

# Examiners' Report November 2012

## GCSE English 5EH2H 01

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## Introduction

The unusual nature of this series clearly affected the nature of the intake: entry was limited to those candidates retaking the qualification after certificating in Summer 2012 and thus the entry numbers were relatively small. Candidates demonstrated greater familiarity with the rubrics and layout of the examination.

This report will provide exemplification of candidates' work, together with tips and comments, for those questions where we saw a significant number of responses. The specification in English Language, now into its third year of examination, consists of three elements:

- Unit 1: English Today - 20% (controlled assessment)
- Unit 2: The Writer's Craft - 40% (examination)
- Unit 3: Creative English - 40% (controlled assessment)

Unit 2 is assessed for skills in **both** reading and responding to drama and prose texts **and** candidates' own writing.

### Section A: Shakespeare

As in the past, *Romeo and Juliet* was the most popular choice of text but *Macbeth* seems to be closing the gap. Very few candidates chose to answer on *The Merchant of Venice*.

The (a) question, on character, continues to be the question which candidates seem to be most comfortable with. The picking out of a number of valid points about character, supported by appropriate reference to the extract and explained clearly, allows candidates to access band 1. Better answers tend to consider the complexities of the character. Only a small number of candidates fully appreciated the variety of traits shown by the Nurse or by Macbeth.

The (b) question focuses on performance and there is no doubt that the quality of response continues to improve as more candidates leave aside the temptation to write about peripheral features such as lighting and props. It is encouraging to see a greater number of candidates considering the mini extract in some detail and exploring what the language tells us about characters' thoughts and feelings. It is important that candidates not only make suggestions about performance but also explain why they are making them.

Candidates should also visualise the scene clearly. A significant number suggest that characters should 'wave their arms about' (to signify any one of a vast range of emotions from panic to anger) without realising how it would look in practice. The best responses often consider the impact that a performance technique would have on an audience.

The (c) question is worth the most marks in this section but the quality of candidates' responses was disappointing overall. A successful answer must focus on **one other part of the play**. This must be chosen carefully and identified clearly, although act and scene numbers are not expected. Unfortunately, many candidates go on to discuss a second part, or even a third, fourth and fifth. When this occurs, examiners will only give credit for the single part that is treated with the greatest degree of success.

Answers are often brief and many do little other than describe what happens. It must be remembered that this is a question about a theme and its significance in the chosen part of the play. Candidates must not write an essay about the theme, however. **Significance** can be interpreted in a number of ways and I suggest that these are covered by the following:

## **Character**

For example, what we learn about a character's attitude to, say, 'power' in the chosen part.

## **Relationships**

For example, how differently Macbeth and his wife perceive 'power' in the chosen part.

## **Ideas**

For example, what Shakespeare appears to be saying about 'power' in the chosen part.

## **Structure**

For example, why that particular part occurs where it does and how the audience are affected by it.

## **Plot**

For example, what the chosen part does to further the plot and how that impacts on our understanding of the theme.

I have adopted the acronym **CRISP** for the above and candidates, I hope, will benefit from discussing at least one from the list in their response. As it is, few go much further than suggest how their chosen part affects the plot.

## **Section B: Prose**

As in the past, *Of Mice and Men* was the most popular text.

The (a) question on character can be approached in very much the same way as the Section A character question and, again, candidates seem comfortable and fairly confident in their approach.

The (b) question focuses on language and it is important that candidates do not turn this into another character response. Much depends on candidates' ability to analyse at word and sentence level and successful answers often use sentence structures that foreground a language feature, as in 'The word \_\_\_\_\_ shows that .....'

The (c) question is on a theme's importance in one other part of the novel and the comments made on the Section A (c) question also apply here. Candidates who discuss several different parts are disadvantaging themselves. They must comment on importance and not just describe what happens. In addition to this, they must comment on context. The contextual focus in the *Of Mice and Men* question was on the rarity of close friendships in a working environment that was seasonal and migratory.

Candidates must write enough that is relevant and rewardable if they are to access marks in the top band.

## **Section C: Writing**

Candidates must remember to leave enough time to do justice to this section, which is worth 50% of the marks: a number of responses were too short to gain access to the higher bands.

The writing tasks are on subjects that candidates are familiar with and which do not rely on specialist knowledge. A range of approaches is welcomed and there is no need to apply rigidly the conventions of a specific genre. The tasks often require candidates to present their views on a subject and this can lead to an assumption that a piece of persuasive or

argumentative writing is required. This is not necessarily a problem but it can become one if certain features of persuasive writing, for example, become too prominent. This can be illustrated with reference to the questions on this paper. Some candidates, writing about school uniform (question 12) felt that they should use some statistics or expert comment to support their views and used the time-honoured technique of inventing some of these. Unfortunately, less proficient candidates then made the mistake of assuming that these cold statistics were the argument (e.g. 98% of pupils in the survey did not want school uniform therefore uniform must go). This was to the detriment of any attempt to present a coherent and reasoned point of view.

Similarly, the fact that this task asked for the text of a speech often led candidates to write down a list of rhetorical devices in their planning. There followed a determination to include as many of these as possible but they were not always effective. Too many rhetorical questions can be counter-productive and contrived alliteration can be inappropriate.

However, these are pitfalls rather than widespread failings. It is good to see so many candidates engage in thoughtful planning of their responses. Structured, paragraphed prose, accurately presented is the keystone of a successful piece of writing.

## Question 1

B) When the nurse says "some aqua-vitae, ho! my lord! My lady! She would probably be holding her hand and looking at her sorrowfully. At this point she is kneeling over her bed holding her hand thinking what might have happened to cause such grief. She would have a sad expression on her face due to shock.

As Lady Capulet enters the room she would probably be standing next to the door looking confused as she has heard the nurse. As she enters the room she would enter fast as she is keen to know what all the noise is about. She would

(Section A continued) then go over to the nurse and ask her what has happened standing close to her. ~~She~~ When she asks the nurse what's the matter she might put her hand on her arm showing her gentle side, as she wants to know what has made the nurse so upset.

When the nurse says "look, look! O heavy day! she might look up to the sky with her hands in the air, wailing from the grief.

As Lady Capulet finds out what has happened she then runs over to Juliet

and as she says "my child, my only life!" she is sitting on the bed with her arms around her daughter. Her eyes would have then filled up with tears. ~~Her~~ Her emotions then change as she says "revive, look up". When this is said she might shake her to try and wake her up, while doing so she is looking up to the sky/heavens hoping that she will wake up. Whilst this is taking place she is panicking as she doesn't know what to do with herself.

(Section A continued) She will have a sad/angry expression on her face as she wasn't expecting this to happen to her only child. Lady Capulet then says "or I will die with thee". When she says this line she could be looking at Juliet hoping that she will hear. She is likely to be crying and in a state of shock. She could also be shaking as there is no response from Juliet. When she says this she might whisper it to her so that no one else hears ~~her~~ her. She then looks at the nurse sadly instructing her to go call for help! "Help, help! Call help!" When she says this her tone of voice will have changed and her voice will have been raised. She would still be sitting

on the bed ~~talk~~ with Juliet so she is  
with her daughter. The nurse will  
then rush out.



**ResultsPlus**  
Examiner Comments

The (b) question response, here, does not suggest extravagant actions and explains the suggestions that are made. It was awarded a mark in band 2.



**ResultsPlus**  
Examiner Tip

Concentrate on what the characters must be thinking and feeling and how the actors would show these thoughts and feelings.



## Question 2

(c) Another part of the play that involves power is when Lady Macbeth convinces Macbeth to kill Duncan. Lady Macbeth has power over the situation and of Macbeth, which is ironic because Lady Macbeth becomes weak later in the play and kills herself.

Lady Macbeth questions Macbeth's manhood, 'are you a man?'. This is doubting his power and authority as a man because if men were considered to be stronger. It also questions his pride and spurs him on to do what she asked.

Even later in the play, Macbeth is seen questioning other people's manhood which goes to show how much power that question had over him.

Lady Macbeth appears to be all the more powerful when she says, 'dashed his brains out, had you so asked'. It shows that she would happily kill for Macbeth and it is a good way to guilt him into succumbing to her will.



### ResultsPlus Examiner Comments

This is a sound band 1 answer which clearly focuses on a relevant part of the play. Some points about significance are made, although they do not go very far.



### ResultsPlus Examiner Tip

Remember CRISP when discussing significance.

## Question 7

a) In the Extract the writer presents George as a demanding person 'Come on. Give it to me'. This shows that he is a commanding person and can be a leader. He is strong willed and wants people ~~do~~ to do what he wants.

It also shows that George is ~~strong~~ <sup>sympathetic</sup> 'Aw, Lennie!'. This shows he is considerate of others and doesn't want to upset people. He is at times nice to Lennie and doesn't want him to feel bad. He for instance like a father figure. The writer also shows ~~that~~ George to be ~~cares~~ caring 'That mouse aint fresh'. This suggests that he is ~~cares~~ caring and looking out for Lennie's best interests ~~but~~ like a father figure. This shows that

(Section B continued) he wants to care for someone and may be lost with out Lennie.

George is persuaded that he doesn't like trouble. 'You get another mouse this is said to be so Lennie will be quiet and cheer up. This will be easier for George and allow him to take the mouse easier.'



### ResultsPlus Examiner Comments

This is a band 2 answer for 7 (a). The first points are sound but the final one ('George ... doesn't like trouble') shows a degree of perception.



### ResultsPlus Examiner Tip

Empathise with the character and try to appreciate his or her underlying motives.

B) The writer says "slowly, like a terrier who doesn't want to bring a ball to its master, Lennie approached, drew back, approached again." This ~~shows~~ shows George and Lennie's relationship all over again as George is Lennie's master and looks after him just like the master to the dog. So the writer is saying Lennie's behaviour is like a dog's. The writer uses the word 'whimpering' for Lennie which ~~is~~ <sup>most people would</sup> find strange as Lennie is so big so you wouldn't expect him to be whimpering like a baby. So here's another bit where the writer is referring Lennie to a baby. When the writer says "Lennie's lip quivered" this shows Lennie's childish behaviour as you'd rarely see a grown man cry, especially rarely see their lip quiver but you'd see a child do it all the time.



### ResultsPlus Examiner Comments

This 7 (b) answer just manages to edge into band 2. There is a clear focus on language and the references are explained adequately.



### ResultsPlus Examiner Tip

Concentrate on the effects the writer is achieving and how individual words and phrases work on the reader.

7c) I feel that we see the significance of their relationship in the novel when George and Lennie are discussing their dream together in the bunk house whilst Candy is there. I think that the way Steinbeck always uses short sentences that always has such power with ~~the~~ the bond between George and Lennie <sup>feels</sup> you with their emotions. The dream that they both have is important because it's what they both cheer up each other with as Lennie wishes to 'tend the rabbits' George can't wait to start their own life on a ranch. This is the moment where they both actually ~~believe~~ believe that they can put a deposit on the ranch they like by the end of the month. The excitement between

(Section B continued) them makes we feel <sup>happy for them</sup> ~~it's~~ and it's like they deserve it. Candy is the one that makes their dream believable with his money, but the two are over the moon with Candy's offer. As this make actually make their dream come true. George and Lennie have always ~~imagined~~ imagined their life on their own ranch together would be just the two of them, but

with Candy's kind offer they find it  
in their relationship to let someone  
else share their happiness.



**ResultsPlus**  
**Examiner Comments**

The candidate selects a relevant part which is significant in the relationship between George and Lennie. However, there is no consideration of context, which could have been dealt with by discussion of why the dream was so important to them. A mark at the bottom of band 2 was awarded.



**ResultsPlus**  
**Examiner Tip**

You must choose just one relevant part of the novel, consider its significance and link it to a point about context.

## Question 11

Write your answer to Section C here:

November the 17<sup>th</sup>, 2012.

To the producers of the Daily mail.

It has recently come to my attention that the people in my local community have no clue what to do when it comes to improving the environment. With your help I would like to give others a helpful nudge in the right direction.

First of all I was hoping it would be possible ~~to~~ for you to dedicate <sup>just one</sup> ~~a~~ page of your newspaper ~~to ways that~~ on ways that they can help out the local community. If you are feeling unconvinced, allow me to explain a few reasons why.

It is important to keep our environment

(Section C continued) fresh and prevent our young children from breathing in the harmful toxics produced from cars, factories and gas stations. Do you really think that it is at all healthy for anyone to be breathing in the thick toxic clouds of smoke that manage to blend in with the ~~once~~<sup>once</sup> fresh air? Wouldn't it be nice to wake up and breathe in clean ~~air~~<sup>uncontaminated</sup> air on your walk to work? However, it's not just oxygen we need to work on. For example the hazardless contraptions built upon large stretches of green, otherwise known as ~~&~~ parks, need to be knocked down and rebuilt. With many of them being built years ago they are no longer fit enough to have children clambouring over them. With splintered wood and ropes now hanging ~~entirely~~<sup>by nothing</sup> but a thread.

There are many ways the local community can help out with just a small amount of encouragement. For example one of the most obvious ways people can start improving the environment is by the simple method of walking.

(Section C continued) Why waste your petrol money for a five minute trip down the road? There's just no need, especially on those nice sunny days when the sun is beating down and birds are tweeting a merry little tune. Who wants to be stuck in a <sup>hot, stuffy</sup> car ~~to~~ when you could be out and about taking a nice relaxing stroll without the worry of changing gears, long traffic queues and constantly checking the speed limits as you turn down a new road.

You can even get your kids involved! Get them out of the house and into the garden during Spring or Summer and let them help out with the gardening. Freshen your lawn and and life to the empty pots of mud that were left unattended during the cold bitter months ~~of~~ <sup>of</sup> winter. A great way to water your plants is to purchase a ~~water~~ rain catching tank or if you can't afford one, ~~even~~ <sup>just</sup> leave around a few empty buckets to catch the drops instead of wasting



(Section C continued) fresh drinkable water from the taps.

Even if the locals don't have ~~the~~ a garden of their own, there are many other things they can do such as renting or buying a bike and cycle around in the wildlife, view all the sights nature has to offer. This would mean CO<sub>2</sub> wouldn't be bleeding into the atmosphere from ~~less~~ <sup>the</sup> ~~vehicle~~ vehicle transportation. It would take by going without a bike.

For the sake of our local environment and the world around us, I really hope you take this letter into deep consideration.

Yours sincerely,  
Shannon



### ResultsPlus Examiner Comments

This is a securely organised piece of writing which develops some relevant ideas. There are a few errors and sentence structures are not invariably under control but it has enough positive qualities to merit marks in band 3 for both AO3 (i) (ii) and AO3 (iii).



### ResultsPlus Examiner Tip

Try to use specific examples from personal experience to illustrate your points.

## Question 12

Write your answer to Section C here:

Good evening and thank you for coming to my listening to my part of the debate on School uniforms.

I'm not going to mess about and I'm going to get straight to the point. I am for school uniforms, its a good effective way of going about things and I shall explain why.

First of all school uniforms look smart, and any head teacher will agree no-one wants a scruffy school as it does not look good on them or the students. Smartness of uniforms is good for other things too, for example if someone looks smart chances are they will probably feel smarter too and that can result in improved grades.

(Section C continued) Next up. Say an Ofsted inspector goes in to two different schools. One with a uniform structure the other with none. From the Ofsted inspectors eyes he will see a school with a good clothing structure and good discipline and another that doesn't care and therefore has no discipline in that area at all, one will score higher than the other for sure.

Now this is a debate and the other side may go "What about our uniqueness" to that I say school is a place of learning and doesn't need the pupils or students to be galavanting in hoodies and trackies in a civil place of learning!

Some may say "Uniform is too expensive" and to that I say yes it may be expensive for a £10 blazer to be £40 because of a logo but do you know what? It's a sign of commitment, not only to the school but also proof of your commitment to your child's well being.

I know people ridicule the idea of school uniform but there are far more good points than bad.

(Section C continued)

The other day I saw a parent sending their child into school for the first time, and as they knelt down in front of their child checking their uniform I heard her say "you look so smart sweetie" and that's what I mean when I say that as strange as it is uniform can bring people together and it does inspire pride.

During one of my other speeches a working class mum said to me "I can't afford to pay for uniform, what should I do?" I told her that she had two options, get a loan which nobody wants or just contact the school as I'm sure they would be happy to help.

Sometimes it is a case of accepting that it isn't going to change anytime soon and you might as well start looking at the good points because what else can you do?

~~As a brief summary~~

Uniform has another upside to it that some of you might not see and that is that if a child has that self pride from looking smart then there is a

(Section C continued) Chance that the new confidence could inspire him or her to work harder and get better results which makes the school look even better another added bonus.

As a brief summary look at all the good points I've given you; discipline, confidence, inspirational, smart looking and even better grades. Those problems are nothing against that and I've even given two solutions to the money side of things. Come to my side of things and things are a lot brighter. I know you want to and I hope you do. Thank you for your time and have a nice week!



**ResultsPlus**

**Examiner Comments**

This is a confident, no nonsense speech which develops a consistent argument and has clear features of spoken language. It was awarded marks near the top of band 3 for both AOs.



**ResultsPlus**

**Examiner Tip**

Be firm about expressing and supporting your own point of view.

## **Paper Summary**

The take up for this November 2012 examination series was relatively small as entry was limited to those candidates retaking the qualification after certificating in Summer 2012. The level of achievement was lower than the summer series. Future candidates must manage their time effectively and should be encouraged to practise (c) questions for Sections A and B.

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