The majority of candidates try to use the texts in a detailed and purposeful way, to support their points - and the degree of success with which this is achieved continues to be the major discriminator, across the ability range.

There was a very predictable choice of texts, for both the coursework and the written paper: the 'old 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. The take-up for Section D, on the written paper, continues to be small, although there was interesting work from the few candidates who did answer on these texts.

The administration, marking, and moderating of the examination went smoothly. Most Centres are now very realistic in moderating coursework, and the moderators had to make relatively few changes to Centres' marks. There was also clear evidence, in many cases, that internal moderation had been carried out well - indeed many folders bore two or more teachers' signatures. The recently introduced procedures for candidate authentication now seem to work smoothly.

Coursework Units

Unit 1: Pre - 1914 Drama

'Macbeth' and 'Romeo and Juliet' continue to outnumber all other texts put together, and in almost all cases this is used as a 'cross-over' piece, with English 1203 or 1204. Centres have been skilful in developing assignments which meet the requirements of the two specifications, and there is much good work produced for this unit

Unit 2: Pre - 1914 Prose

While short stories are a popular choice, there are also many different novels selected for this unit. The works of Edgar Allan Poe seem increasingly popular, while Jane Austen still holds her own, alongside Dickens, Hardy and others. Candidates seem to enjoy their work on this unit, and there are many very full and interesting responses.

Unit 3: Pre - 1914 Poetry

This remains the most problematic unit, for some candidates: although the 'feature - spotting', so often referred to in past Reports, seems to be slightly less frequent, it is still true that many candidates fail to engage with the texts in a meaningful way. Of course there are many folders which display a high level of personal response, alongside worthwhile analysis of language and technique, but this is not always the case. The poetry unit is still the weakest piece in the folder, for a large number of candidates, and generally the writing on poetry does not reflect the same enthusiasm as is often seen elsewhere. In general, the more narrowly focused assignments seem to work better than those - 'A Comparison of 5 Love Poems', for example - where the focus is less sharp.

1213/2F

Where no comments are offered on particular questions, this is because there were insufficient responses on which to base a generalised comment. Overall, there was a good response to this paper, and none of the questions seem to have caught candidates unprepared. Some candidates did not manage their time particularly well, perhaps spending too long on Section A, so that they did not allow themselves time to write at the same length on the prose, or, more frequently, the drama section.

Section A: Modern Poetry

Collections A and B continue to be popular, with rather less take-up for 'Nature'. As always, the more successful candidates showed a real focus on the question, and recognised the need for comparison, which is a feature of all questions in this Section. Many candidates used the bullet points constructively, though some perhaps showed an over-reliance on the bullets, for both the structure and the content of their responses.

Q1

Both poems seemed to have been understood, and responses to this question were generally good. The theme of death was an accessible starting point for all but a very few candidates.

Q2

This was the less popular choice, on this collection. 'Refugee Blues' was the most common choice, for the comparison, and this often worked well.

Q3

'I Shall Paint My Nails Red' continues to bring out some good responses, and this question was, in general, handled well, across a wide range of ability. The understanding of 'Still I Rise', or the interpretation of it, was perhaps less secure.

Q4

This was the less popular question; and 'Death of a Naturalist' was paired with a range of other poems - some were more appropriate choices than others, however.

Q5

This was much more widely chosen than question 6, and the focus which the candidates were given, the poet's reaction to the animals, led to some very worthwhile responses.

Q6

Very few responses.

Section B: Modern Prose

'Of Mice And Men' continues to be overwhelmingly popular - and it is clearly evident from many candidates' responses that it is (still) taught with great enthusiasm and freshness.

Q7

The two questions were more or less equal in popularity, and were handled with more or less the same degree of success. For Q7, some candidates did not do much more than simply relate the 2 characters' part in the narrative: the question asked for an assessment of what Crooks and Candy contributed to the novel, however, and this proved more difficult for some.

Q8

The majority of responses agreed with the proposition, and drew on characters such as Curley, and Lennie, for illustration. 'Unfriendly' 'was perhaps less well thought through than 'violent', in some cases, although there was some good writing on characters such as Crooks, for example, or Curley's wife.

Q9

This straightforward question appealed to most of the candidates who chose this text, and it was generally answered quite well. Candidates found a great deal to admire in Atticus, as a citizen, as a lawyer, and above all as a father.

There were few responses to other texts in this Section.

Section C: Modern Drama

Although 'An Inspector Calls' still dominates this Section, most of the other texts are taken up in significant numbers: only 'Talking Heads' is rarely offered.

Q19

This question proved straightforward, and most candidates divided their time sensibly between the two characters - though a few responses devoted much more space to Sheila, and this imbalance was a factor in the mark. The bullet points were used sensibly.

Q20

This more abstract question was much less popular, although where it was attempted some very good answers were seen.

Q21

Few responses.

Q22

Most responses supported the view of Frank put forward in the question, and candidates often displayed a detailed knowledge of the text in illustrating this. There

were some aspects of his character which were rarely mentioned - his sense of humour, for example.

Q23

There was a more or less equal split between the two questions on this play. This question worked fairly well, although there was a tendency to offer narrative without comment in some responses.

Q24

The demands of this question were met reasonably well by those candidates who did try to assess her 'importance', but other responses simply gave accounts of Catherine's part in the narrative, with little or no attempt at analysis.

Q25 and Q26

Few responses.

Q27

Hibbert's character was assessed in some detail, by most candidates, and opinion was divided on the proposition in the question. On this text, this was by far the more popular question, and it was generally done well.

Q28

Few responses.

Q29

Candidates tended to write more on Bamforth than on Mitchem, but overall the detailed knowledge on display was quite impressive. This was by far the more popular question on this text.

Q30

Few responses.

Section D: Modern Literary Non-Fiction

There were few responses to this Section.

1213/3H

Most candidates seem to have done themselves justice, and there were no particular difficulties reported with any individual questions. The selection of texts was not quite as narrow as on the Foundation Tier, but was still based firmly on those central texts which have proved so popular, over the years: as with Paper 2F, comments will not be offered where there were insufficient responses on which to base a generalised comment.

Section A: Modern Poetry

As in past years, most candidates bore in mind the requirement, which applies to all questions, to offer comparisons between texts. Many responses were well structured, presenting and illustrating a point of view in a clear and logical way. In Section A it is obviously important for the two, or more, poems to be given more or less equal treatment, and most candidates achieved an appropriate balance. Most of the interpretations offered were soundly supported by detailed textual reference, and in general the candidates seem to have been well prepared, and almost invariably they were able to offer cogent interpretations.

Q1

On this question, some of the many lengthy responses listed the external features of 'The House', before getting to grips, perhaps more purposefully, with the theme of childhood memories. Comments on 'Brendon Gallacher' were often perceptive.

Q2

Responses tended to focus on the darker side of various 'dramatic moments', here, rather than on any great optimism - perhaps unsurprisingly, as popular choices for comparison were the War poems. Sound comparisons were drawn, in many cases.

Q3

'Not My Best Side' seemed more accessible, but there was good writing on both poems.

Q4

This question produced an interesting range of pairings, with 'Mid-Term Break' the most popular. Comments on technique were often developed, and well illustrated.

Q5

The central issue in this question, of relationships, gave candidates a direct route into these poems, and there were some well developed comments on the presentation of this theme.

Q6

Few responses.

Section B: Modern Prose

As with the Foundation Tier, 'Of Mice And Men' was the overwhelming choice. In general, this Section is possibly the strongest, for many candidates: they seem to have been well prepared, and the detailed knowledge displayed was often very impressive.

Q7

For this question, some candidates spent describing 'The American Dream' in general, rather than focusing directly on the characters in this book: obviously a background knowledge and understanding of the context, and of dust bowls and the Wall Street Crash, and so on, are all vital in an appreciation of this book - but in some candidates' answers this information took the place of a direct response to the demands of the question. There were, however, many thoughtful and developed answers, based on an interesting spread of characters.

Q8

For many candidates George's complexity lay in his perceived ambivalence, in his attitude towards Lennie. Other starting points proved equally successful. A minority of responses took the view that George was not complex, and this case was also well illustrated, in some cases. Overall, the grasp of narrative detail, and the sense of engagement with, and enjoyment of, the book was very impressive.

Q9

The 'mockingbird' symbol seemed well understood, and this question worked well.

Q10

Very few responses.

Q11

Few responses.

Q12

Few responses.

Q13

This question was the more popular of the two, and Piggy was widely regarded as having a major role in the themes of the novel. Many perceptive and well illustrated responses were seen here.

Q14

There was some interest in this question, but responses tended to lack the sharpness of focus sometimes seen elsewhere.

There were very few responses on the other texts in this Section.

Section C: Modern Drama

As with the Foundation Tier, 'An Inspector Calls' still dominates this Section.

Q19

This question was not as popular as Q20, however, many of those candidates who did attempt this question wrote in some detail about their two or more chosen characters. The conclusion most frequently arrived at, was that there were clear distinctions, usually along generational divisions, into 'good' or 'bad'.

Q20

Some candidates wrote about Eva's character, and her part in the narrative, rather than about the dramatic technique - which was what the question demanded - but many others took this opportunity to respond to the play in an interesting and original way.

Q21

Take-up was about even, on these two questions. This question saw most responses opt for the 'message', making good use of the wealth of available material.

Q22

Some responses were mainly narrative, giving examples of sadness and/or humour, without much comment or analysis. At the top end, however, this question gave candidates scope to write with insight, and to display an awareness of the writer's craft.

Q23

In some responses it appeared that candidates made no distinction between 'inevitable', and tension-building - and they therefore lost some focus on the question. However, there were many others which did the question justice, making many relevant points. Alfieri's role in the play was often given prominence.

Q24

Opinions were divided here: the question gave candidates a clear opportunity to focus on Catherine and Beatrice, and most candidates showed a detailed understanding of the developing relationships within the play. The aspect of presentation was not always dealt with in equal depth.

Q25 and Q26

Few responses.

Q27

A few candidates took a somewhat pedestrian approach, offering little more than an account of events in the play but others engaged with the writer's dramatic technique very successfully.

Q28

Some responses treated the soldiers collectively, whilst other candidates, in total contrast, based their responses around making distinctions between them. Osborne, Stanhope, Raleigh and Trotter were all considered as exhibiting some of the relevant qualities. Both questions on this text produced some very good writing.

Q29

This was the more popular of the two questions, and 'power' was examined from an interesting range of perspectives: there were many thoughtful responses.

Q30

Mitchem's character, and his role in the play, gave candidates plenty of material, and this question was also done well in many cases. In Q29, Mitchem also made frequent appearances, although Bamforth perhaps drew more comment, as the concept of 'power' was discussed.

Section D: Modern Literary Non-Fiction

There were few responses to this Section.

Statistics for GCSE English Literature 1213

Option 1: Coursework, Paper 2F

Grade	Max. Mark	C	D	E	F	G
Boundary Mark	100	52	40	28	16	4

Option 2: Coursework, Paper 3H

Grade	Max. Mark	A*	A	B	C	D	E
Boundary Mark	100	76	66	56	47	38	33

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 019130 Summer 2007

For more information on Edexcel qualifications, please visit www.edexcel.org.uk/qualifications
Alternatively, you can contact Customer Services at www.edexcel.org.uk/ask or on 0870 240 9800

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