

Candidate Style Answers

OCR GCSE English Literature J360

Unit A664 Literary Heritage Prose – Examined unit

This Support Material booklet is designed to accompany the OCR GCSE English Literature specification for teaching from September 2010.

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Introduction

OCR has produced these candidate style answers to support teachers in interpreting the assessment criteria for the new GCSE specifications and to bridge the gap between new specification release and availability of exemplar candidate work.

This content has been produced by subject experts, with the input of Chairs of Examiners, to illustrate how the sample assessment questions might be answered and provide some commentary on what factors contribute to an overall grading. The candidate style answers are not written in a way that is intended to replicate student work but to demonstrate what a “good” or “excellent” response might include, supported by examiner commentary and conclusions.

As these responses have not been through full moderation and do not replicate student work, they have not been graded and are instead, banded “middle” or “high” to give an indication of the level of each response.

Please note that this resource is provided for advice and guidance only and does not in any way constitute an indication of grade boundaries or endorsed answers.

Unit A664 Contemporary Poetry - Unseen

Question

GOLDING: *Lord of the Flies*

How do you think Golding makes this moment in the novel so frightening?

Candidate A

When the twins Sam and Eric were guarding the signal fire on the mountain top, they saw what they thought was the beast. The boys, especially the littluns, have been afraid of a beast being on the island really almost since they first arrived there. Sam and Eric managed to keep the fire alive, and when it blazed up they heard a plopping noise and saw the thing move. They ran down to the beach to tell the others what they saw. "It was furry. There was something moving behind its head -- wings. The beast moved too." In the passage, Ralph, Jack and Roger, armed with three wooden spears have bravely gone to see if what Sam and Eric saw is really the beast.

What Sam and Eric saw was really the body of a man wearing a parachute. In the chapter called "Beast from Air", Golding tells how there was an explosion in the sky from the war and a "figure came dropping swiftly beneath a parachute" and "the figure sat on the mountain-top and bowed and sank and bowed again". So there is no real beast there only a dead man wearing a parachute. But Ralph, Jack and Roger don't know this so they in a frightening situation here and I feel frightened for them. Anyway, if this really was a beast then three wooden sticks wouldn't have good enough for the boys to defend themselves. They are so scared at the end of the passage that they run away leaving "the three abandoned sticks".

I think Golding makes this moment in the novel very frightening. The boys don't know what they're going to see. I can tell they are afraid, though it is brave of them even being there, as they "crouched together" so whatever it is would have less chance of seeing them. Golding makes it a bit like a scene in a horror film. It is dark but the moon is about to come out, and the boys see its face suddenly in the moonlight. It is described as "the ruin of a face" so it must have horrible injuries. This would be very frightening for the boys. When the creature lifts its head, the wind roars again like an animal or a monster and so the boys run away.

This is a frightening moment in the novel because the boys are trying to hunt the Beast. They run away because of what they see and tell the others that there really is a beast on the island.

Commentary

The response needs to look more closely at the extract and Golding's language. It takes too long providing background to the extract. Although the candidate clearly knows the novel in some detail, the too brief focus on the extract (coming in the penultimate paragraph) means that this is a middle response.

Candidate B

In this extract from the novel, Ralph, Jack and Roger, though frightened and armed only with three sticks, are approaching what Jack has described as “a thing”. Sam and Eric said this thing was the beast. The three boys are frightened and Golding makes the scene frightening for the reader.

The setting is a frightening one. It is night-time, but not completely dark as there is “a patch of lighter sky where in a moment the moon would arise”. The boys’ situation is dangerous, high above the “glittering lengths of the lagoon” and the “long white smudge that was the reef”. Golding has taken away all colour from the scene and made it seem to be taking place in black and white. When colour does appear, it is green “Green lights of nausea”, brought before Ralph’s eyes by his unexpected contact with “the cold soft ashes of the fire”, a sensation which makes him almost physically sick. When the ashes blow into his face from the dead fire (darkness and death seem linked in this frightening place) Ralph almost faints as “the top of the mountain was sliding sideways”. Fainting on the top of this mountain with the lagoon and reef so far below would be very dangerous and makes the reader frightened for Ralph. Jack taunts Ralph by asking if he’s scared. Golding uses a much more powerful word than Jack’s schoolboyish one; Ralph’s fear has for a moment “paralysed” him, making him incapable of movement.

The sounds Golding describes are the sounds of fear. Twice the wind is said to roar, like an animal, hungry to swallow them. Roger’s breath is “a hiss” as if fear has turned him into something less than human. Ralph hears the chattering of his own teeth, another sign of how frightening this moment is.

Golding builds up tension in the extract to make it still more frightening. The boys see close to them “a rocklike hump where no rock should be”. After two “leaden” steps that show Ralph’s reluctance to approach this “hump”, the sudden sliver of moon reveals the frightening figure of “a great ape” now asleep but ready to wake up and terrify the boys. Finally, as the wind again roars, “the creature lifted head” and they see “the ruin of a face”, like some horror from a nightmare. This is the climax of the extract and the boys run in terror.

The boys have no idea that they have seen a dead parachutist, whose parachute has been caught by the wind making the body appear to move and come alive. This extract confirms their worst fears; that they are on an island inhabited by a beast ready to prey on them. The extract is frightening to a reader, and shows why the boys report to the others that there really is a beast on the island.

Commentary

This response selects and evaluates material from the extract to support the view that this moment in the novel is frightening. It does this by focusing closely on the extract, avoiding giving any lengthy background by way of introduction. The reference to the beast being a dead parachutist shows wider knowledge of the novel. It focuses well on how Golding’s use of language contributes to the frightening atmosphere of the extract. This is a higher response.