

Examiners' Report  
November 2014

GCSE English 5EH2H 01

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## Introduction

This being a resit exam, there was a comparatively low number of entries. Perhaps because candidates had previous experience of sitting the paper, most were able to organise their time well. There were proportionately fewer examples of undeveloped responses or of candidates leaving out questions altogether.

In Section A, twice as many answered on Romeo and Juliet compared with Macbeth, and very few answered the Merchant of Venice questions. The overwhelming majority of candidates answered the Shakespeare character (a) questions fully and successfully. Responses to the performance (b) questions continue to show improvement and many more candidates seem to have a better idea of how to approach the theme (c) questions. Nevertheless, a sizeable minority tend to spend too much time on the first two traits at the expense of the third, which is worth more marks.

In Section B, Of Mice and Men remains by far the most popular text, with Heroes a distant second. Practically all candidates discussed relevant material in their responses to the character questions, whilst the question on language still poses problems for those candidates who, mistakenly, tend to approach it as a second question on character. Those who answered on Heroes, however, coped particularly well with the language question. As in Section A, the theme question still poses problems for those who don't choose a specific other part of the text on which to base their answers. General discussions of the theme or a list of numerous episodes in the text which may have some relevance will inevitably fail to get high marks.

Question 11 (writing an article about a town or city) proved the more popular choice in Section C, with many candidates writing enthusiastically about what is, presumably, their home town. The most successful of these responses were carefully structured, connected well with a teenage audience and, of course, demonstrated a high degree of technical accuracy. A lot of responses to question 12 (a speech about a person admired by the candidate) were less well developed and structured. Those that planned their response along the lines of 'there are four reasons why I admire this person...' tended to be more successful.

## Question 1

- a) Most candidates were able to identify two or three aspects of the Nurse as demonstrated in the extract: that she is tired, or old, that she has a close relationship with Juliet and that she makes a judgement (albeit ambiguously) about Romeo. Some candidates drew a comparison between the Nurse and Juliet's mother, which was broadly acceptable if it did not lead off on a tangent, but the most successful were those who recognised that the Nurse was deliberately teasing Juliet. As some candidates pointed out, the Nurse is 'a wind-up merchant'.
- b) Where candidates had recognised that last point, above, their response to the performance question had greater focus. Most were able to comment on the Nurse's exhaustion but the response had extra sharpness if this was seen as a melodramatic ploy to frustrate an eager Juliet.
- c) Although the play clearly revolves around love and marriage, it is important that candidates focus on a carefully chosen other part of the play. There are plenty to choose from, including Romeo's persuasion of Friar Lawrence. Those candidates who wrote in very general terms about Capulet's attempts to arrange a marriage for Juliet, and what this shows us about customs in Shakespeare's day, failed to do themselves justice. However, more candidates are heeding the advice to comment on significance by discussing what the chosen part tells us about at least one of the following: **character**, **relationships**, the play's **ideas**, its **structure** and how the chosen part drives the **plot**. The acronym CRISP is catching on and is clearly helpful to the majority of candidates who can't rely on flashes of brilliance.

This 1a) response was awarded a mark in band 3.

(a) In this extract Shakespeare describes the scene when the Nurse brings Juliet the news from Romeo about their marriage.

The Nurse sees how excited and impatient Juliet is to hear the news, but she withholds it on purpose for a comic effect. In stead she talks about her illnesses - 'how my bones ache! what a jaunce have I! how my head aches! What a head have I!'

She is doing it in order to tease Juliet & play a joke on her. The exclamations suggest that the Nurse is being very dramatic & over-the-top & I think she is doing it to get some attention.

The Nurse is not going to give out the news easily & keeps playing a teasing Juliet. Just when Juliet thinks she is going to tell her something

(Section A continued) she suddenly changed the subject - 'What, have you dined at home? Where is your mother?' The Nurse withholds the information to make herself look important & build up suspense.

We can see that she enjoys being Juliet's messenger, but she says just the opposite - 'Beshrew your heart for sending me about to catch my death with jauncing up & down!' She is doing it to give importance to what she is doing.

We can see that the Nurse goes in detail to describe Romeo's physical appearance & compare him against other men - 'His face is better than any other man's,' ... ~~and for a hand and foot & a body, though they be~~. This is highly inappropriate, & shows her as rude & vulgar.



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Examiner Comments

The candidate has pinpointed with accuracy much of what the Nurse is doing in this scene. There is a perception that her teasing is creating comic effect and that her changing of the subject builds suspense. That the Nurse enjoys her work but says the opposite is particularly astute. Only the comment about her being 'rude and vulgar' doesn't quite get to the heart of her view of Romeo.



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Examiner Tip

Look at everything that the character says and does and explain what each of them reveals.



This 1b) response gained a mark in band 3.

The line "Where is my mother?" would be said in a loud irritated voice as she's tired of the nurse teasing her. Juliet would also sigh out to show how much she wants to hear the news and how she's getting annoyed with the nurse's pointless questions.

(Section A continued) be pointing at Juliet while saying the line so Juliet knew the nurse was talking to her. The nurse would also walk around a bit and have a constant smirk on her face as she's teasing Juliet about the news.

When Juliet says the line "sweet, sweet, sweet nurse tell me" I imagine her to be very close ~~to~~ to the nurse and giving her a hug as she's apologising to her but also trying to get the news from her. Juliet would say it quite loud as she's getting tired of begging the nurse. Juliet would also be holding the nurse's hand as she would feel guilty for making the nurse cry for her.

The line 'Where is my mother?' would be said in a loud irritated voice as she tired off the nurse teasing her. Juliet would also sigh once to show how much she wants to hear the news and how she's getting annoyed with the nurse's pointless questions.



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**Examiner Comments**

The candidate has a consistent interpretation of the scene and how the characters are making their thoughts and feelings apparent. The suggestions are nuanced and avoid melodrama.



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**Examiner Tip**

Focus on the emotions of the characters and why they should behave in the way you are suggesting. Consider the effect on the audience.



This 1c) answer is also a band 3 response.

(c) Shakespeare refers to marriage in a famous balcony scene where Romeo & Juliet reveal their feelings to each other. Juliet is very practical & down-to-earth. She understands that the only way forward with Romeo is to get married. She tells Romeo right from the start that if his purpose is not marriage, to leave her to her grief. This shows that Juliet conforms to the norms of the society she lives in, is and also is virtuous & quite religious. She also tells Romeo to make practical arrangements for them to get married. This <sup>practical attitude</sup> comes as a contrast to Romeo's romantic & somewhat bookish attitude to love.



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Examiner Comments

The contrast between Juliet's (conformist and practical) and Romeo's (romantic and bookish) attitudes to marriage is particularly sophisticated.



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Examiner Tip

Choose a relevant part of the play that you know well, have studied and given thought to.

## **Question 2**

- a) There is evidence of Macbeth's self-doubt emerging in the extract, together with his determination to counter it by decisive and unflinching action. Many candidates commented on his barbaric ruthlessness in planning to dispose of Macduff's family. Perceptive responses saw how Macbeth distrusted the witches whilst continuing to act upon what they tell him.
- b) Successful performance suggestions focused on Macbeth's desperation and frustration, together with Lennox's baffled but respectful reactions. As always with these questions, it is important that candidates understand the characters' states of mind before suggesting performance techniques which reflect them.
- c) Again, candidates are not best served by ranging widely over the play as a whole to produce a series of examples relating to the theme (power). The best answers focused on a single scene, such as Act 1 Scene 7, where Lady Macbeth exercises her power over Macbeth. As long as the chosen other part is discussed, it is, of course, acceptable to point out that here we see Lady Macbeth at the zenith of her power before guilt causes it to wane.

## **Question 6**

- a) Most candidates were able to comment productively on Francis's awe-struck admiration of Nicole, his shyness and his anger when Joey is negative. The more perceptive noticed how his regard for Nicole had become sexualised when compared with the earlier encounters mentioned in the extract.
- b) Successful responses to this language question were able to comment on the effect of the strong similes and verbs used to describe Nicole, her sexual attractiveness but also her fragility.
- c) Many candidates chose the scene in chapter 11 where Nicole sees Francis after she has been assaulted or the final confrontation between Francis and Larry. The application of CRISP (please see the comments on question 1c) helped a number of candidates once the chosen part had been identified. Successful comments on context referred to prevalent attitudes to sex or the effects of the war.

## Question 7

- a) Many responses focused on Crooks's cruelty towards Lennie and also his readiness to back down when subjected to physical intimidation. The more astute were able to draw a link between Crooks's isolation and his baiting of Lennie, whilst the perceptive were able to see that Crooks initially just wanted Lennie to see things from his perspective, then realised that Lennie's imagination couldn't cope with the challenge.
- b) Successful candidates put the emphasis on language rather than on the character of Lennie. They identified how the word 'cried' and the various repetitions in Lennie's statements reflect Lennie's distress, whilst verbs such as 'growled' emphasise both his unhappiness and the threat he poses.
- c) Successful candidates chose a relevant part of the text such as the encounter between Crooks, Candy, Lennie and Curley's wife, or Curley's wife's conversation with Lennie before he kills her. The most effective references to context arise out of the chosen part and tended to comment on the pecking order on the ranch or the life of the migrant worker.

This very full answer on Crooks was awarded full marks.

7) Crooks in this extract is presented as careless about Lennie's feelings, while he continues to imply how George may leave and never return, abandoning Lennie. "You never heard of him... 's'pose that". This harshness ~~may be~~ because of jealousy because George cares so much about Lennie and is always there for him. Crooks therefore, in this way is reflecting his own ~~own~~ fears onto Lennie, since Crooks is considered an outcast, often called "nigger", may limit his ~~under~~ understanding of such a unique relationship between George and Lennie. He is also inconsiderate about Lennie's feelings and is persistent on the idea that George will leave Lennie and continues repeating "S'pose... supposin". However, Crooks may just be curious about why they are so close to each other and tries to make Lennie confess of any plans. "Crooks ~~is also~~ face lighted with pleasure in his torture", illustrating a very mean attitude and

(Section B continued) insensitiveness towards Lemmie's feelings. He enjoys making Lemmie overthink and giving him attention "Don't you think he will?" - where Crooks knows he's got the upper hand and continues to manipulate Lemmie's feelings with extreme situations like: "~~he~~ gets killed or hurt so he can't come back." ~~These statements,~~ ~~and~~ however, could become reality. These scenarios even though they are so dark and suggest a psychology problem on Crook's behalf, could come reality, since death is ~~is~~ not something that could be avoided or known; therefore Crook's saying that may also ~~be~~ ~~to~~ be a way to show Lemmie how useless he would be without George and even says "They'll tie ya up with a collar like a dog." Crook's lack of understanding of Lemmie's mental illness ~~and~~ and Crook's ~~and~~ can be seen as heartless.

In addition, Crook's realises the danger and his ~~is~~ physical weakness ~~to~~ to Lemmie and when Lemmie "stood up and walked dangerously toward Crook's", immediately there was a shift of his manipulative language to "~~George ain't hurt~~" ~~and~~ and he stops the abuse. This shows that he is only verbally able to abuse Lemmie and becomes a coward when faced against him. Crook's has become ~~is~~ this man in order to survive all his discrimination he is against and this attentions allows him to return all

(Section B continued) *the hurt he has felt before and getting pleasure from it.*



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### Examiner Comments

The candidate makes a number of perceptive points early on and probably does not need to develop the response as fully as he or she does. Crooks is seen as:

- careless of Lennie's feelings
- jealous
- behaving in a way that reflects his own fears
- one whose status limits his understanding
- possibly curious about the relationship between Lennie and George.



## ResultsPlus

### Examiner Tip

If you have made three or four good points, don't spend too much time developing the same answer.



This 7b) response did just enough to get a mark in band 3.

(B) Lennie is presented by Steinbeck with animal imagery. The way Lennie 'growled back to his seat' emphasizes his characteristics to be of an animal, the way in which Lennie 'stood over' Crooked further suggest <sup>hierarchy</sup> ~~between~~ between the ~~two~~ characters as although Lennie is simple minded and child-like his characteristics such as his strength could be considered more important on the ranch and Lennie is constantly being compared to a "bear".

Steinbeck presents Lennie as a simple-minded and child-like ~~man~~ with the ~~use of~~ description of his behavior towards Crooked. Lennie's behaviour "face wrinkled with apprehension" suggest a child worried about his father and has become ~~is~~ frightened by the thought of George not coming back, additionally the use of the adjective 'dangerously' highlights the idea that although Lennie is child-like and simple minded he has the body of a "bear" ~~and~~ ~~is~~ ~~not~~ who doesn't know his own strength.



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Examiner Comments

Two points about language are made and explained in a way that shows perceptive understanding.



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Examiner Tip

Carefully consider the effects of the writer's choice of words.



This is a 7c) band 3 answer.

(Section B continued) c) B The part I have chosen is where Curley's wife enters Crook's room where Candy and Lemmie are present and her loneliness is shown. Curley's wife ~~is~~ gets mad at the requests of the men to leave and says "Think I like to stay in the house all the time?". This aggressiveness is showing how fed up she feels of her loneliness and the attitude of men towards her. ~~Her~~ Her anger also reveals the situation at the time, "it's like you are scared of each other", where ranch workers would be looking for excuses to accuse the other men such as in this case, they could be fired by just talking to her (if Curley learnt about it) and their American Dream of living "off the ~~fat~~ <sup>top</sup> of the land" would be ruined. Therefore she is seen as a threat and they avoid her. Also Curley's wife is ~~calling~~ <sup>insulting</sup> them "Jum jum, ol' sheep and nigger" on her anger and calls them. She is aware of the fact that she has the power to accuse them since she is Curley's wife and ~~the~~ she is mean towards them. Women were viewed as inferior and were supposed to stay in the house, yet the era changing ~~and~~ is reflected through her, wanting more in life and wanting attention. In the 1930 women were also viewed as objects and men feeling superior over them. Curley's wife is

(Section B continued) showing her dissatisfaction of the current situation and even threatens to ~~hang~~ Crooks "Could-strung up on a tree", as the Ku Klux Klan were doing. Her over-reaction is showing the racist streak she has and is coming off as threats which would more likely not help her loneliness. This further illustrates that she is not seen as "welcome" and reflects the view men had towards women, telling her to leave.



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Examiner Comments

This is a very astute analysis of the complexities of Curley's wife's predicament: she wants more attention but her behaviour makes it less likely she will get it.



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Examiner Tip

Points about context should arise directly from the part of the text you choose.

## Question 11

The vast majority of candidates understood that this was an article directed at teenagers and so tailored their language and subject matter accordingly. Beyond that, close attention has to be paid to the tone, overall structure reflected in purposeful paragraphing, the grammatical and structural integrity of sentences, the choice of vocabulary and the accuracy of spelling and punctuation. A comparatively low percentage of candidates were able to fulfil all, or even most, of these requirements so as to access a high band. Nevertheless, there were some lively and entertaining pieces, most of which were unwaveringly positive and persuasive.

Less successful responses omitted to give essential information for visitors and merely provided an unmediated list of attractions.

## Question 12

Most candidates understood that their response should be presented as a speech to their peers and had little difficulty in deciding on an object of admiration, whether it be a famous person or a member of their own family. The challenge that many candidates faced was how to develop a response once they had decided on their subject. Those that planned carefully were able to avoid the dangers of repetition or of hitting the metaphorical brick wall. There were some moving and heartfelt tributes to relatives and friends who had provided inspiration of various kinds. Again, however, limited accuracy in the use of paragraphs, sentence structures, spelling and punctuation, often prevented candidates from accessing the higher bands.

This response was awarded band 3 marks for both assessment objectives.

elon musk.

~~Answer~~ 6 paragraphs

1) Who am I, who it is? why

2) why him

3) why I personally admire <sup>what do I get from him?</sup>

4) what he had to deal with

5) how we can all learn from him.

6) This is why summarise points.

A Forest <sup>personal story</sup> <sup>facts</sup> <sup>statistics</sup> <sup>example</sup>  
repetition. <sup>three S.</sup>

Hi there, my name is Nick if some of you didn't already know. I'm going to talk about the person I most admire. Some of you may not know who he is but his name is called Elon Musk. He is the founder of Tesla and SpaceX. These are both companies which are very innovative and futuristic.

I have chosen him to be the person I most admire because he is someone that is a risk taker. I won

(Section C continued) think that we can all learn from him because when he founded his second major company he used money from his car company, ~~SpaceX~~<sup>Tesla</sup> to take what I thought was one of the biggest risks. He used it to create <sup>another</sup> ~~an~~ company called SpaceX. This was to be a forward thinking company that created the transportation for <sup>organisations</sup> ~~people~~ like NASA to use to get into space.

There isn't really a market for space yet but the fact that he was determined to create a company that specialises specialised in space transportation was a good risk that paid off. Earlier on this year NASA was looking for a company in which <sup>they</sup> could pay ~~for~~ to transport their Astronauts to the International Space station and back. This was going to be the cash injection they had hoped for because they couldn't rely on his ~~£~~ money as it wasn't <sup>a</sup> sustainable source of income.

If they didn't ~~get~~ win ~~the~~ the chance to



(Section C continued) transport astronauts then they probably wouldn't have survived. I think that we can all learn from him because he took a risk and it paid off for him. Therefore if we take risks then it could open ~~new~~ new doors. He had to deal with some competitors who ~~were~~ each had their own designs. This can relate a lot to everyday life situations, for example applying for university. When we each try to differentiate ourselves to stand out.

I mostly admire him because of his ability to take risks but also because I like the fact that he is looking toward our future needs. His car company 'Tesla' is probably the only car company in the world that only produces electric cars. These are cars that have ~~DN~~ no emissions whatsoever. However if you would like to be technical then they do emit heat.

I will conclude by saying that I admire his efforts to save the planet with his cars ~~beca~~ but also

(Section C continued) his risk taking and his  
space transportation company.



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Examiner Comments

The response has a clear, pre-planned organisation of relevant ideas. Sentence structures are varied and the fairly advanced vocabulary used benefits from correct spelling.



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Examiner Tip

Plan in advance. Make a list of ideas you are going to use and the order in which you are going to use them. Check for accuracy.



## Paper Summary

Successful candidates are able to do the following:

In Sections A and B (Reading),

- When answering the a) questions, show that you have a thorough understanding of the character as he or she appears in the extract
- When answering the Shakespeare b) questions, comment on each line spoken by the characters and give **reasons** for each performance technique you suggest
- When answering the Prose b) questions comment on at least three **language** features and why you think the writer has chosen to use them
- When answering the c) questions, identify clearly **one other part** of the text to discuss
- Comment on the significance of the theme named in the question in this other part of the text, using CRISP to guide you
- When answering the Prose c) question, explain what the part you have chosen tells us about the **context** of the text.

In Section C (Writing),

- Plan your answer carefully, deciding what to write in each paragraph
- Leave time to check for errors in your work at the end.

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