

# Principal Examiner Feedback

## Summer 2010

GCSE

GCSE English Literature (1213)  
Paper 3H (Higher)

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## GCSE English Literature 1213 3H

Examiners noted many positives this year. Responses generally showed evidence of more detailed engagement with the texts and more confidence in the use of textual detail, and it was pleasing to see candidates responding at greater length. There were far more methodical and supported responses and fewer broad brush generalisations. Candidates offered more comment on techniques and language, though there was some uncertainty and lack of clarity about purpose and intention and authorial attitudes. Candidates were clearer on the themes of texts, but relatively few were able to offer worthwhile comparisons between texts or connections between events. Responses were generally clearer, though many examiners noted increasing problems with expression and spelling, and it was certainly encouraging to see fewer rubric infringements or responses in which nothing was written.

### Section A

Candidates wrote about a variety of poems and answered from a range of sections. There was a tendency towards vagueness and lack of clarity about theme and intention, and responses still tended towards the reductive. Comparisons were weakly drawn or absent, and technical analysis tended to identify aspects of language and structure without fully relating this to the overall impact on the poems. However, responses were methodical and comments well supported.

Q1. Possibly the most popular choice. Many candidates interpreted the poems a little too literally, and examiners felt that a worrying proportion of candidates failed to understand the imaginary nature of the death in "Brendon Gallacher". Much of the detail was narrative, although candidates were clearer on "Death in ..." and were able to identify attitudes and intentions.

Q2 Although most candidates saw that the poems were written as if by children, only a few were able to analyse what was specifically child-like about the writing, though most were able to identify some aspects of child-like language.

Q3 Few candidates were able to analyse the nature of the emotions presented, and few were able to explore the poets' attitudes, particularly so in "Miracle .."

Q4 Although tending towards narrative, all responses showed a grasp of themes and attitudes.

Q5 Few responses, though more than last year.

Q6 Again, candidates were unable to explore the nature of the emotions presented. Although, again, responses were methodical and showed some technical awareness.

### Section B

#### General

As in previous years, "Of Mice and Men" proved to be the most popular text, although responses were drawn from a range of texts in this section. Examiners commented on the level of textual detail and support in the responses, although all were keen to point out that there was far more evidence of scaffolding, question spotting and over preparation of the anticipated questions, to the extent that a few candidates were unable to answer the questions set. So, for example, candidates spotted the

reference to themes in Q 7 and Q10 and then went off in search of all of the themes in the novels without looking more carefully at what the questions demanded.

Q7 Responses tended to list the lonely without fully exploring the causes of their loneliness. Candidates might, perhaps, have been better off turning the question around and exploring how loneliness impacted on the novel. It was pleasing, however, to see reference to author- to the playing of solitaire, for example.

Q8 Most candidates were clear about the nature of prejudice, but few explored the "most" aspects of the question so responses again tended simply to list the lonely and downcast.

Q9 Again, there was a high level of detail about the various prejudices but little exploration of the shared nature of behaviour and attitudes, or evaluation of Scout's attitudes or changes therein.

Q10 Many responses simply listed all of the novel's themes, and while many noted the varieties of family life, only a few were able to explore the impact of this on family members. Having said that, there were a number of very interesting and original comments about Calpurnia's importance.

Qs 11 and 12 Were generally focused, although a little narrow. Few responses dealt with the inevitability of Snowball's downfall, so there was a tendency towards the descriptive and narrative. Contextual references, though valid, were perhaps slightly laboured.

Q13 Was more popular than Q14, but responses to both questions were tightly focused and explorative, with clear references to author and attitudes. Contextual references were, again, slightly overdone, in some cases.

Qs 15 and 16 Were attempted by relatively few candidates, but focus was clear throughout, and there was well integrated reference to author and technique.

Very few candidates attempted Qs 17 and 18

## Section C

### General

Although some responses were rushed and /or incomplete, Section C was where many of the strongest responses could be found. It was pleasing to see closer focus on the questions and clear reference to dramatic device. There is obviously an issue of time-management here which some candidates need to address. That age old mantra, "divide your time equally", has increasing resonance, we feel.

Q19 Sometimes tended towards the descriptive and narrative with an overview of the characters' behaviour rather than attitudes, but there was certainly clarity about the nature of prejudice, with many sophisticated explorations of the role of women. There were also many equally sophisticated references to the nature of the class divide.

Q20 Again, the focus was on behaviour rather than impact and role, but it was pleasing that most candidates at least made the obvious point that it was Daisy's sacking which set in motion a sequence of events. Some candidates grappled with Birling's qualities as a parent but could not explore his effect on the children.

Q21 Responses were focused but quite narrow, with much reference to events in the film version.

Q22 Candidates seemed very comfortable with the issues raised by this question, and it was pleasing to see reference to many of the minor characters. Again, though, reliance on events in the film version was increasingly evident.

Qs 22 and 23 These questions proved to be popular and were generally answered well, but there were surprisingly few references to the importance of culture. It was here that we saw clear and pleasingly relevant references to stagecraft and device - for example, to the screwed up newspaper.

Qs 25 and 26 Were answered by relatively few candidates, but responses were of a universally high quality.

Q 27 Was considerably more popular than Q28. Responses were very focused, though there were many generalisations - about Hibbert in particular- and few were able to offer a rounded and balanced exploration of all three characters.

Qs 29 and 30 Were answered by relatively few candidates, but responses were focused and methodical, with much supporting reference to stagecraft. Many candidates offered sustained explorations of the nature of humour and shock in Q29, and most were able to offer more balanced views of the characters in Q30.

#### **Section D**

Very few candidates answered questions from this section.

## GCSE English Literature: 1213 Grade Boundaries

### Opt 1 01, 2F

C	D	E	F
58	45	32	20

### Opt 2 01,3H

*	A	B	C	D	E
79	70	61	52	42	37

### Opt 3 01T, 2F

C	D	E	F
58	45	32	20

### Opt 4 01T,3H

*	A	B	C	D	E
79	70	61	52	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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