

Report on the Units

June 2008

1900/MS/R/08

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This report on the Examination provides information on the performance of candidates which it is hoped will be useful to teachers in their preparation of candidates for future examinations. It is intended to be constructive and informative and to promote better understanding of the syllabus content, of the operation of the scheme of assessment and of the application of assessment criteria.

Reports should be read in conjunction with the published question papers and mark schemes for the Examination.

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Any enquiries about publications should be addressed to:

OCR Publications
PO Box 5050
Annesley
NOTTINGHAM
NG15 0DL

Telephone: 0870 770 6622
Facsimile: 01223 552610
E-mail: publications@ocr.org.uk

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Chief Examiner's Report

English 1900 June 2008

Report for Publication to Centres

Key Points

- Examiners expressed some concern that the everyday use of SMS messaging, e-mail etc. by candidates could be having a detrimental effect on their observation of some of the basic principles of written English expression; in particular, paragraphing and the failure to use an upper case 'I' to indicate the first person pronoun singular. Centres are encouraged to advise candidates that, for the purposes of an examination in English, it is important that the conventions of written expression are observed.
- A further point related to the use of technology in examinations is that candidates should be advised that if they word process their scripts, they must take care to ensure that words are correctly spelt: Examiners are unable to distinguish between typing mistakes and simple spelling errors.
- As has been mentioned in previous Chief Examiner's reports, candidates are reminded that writing analytically involves the identification of key passages from a text followed by comment explaining how these examples exemplify the requirements of the question. Simply identifying and naming literary devices is *not* analysis and candidates are reminded that any statement they make which results in an Examiner writing 'how?', 'what?' or 'so?' in the margin, is an incomplete comment.
- OCR appreciates that the completion of forecast grade forms is a time-consuming procedure. However, these forecast grades are an important part of the awarding and reviewing process and centres who fail to supply them or whose forecasts are found to be unreliable or unfocused may place themselves at a disadvantage.

2431/01 Non-fiction, Media and Information (Foundation Tier)

General Comments

Overall, performance was generally in line with that achieved in previous series. Candidates appeared enthusiastic about the topic and interested in reading about it. The paper differentiated well between candidates, though responses to reading were noticeably stronger than those to the writing task. This was partly because candidates were helped to give more extensive answers to the reading questions by the careful scaffolding encapsulated within the tasks. With the less restrictive parameters of the writing task, candidates who were able to structure their own text and then to control sentences, punctuation and content stood out as exceptions.

Clearly, candidates are being encouraged to make useful plans for all extended answers, though some who did this for Questions 1 (c), 2, and then for 3 had a problem with finishing in the time allowed.

The topic appealed to many candidates and was certainly understood by all – perhaps memories of newsreel pictures of the actual events helped, or indeed the more recent and more local floods of a year ago.

There was no misinterpretation of the rubric, which was pleasing.

Comments on Individual Questions

Section A

Reading: Non-fiction

Question 1

(a) **From paragraph three**, beginning 'At one home', write down **one** thing which Danny Schroder is interested in, and **one** thing which Christopher Schroder is interested in.

(b) **From paragraphs one and two**, write down **three** things which people do to prepare for the hurricane.

Questions were answered very well by the majority of candidates, as was the intention. A few responses were too vague and did not gain full marks because they selected some, but not enough, information. 'People sat in their cars' was not enough, for the relevant point was that in doing so they were escaping from the hurricane. Some candidates failed to identify the fact that it was shopkeepers who boarded up their windows and locked their doors. A very small number wrote out everything without any attempt to be selective or show understanding.

(c) *How do Mr and Mrs Schroder and Tim Hughes react to the threat of the hurricane?*

You should consider what they do, what they say and what their worries are.

*Use **your own words** as far as possible.*

This question asked candidates to say how three people reacted to the hurricane and, therefore, required them to show understanding not just through the details they included but also through the way they selected and organised their material. Candidates were rewarded for showing inference and for explicitly describing the reactions of the three identified people. Indeed, the ability to comment on the different reactions of the three adults proved to be a good differentiator. The best answers used appropriate vocabulary – 'urgent', 'relaxed', 'calculated' – for the three reactions, rather than merely suggesting different degrees of 'worry' or 'fear'. Less

successful answers made general comments about all three, or treated Mr and Mrs Schroder as one person. Common misunderstandings were that the Schroders wondered how far they, and not the 'geo-socks', would be thrown by the storm, that Mr Schroder would take six months to repair his boat, and even that 150 cattle were going to be tied to a telegraph pole. However, this turned out to be a successful question on the whole. Many candidates showed a clear focus on the three characters and wrote appropriately about each person's reaction – what they did, what they said and what worried them. This necessitated using their own words, though it was a shame that some potentially better candidates quoted far too much and began using the techniques required in answering Question 2.

Reading: Media text

Question 2

How does the article show the power of the hurricane?

In your answer you should write about:

- *the headlines and the photograph*
- *what we learn about what happened and what people said*
- *how particular words and phrases show the power of the hurricane.*

Bulleted guidance for this question assisted candidates to organise their answers in response to the stem of the question, although there was some misinterpretation of the prompt 'what we learn about what happened...'. Some candidates applied this to hurricanes in general, advising on suitable preparations to make if there is a warning of an imminent hurricane. Some candidates did address the impact of the headline (though mostly the main headline and not the sub-headings and corresponding structure) and photograph. Comments on presentation were rather formulaic and generalised. They suggested that the candidates were not really applying what they had been taught to the particular text given and so did not demonstrate any real understanding. For example, some commented that the photograph 'shows what is in the article' or wrote that the headline 'says it all really'. Others, though, did go beyond giving generic comments, to focus on individual words within the headline and to assess their impact.

All candidates were able to follow the second prompt and identify the content points, but there was the usual tendency for many students to copy or summarise sections of the text. This time it was the paragraph beginning 'Shards of glass...' which was then followed by the entire list, covering cars being hurled, trees felled, power supplies failing and road links destroyed. However, the question stimulated the usual range of response between those who described the power of Katrina and those who analysed the descriptive language. There was much correct identification of words which showed the power of the hurricane. The explanatory comments were often superficial: 'This word is really strong' or 'Battering' shows that the storm battered the city'. Other comments were that 'under siege' suggested that the city was 'in a battle' or 'at war', which was pleasing.

Section B

Writing to Inform, Explain, Describe

Question 3

'It made me so afraid!'

Describe any situation that caused you fear, **explaining** what it was that made you afraid.

For example, this could be an illness or an injury. It could be a fear of the unknown, a physical test of some kind, an examination or a journey.

This task required writing to 'Describe...explaining'. Although it was quite acceptable for candidates to take a narrative approach in order to illustrate the feeling of fear which should be at the centre of the essay, some essays were altogether too anecdotal to be in any sense a portrayal of fear. Sometimes, the prompts given on the paper were taken to be the essay topics, and so there were stories of journeys which were not fearful. Occasionally, candidates seemed to be writing fiction, often based on horror films or soap operas, but these were invariably unconvincing; the vast majority gave the impression that they were writing from true life experience.

Fear is a common emotion which unfortunately pervades the lives of many adolescents, and so there was writing about a wide variety of topics which had caused the writers to be afraid: being in hospital because of illness or sports injuries, car accidents, roller-coasters, bereavement, pregnancy, domestic violence, interviews, sitting examinations and a fear of flying. A few of the least successful responses relied upon the source material and described their fear of hurricanes. Other candidates wrote powerfully about painful or distressing experiences but gave only very limited descriptions of the situations which produced them. However, because the topic was so personal, candidates at all levels were able to write something. The best responses kept to the triplet – they identified the fear, described it in detail and then explained the reason for it, using anecdotes to maintain the reader's interest.

Although textual cohesion in an overall sense was adequate in most cases, there was often a lack of paragraphing, and punctuation at sentence breaks was frequently missing. This resulted in uncontrolled answers from candidates who actually had interesting and relevant ideas. There was often inappropriate use of colloquialisms. There was also a lack of adequate punctuation in direct speech, and indiscriminate use of upper and lower case, with capitals being scattered regardless of need and with the spelling of 'i' for the personal pronoun. It is likely that the latter error has been caused by the popularity of sending text messages on mobile telephones. Text messaging may also encourage abbreviations like 'u' for 'you', and writing words such as 'kinda' or 'gonna'. Further, text messaging discourages paragraphing and punctuation within sentences – or indeed the use of a full stop at all. Having said that, most candidates clearly know the difference between the language they use for telephone texts and what is appropriate in an examination essay.

Candidates managed their time well; exceptions were those who wrote at great length on Question 2, to the detriment of the writing task. There were some who did not attempt Question 3, though there were fewer such candidates this year.

2431/02 Non-fiction, Media and Information (Higher Tier)

General Comments

Examiners were of the opinion that most of the Candidates who took the paper were entered for the appropriate tier although there were a small number who would quite possibly have found the reading material and questions on the Foundation Tier paper to be more appropriate. Many of these candidates, however, were able to pick up sufficient marks on the writing task to go some way towards making up for their limitations in response to Section A and ensuring that they were at least capable of gaining a grade on this unit.

Overall, candidates, both male and female and of all levels of ability, found the subject matter of the reading passages to be both interesting and accessible. Most showed at least a secure understanding of the article about Andy McNab, although not all showed as secure an understanding of the requirements of the question set on it. Similarly, most candidates revealed a good general understanding of John Gatto's arguments about education, although fewer were able to convey a confident appreciation of the more specific points made in his speech. A significant minority apparently failed to take note of the introduction to the article explaining that Gatto was an American speaking to an American audience and assumed that his strictures were comments on the education system in the UK.

As has been the case with this paper over the years, many candidates produced their best performances on the writing task. Most wrote to at least adequate length and responded relevantly to the requirement to describe their best teacher. However, a considerable number marred what were potentially very good answers by failing to acknowledge that the task required them to use the genre of an article for a teenage magazine. It should be mentioned that Examiners expect candidates to show some awareness of the specified genre in writing tasks – in this case, for example, an introductory paragraph addressing the putative readers would have been sufficient to show this – and although failure to do so is unlikely to result in a deduction of marks, an Examiner is likely to take this into account when deciding which of two marking bands to award the response and opt for the lower. Similarly, there were a significant number of candidates who saw this title as an opportunity to recycle past essays. Those who did so and successfully adapted the content and approach of their material to fit this year's task produced perfectly acceptable responses. However, many who attempted this approach did not take sufficiently closely into account the requirement to describe and explain, and produced eulogies of the qualities of parents and friends which were unbalanced in terms of the question.

It would appear that most candidates apportioned their time effectively across all three tasks, as Examiners reported very few cases of either extremely short or missing responses. Presentation was generally of a satisfactory to good standard and spelling, punctuation and linguistic expression were at least, no worse than in previous series. It should be emphasised, however, that candidates who word process their scripts must take care when using the keyboard. Examiners are not in a position to discriminate between typing and spelling errors and consequently, all misspellings will be marked, regardless of how they were produced.

Comments on Individual Questions

Section A

Reading: Non-fiction

Question 1

From the article, Bravo to army training, outline what Andy McNab was like before he joined the army and explain concisely how his army experience changed him.

Use your own words as far as possible.

Most candidates produced adequate responses to this task and indicated that they had a secure understanding of the passage as a whole; however, disappointingly few produced responses which gained marks in the highest band. The main reason for this would appear to be that there is still a certain lack of clarity among a considerable number of candidates as to what this task actually requires them to do. It is, in effect, a selective summary which involves conveying concisely but in appropriate detail, what is said about particular aspects of the passage. In this case, candidates were expected to state what Andy McNab was like before joining the army, and how his experience in the army changed him. Most candidates responded well to the first part of the question and clearly identified that he was not a star pupil at school (although a fair number of them failed to follow the sequence of the passage and attributed to him abilities which clearly were not apparent in his school days). Most included the more straightforward points about his education, such as being placed in a remedial class, although fewer showed a clear understanding of the fact that he treated this almost as a mark of pride. Similarly, although many candidates made generalisations about him being a 'lowlife' and 'badly behaved', almost as many omitted to mention that he was actually convicted of a criminal activity and serving time in borstal when he made the decision to join the army. Incidentally, there was a tendency among some candidates to make statements such as 'he was in borstal at the time; a borstal is a detention institute for young people.' Although such comments show an admirable desire to explain an understanding of vocabulary, they also detract from an attempt to be concise as well as being an ineffective way of using own words. It would have been sufficient simply to have written, 'he was in a detention centre' or even to have used the word 'borstal' alone – Examiners do not expect such technical vocabulary always to be turned into the candidate's own words.

Where candidates found most difficulty, however, was in dealing with the second element of the question, as many lost focus on the task and instead opted to give a narrative account of McNab's army career without precise reference to how it changed him from the person they had so clearly described in the first part of their answer. In doing so, many candidates referred to a considerable number of relevant points but only in passing, rather than clearly relating them to the terms of the question. Such an approach led to many responses gaining marks in the Band 4/3 range whereas, had the points made been more clearly focused and carefully organised, they were likely to have scored significantly higher marks.

Nevertheless, there were some very impressive responses to this task in which candidates revealed a complete understanding of both the passage and the task, and conveyed this in well-planned answers which were fully focused on the ways in which McNab's army experiences changed him from what he was before. Such responses were written mainly in the candidate's own words and were seldom longer than 300 words; however, there was evidence in all such answers that careful planning and note making had taken place before the final version was produced. It should be emphasised that with this task in particular, a methodical approach to reading the passage and to making relevant notes is of especial importance.

There were very few responses indeed that showed a complete misunderstanding of the passage, although a small number of candidates tended to rely so heavily on the language of the original that Examiners were not able to gauge accurately how much of it had been understood. At the other end of the spectrum, there were some candidates who took the

instruction to be concise to the extreme and produced a generalised statement about the influence of the army on the youthful McNab in about 80-100 words only. Although such responses usually indicated that the passage had been understood and even gave an overview of sorts, in most cases they were lacking in sufficient specific details to show close reading of the material to be placed higher than in Band 3, and in many cases, Band 4.

Reading: Media text

Question 2

Explore the ways in which John Gatto presents his ideas and the language he uses to persuade his audience that the reform of schools is necessary.

As in previous series, this task produced the widest range of achievement and, therefore, proved to be a good discriminator. The best responses came from candidates who took into account that this was the text of an actual speech and kept this fact clearly in mind throughout their answers. Such responses also clearly identified Gatto's purpose and proceeded to analyse closely the ways in which he presented his argument, including thoughtful and convincing explanations of the language devices used and the rhetorical features of his speech. These top level responses showed a perceptive appreciation of the way in which the speech was structured, commenting on the opening in which Gatto established his educational credentials and, in the course of doing so, made it clear that he was on the side of teachers with whom he clearly identified, before launching into an initially unexpected attack on the educational system within which both teachers and students have to work before moving on to suggest possible solutions to the situation, following on from the rhetorical question, 'What can be done?'. Candidates at this level explained the effectiveness of the use of repetition within the speech and how it was used to persuade the audience, and also showed a clear appreciation of Gatto's tone of voice – especially in relation to his closing statements – and of his considered use of imagery in describing the school system as psychopathic and comparing schools to prisons by describing classrooms as 'cells' as opposed to the 'sanctuary' of home where even there the system was trying to control pupils through its requirements that they should do 'homework'. The key feature of responses at this level was that candidates were consistent in relating the points they made about the features they identified to a clearly defined understanding of Gatto's purpose.

Middle range responses were less consistently focused on the writer's purpose and similarly showed a less consistent awareness that they were writing about a spoken rather than a written argument. Candidates at this level tended to comment on features in isolation and relied on spotting a wide range of literary devices (anaphora, ascending tri-colons, personification etc.) without necessarily explaining how they were used by the speaker as ways of persuading his audience to share his point of view; they often made merely generalised and not particularly helpful statements such as they 'make the reader want to read on' or that they were examples of 'strong language'. It should be emphasised that this task is not set in order to test how well candidates are able to identify a wide range of linguistic and rhetorical devices but rather to explain how the language and content of the writer's speech affects the audience. Many candidates at this level appear to be under the misapprehension that their responses should be driven by the requirement to show how many literary devices they know and that they should make every attempt to find examples of them in the passage whether convincing or not. Despite the attempts of many candidates, Examiners were not convinced that 'schools succeed' was a deliberate use of alliteration in which the sibilant initial consonants were intended to produce a sense of sinister manipulation! Band 4 marks are awarded to responses which make an attempt to analyse; candidates capable of producing work at this level are encouraged to remove any pre-conceived plans they may have taken into the examination room and respond to what the writer says and how s/he has said it, concentrating on the effect of what is written rather than using a check list of devices which may or may not be contained in the passage.

Apart from the few candidates who totally misunderstood Gatto's argument, the least successful responses were from those who did little more than summarise or re-write the passage in their own words. Many such responses contained little more than unsupported generalisations and assertions, and could not be placed higher than low Band 5 or, more usually, Band 6. Those who made some attempt to relate their summaries to specific quotations from the passage showed at least some understanding of the writer's purpose, although they mainly described rather than analysed the effects of the examples they quoted, gaining them marks in the Band 5 range. However, if these predominantly descriptive approaches nevertheless contained some developed attempt to comment, then it was possible for them to achieve a mark in the Band 4 range.

Section B

Writing to Inform, Explain, Describe

Question 3

Write the words of an article for a teenage magazine in which you describe your best teacher, explaining what and how your teacher taught you.

Remember, a teacher need not be someone whom you have met in school. A teacher may be a person whom you have met during leisure activities or, indeed, a parent or friend.

As mentioned earlier in this report, many candidates produced their best performance on this task. However, as with responses to Question 1, Examiners felt that many could have produced even better responses with a little more thought about and attention to what the question actually required.

The key requirements for the task were that it should be an article for a teenage magazine; that it should describe a teacher and that it should explain both what the teacher taught the candidate and how the teaching was carried out. The best responses showed a clear understanding of all four elements of the task; they were written in a register appropriate to the specified genre, showing a good appreciation of the intended audience without being over colloquial in tone. Such responses contained a concise and focused description of the featured teacher, giving relevant information as to the teacher's relationship with the writer. This was followed by an explanation of what the teacher had specifically taught the writer, what was particularly impressive about the ways in which it had been taught and a brief but apposite evaluation of what made this teacher's methods superior to those of others of whom the writer had had experience.

The least successful responses were less well balanced in their structure and failed to focus clearly on the main elements of the task. Candidates producing such responses in particular showed insufficient awareness of the need to write a magazine article and in many cases, insufficient awareness that this was a task belonging to the *Inform, Explain, Describe* triplet, producing essays which would have been far more suited to *Explore, Imagine, Entertain*. It was perfectly acceptable to choose a relative or friend as a teacher – indeed, the rubric of the question specifically stated that this was so – but many candidates chose to turn this task into an essay on, for example, 'My Best Friend' with the result that in their eulogies they lost focus on the requirement to explain and describe what and how they had been taught and dealt with these requirements more or less tangentially with the result that they did not fulfil the task fully. Candidates are advised that when answering this paper, they should keep the aspects of this specific triplet clearly in the front of their minds when writing their responses as failure to do so could well result in being awarded a mark in a band lower than that of which they are capable.

It was interesting to note that those candidates who chose to describe a schoolteacher described those who did not necessarily reflect the features of what those who carry out observations and inspections in schools would appear to expect. In the eyes of many candidates, 'best' teachers are those who show spontaneity and originality in the classroom;

who tailor their approach to the needs of individual students; who do not follow rigidly imposed lesson plans but develop the interests of their students by following up unprepared and unexpected trails resulting from students' questions; who talk about and discuss relevant issues with their students rather than dictating reams of notes; who have a relaxed, but nevertheless authoritative teaching style, reinforced by a good sense of humour; who have a good subject and general knowledge and who set homework only when it is an integral part of the lesson rather than just because it has to be set. Overall, Examiners were impressed by the perception of many candidates who chose to write about those who had shaped their careers in schools and by the obvious respect that was felt for those teachers who exemplified the qualities which the candidates most demanded. History and English teachers in particular came in for great praise.

The quality of candidates' written expression was of a generally satisfactory standard, with a good proportion of essays being very well written indeed, being clearly structured, almost flawless in their spelling and punctuation and with a skilfully varied range of sentence structures and types and precise and fully appropriate vocabulary. As has been the case throughout the years, the most serious errors were in the inability of many candidates to separate sentences correctly by using commas rather than full stops; a failure to use the apostrophe to indicate both possession and omission, and haphazard or non-existent paragraphing. A further limitation of many responses which fell into the Band 4 range was imprecise and poorly chosen vocabulary; greater thought about what were the best words to use might well have led to many scripts being awarded a higher mark.

In conclusion, responses to this paper reflected the whole range of ability expected from this tier. There was much good work seen by Examiners and the quality of the best scripts was very high indeed. Nearly all who sat this paper treated it seriously and responded to the tasks conscientiously. The main message for teachers to convey to future candidates is the importance of reading instructions carefully and of being fully aware of the different approaches required by the different tasks in Section A: Task 1 is primarily a summary of the aspects given in the question, whereas Task 2 requires an explanation of the ways in which writers attempt to influence their readers; as always, the key words relating to these tasks are 'what' and 'how' in that order.

2432/01: Different Cultures, Analysis and Argument (Foundation Tier)

General Comments

The overall performance of this year's candidates was in line with previous years, with virtually all having been entered appropriately. This meant that the trend of there being fewer candidates at the extreme ends of the spectrum has been maintained. Almost all candidates engaged with the tasks with a sense of purpose, determination or ambition. One persists in speculating on whether or not some candidates entered for the Higher Tier would not find this paper more rewarding.

Most Centres had studied *Opening Worlds*, which tended to reject the trend that seemed to prefer a retreat from the anthology to, mainly, *The Old Man and the Sea*. The few candidates who had tackled *Things Fall Apart* wrote more successfully than those in earlier series. There was very good work indeed from some candidates who had been thoroughly prepared, and had a confident and convincing knowledge and appreciation of either the six prescribed stories or the relevant novel. This enabled them to explore their chosen task with insight into both overview and relevant detail. But, on the other hand, many candidates' responses were limited by their attempts to relate a particular theme/issue which they had studied to a task to which it was not necessarily relevant. The most obvious (but by no means the only) examples were the writers' concerns with poverty in *The Pieces of Silver* and *The Red Ball*. Similarly much work had been done on relationships in *The Old Man and the Sea*. Centres would be well-advised to help candidates focus on the task as set when preparing them for this section of the paper.

There was no diminution in the number of candidates making rubric errors and answering two, three or even six questions in this section.

Some Examiners commented that candidates find it impossible to produce an abstract/non-literal response to Question 7. Perhaps it was that candidates (perfectly acceptably) chose to write directly from their own experience within their families, schools and friendship groups. A limiting factor was the translation of 'do' to 'should' men and women have equal opportunities...? This tended to over-complicate the task rather needlessly.

Question 8 was relished by virtually all candidates who were very comfortable with the speech format. There were very few proponents of single sex education and many detractors. Thus, in this series the more usual outcome of candidates on Question 8 scoring more heavily than Question 7 was re-established. Mixed use of the stimulus material was again evident, reflecting amongst other things the brevity of answers from weaker candidates who had attempted to make some use of it.

Comments on Individual Questions

Section A: Reading

Question 1

How do the writers show characters ending up in situations they did not expect, here and in **one other story** from the list above?

(The passage is the conclusion of *The Pieces of Silver*.)

Almost all candidates were familiar with the passage and the story, and wrote convincingly about Chase's come-uppance and the circumstances that led to it. Many wrote about both Chase and Clement and the other seven in 'the line of boys'. Some concentrated on one or the other. In all cases it was clear that the story had had a significant impact on the readers. More successful responses gave some pleasing accounts of the significance of the concluding simile as a supporting language point. Candidates found the choice of a second story less taxing than in some previous series. There was good work on Bolan in *The Red Ball* which focused on his experience of loneliness and disenfranchisement as the story opens – of the extreme violence of the beating meted out by his father – and of the enigmatic conclusion. Much good work, too, was in evidence on *The Young Couple*, in which many candidates gave a well supported and sympathetic view of Cathy's plight. Few, however, focused on the unsatisfactory nature of the central relationship, tending to respond to the presentation of Nariaian's family. Some answers dealt with Sidda in *Leela's Friend* and with Ravi in *Games at Twilight*. By far the most popular, however, was *The Winter Oak*, with varying degrees of analysis of Anna Vasilevna's experience of 'the mysterious and wonderful future citizen'. As outlined above, less successful responses were ones which attempted to regurgitate what had been recalled from previously set but essentially differently focused tasks. Some candidates stuck rigidly and exclusively to the passage set without using any sense of even the context of the story as a whole.

Question 2

How do the writers show the importance of family conflicts in any **two** of the stories in the list above?

Some Examiners reported that less successful candidates had struggled with the notion of 'conflict' which led them to write rather more generally about family issues as presented in the stories. This provided adequate differentiation, however. There was a lot of work which focused precisely on the task as set and gave well-developed accounts of the Dovecots in *The Pieces of Silver* and Bolan's family in *The Red Ball*. Especially pleasing were candidates who saw that Bolan's father was a case for sympathy, besides the boy and his mother, and gave convincing evidence for this. Many chose *Leela's Friend*, citing the conflict between Leela and her parents over Sidda. Others wrote with varying degrees of success on *The Young Couple* (as in Question 1, generally on the conflict between Cathy and Nariaian's parents) and on the children's play in *Games at Twilight*.

The Anthology was by far the most popular of the texts and the numbers answering each question were roughly equal. Even the least successful responses had something to say which bore some relevance to what they had studied and what was being asked.

Question 3

How does Santiago's attitude to his fishing expedition here differ from his attitude at **one or two other moments** in the novel?

(The passage is from the end of the novel, immediately prior to Santiago's return to port.)

This proved quite a challenging task for the relatively few who had studied the novel and chose this question. All managed something on the passage, picking up on 'a strange taste in his mouth', the contempt as he spits at the shark, and the sense that he was beaten 'finally and without remedy'. Responses were differentiated by the selection of second/third passages and

what was said about them. The best answers found clearly contrasting passages, for example, Santiago's reaction to hooking the fish in the first place/his defeat of the marlin/his first defence of it against the encroachment of the sharks. Less successful answers struggled to find a second passage and did little with it. Many of these responses were disappointing given the open ended and straightforward nature of the task.

Question 4

Why were the Old Man's attempts to bring the marlin to port always bound to fail?

Overall, there was a stronger response to this question than to Question 7. At the top end of the range some candidates were able to pick up on and develop a response to the sense of inevitability inherent in the question – he went out too far, he needed support and so on. More modest answers stuck with an account of reasons for the failure of the trip with some illustration from the text. The least successful answers offered simplistic and unsupported generalisations about the voyage, but there were very few of these.

Question 5

*How do things fall apart in Umofia, here and at **one** or **two** other moments in the novel?*

(The passage is from the ante-penultimate chapter of the novel which deals with the duping and humiliation of the six highest ranking Umuofians by the District Commissioner.)

This was a clear and accessible task to which virtually no one responded.

Question 6

How does the writer show that Okonkwo's character and behaviour lead to disasters?

Candidates found this question preferable to Question 5. It certainly elicited some of the best work on the novel we have seen, with most of the candidates who chose it having a clear knowledge of the text as a whole and therefore able to select relevant passages/episodes to support their responses. Many chose the relationship between Okonkwo and Ikemefuna, tracing its development and outcome, including the transmogrification of Nwoye to Issac. Other popular episodes were the treatment of his wives and the conclusion of the story (although not his feelings on his release by the District Commissioner).

Section B

Writing to Analyse, Review, Comment

Question 7

Do you think that men and women have equal opportunities in life?

AND

Writing to Argue, Persuade, Advise

Question 8

Should boys and girls be taught separately?

*Write the words of a speech to your fellow students arguing **your** point of view.*

More detailed comments on candidates' responses to these tasks have been made earlier in this report. In general, it would appear that candidates wrote at least as much, if not more, in this series than at any other. The difference between the responses to the two questions appeared

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to be that the least successful candidates said little or nothing on Question 7 but that all managed something on Question 8. As always, there were some technical limitations in candidates' written expression. Those most remarked upon by Examiners included:

- illegible or virtually illegible handwriting
- failure to write in/punctuate sentences
- comma splicing
- failure to respond to the required format: 'the words of a speech...'
- incorrect use of the apostrophe.

2432/02 English: Different Cultures, Analysis and Argument (Higher Tier)

General Comments

Examiners reported that the performance of candidates on this year's examination was particularly good. Evidence from Examiners indicated that candidates had been thoroughly prepared and coped very successfully with the demands of this paper.

The time available to candidates in the examination did not appear to affect their ability to offer responses of sufficient length to reward positively. Examiners had been advised not to penalise concision, but most candidates made excellent use of their time in dealing with all three tasks.

The vast majority of Centres had decided to use the *Opening Worlds* anthology to prepare candidates for this examination. Although this involved writing about two texts, responses revealed a genuine grasp of how the writers make settings both interesting and important, and how far they make us feel sympathy for children. Centres should note that Question 1 no longer requires the candidate to explore both the passage and the rest of the story it is taken from. They must, however, continue to examine a second story from the list specified at the top of the page. Many candidates will feel that further exploration of the text from which the passage is taken is most useful in responding to the task, but the constraints of time makes the study of all three elements – passage, rest of text and second story – demanding. Consequently, there is no penalty for the candidate who selects references exclusively from the passage, or indeed the rest of the story, before going on to deal with a second story. Question 2 proved particularly popular, perhaps because the candidates were given the opportunity to select texts that they had personally enjoyed, revealing a genuine understanding of how sympathy is encouraged by the writer in their chosen stories. Similarly, good answers came from candidates who attempted Question 1, where they were able to explore the intensity of the heat, so powerfully suggested by the writer, and how it impacts on both nature and characters. Indeed, all six tales were used in responses to this question on the interest and importance of settings in the stories with much perceptive analysis of language. Although it was clear that some stories were potentially more accessible than others, Examiners were instructed to be generous in their interpretation of the word 'setting' in the task, enabling candidates to comment on place, people and culture in articulating their responses. Nevertheless, this does highlight the requirement for Centres to ensure that they have studied all six stories in some detail in preparing candidates for this examination.

Questions 3 and 4 were tackled confidently by a smaller number of candidates, the short novel enabling Centres to prepare individuals thoroughly for the demands of the questions. Certainly Question 3 proved by far the most popular, although the nature of both tasks encouraged the vast majority of candidates to respond with insight and understanding.

Examiners were pleased to see that *Things Fall Apart* had been chosen by a significant number of Centres for study. Question 5 was by far the most popular, as it enabled candidates to focus on the central character, Okonkwo. However, those who attempted Question 6 were rewarded with the opportunity to analyse closely how ceremonies and rituals influence the lives and culture of the Ibo people, selecting those events that they felt were most appropriate for study. This was clearly useful to candidates given the time constraints of the paper. The very precise nature of the tasks produced a wide variety of thoughtful responses.

The performance of candidates on Questions 7 and 8 was generally very good. The opportunity to write a speech for a class in which they argued their point of view regarding the separate teaching of boys and girls produced many excellent responses, with many candidates championing their own schools. However, robust arguments were promoted by those who saw nothing but folly in the artificial separation of the sexes, whilst others saw nothing but disaster in the explosive mixture of the teenage hormones. The responses were frequently passionate and convincing. Equally, the opportunity for candidates to muse upon how far they believed that men

and women have equal chances in life produced many engaging responses in which candidates drew upon personal experience and the stimulus material.

There was very little evidence that candidates had been entered for the wrong tier of the examination for this series. Nevertheless, Centres are advised once more that they should not risk entering their candidates where performance is likely to fall below what is required for an award at this tier.

Comments on Individual Questions

Section A: Reading

Question 1

*How do the writers make the settings of their stories interesting and important, here and in **one** other story from the list above?*

AND

Question 2

*How far do the writers make you feel sympathy for children in any **two** stories from the list above?*

The best candidates were able to relate their knowledge of the text to the main thrust of the questions and to provide coherent, structured and sometimes incisive analysis. These were characterised by comments referring back to the ideas of the interest and importance of settings, and the way sympathy is evoked for children, supported by brief, appropriate references. Indeed, Examiners reported that the powerful setting captured in the passage in Question 1 produced many excellent responses, with the candidate very clear as to the techniques used by the writer to present the oppressively hot back-cloth to the day and the reaction of living things to the heat. They certainly grasped the writer's excellent portrayal of a garden baking in the intense afternoon sun. Question 2 enabled candidates to spend their time very profitably in responses that revealed genuine analysis of how far we are encouraged to feel sympathy for children. Interestingly, the most successful responses frequently cited Savushkin as a character for whom little sympathy is required for he is a confident and resolute soul who is very much his own 'little man'. Certainly all six stories provided rich material from which candidates might draw, with the very open nature of the task frequently encouraging a personal and original response.

In the middle range, candidates, even when their knowledge of the texts was very sound, sometimes found it difficult to shape what they knew to the needs of the question. Often, what were appropriate and quite sharp insights lost their immediacy because their relevance to the question was left implicit rather than being explicitly stated. Centres need to impress on their candidates that any comments must be directly related to the question if they are to make the most of their obvious understanding of texts. Similarly, an imbalance in the quality of analysis between the two stories was a feature of responses which showed promise only to disappoint, particularly with a less well understood second story. Centres would be advised to encourage candidates to spend their time evenly over the two stories.

At the lower end of the range was a minority of candidates who had clearly struggled to see beyond the mere narrative – indeed they reproduced much of it in their attempts to formulate a relevant response to either task. Once again Examiners were concerned that some candidates were struggling under a range of misconceptions or merely talked their way through the settings or the experiences of children without reference to interest/importance or sympathy respectively. Such responses could be quite lengthy with little to reward. Centres must ensure that the short stories are not seen as an easy alternative to the study of a full novel/novella. Candidates must experience an engaged study of all six stories if they are to be fully prepared for this examination.

A further weakness of scripts in the middle and lower ranges was over-long quotation. Candidates should be advised that Examiners are looking for succinct references and are not in the habit of awarding high marks to scripts which pad out an answer with quotations spanning six or seven lines. It is rare that such responses genuinely focus on the task.

A final concern in these middle and lower ranges was specifically evident in responses to the writers' use of language in creating the setting for Question 1. There was a marked tendency towards technique spotting, with candidates confidently identifying similes, metaphors etc, but then being unable to explain how they created a specific effect. Equally such candidates then found it difficult to explain how the settings are important in terms of the central conflict and themes of each story.

Examiners were pleased to note that candidates selecting stories for analysis outside the six identified at the top of the Question 1/Question 2 page was extremely rare indeed. Centres are advised that such responses would be penalised. Candidates must respond to questions using the stories specified for the paper.

Question 3

How does Hemingway capture Santiago's feelings about his role as a fisherman, here and elsewhere in the novel?

AND

Question 4

The novel describes the events of just a few days. How does Hemingway increase the reader's understanding of Santiago and Manolin by references to the past, to memories and to dreams?

The best responses offered a genuine engagement with the text and a keen eye for short, pertinent references to back up comments which were entirely focused on the question. Answers to Question 4 were detailed and perceptive, particularly in dealing with the intensity of the reader's experience of Santiago and Manolin through reference to the past, memories and dreams which Hemingway has so skilfully interwoven into the narrative, making the novel such a powerful read. The reflective nature of Santiago, a man alone at sea with little more than his own thoughts for company, was drawn upon extensively in such responses. Question 3 proved more popular with candidates, perhaps because of the opportunity to narrow the focus on to Santiago's feelings about his role as a fisherman in the passage and the rest of the novel. Those who attempted this task frequently responded particularly well to the passage through tremendous empathy with the old man. These responses revealed a genuine understanding of his admiration for the sea's creatures – friends he feels he is obliged to 'betray' out of necessity – as well as of his self belief and sense of destiny that sustain him throughout.

Middle range candidates had a clear understanding of the general themes in *The Old Man and the Sea* and were able to provide sufficient textual support for their answers, although much was implied rather than being made explicit. Equally, a large number of candidates failed to go very far beyond the passage, an approach which was evidently self penalising.

The least successful responses frequently fell into a narrative which was seldom supported by explicit textual reference. Responses at this level were brief or extremely repetitive, failing to convince the Examiner that there was any genuine understanding of how the passage highlighted Santiago's feelings about his role as a fisherman, or indeed how references to the past, to memories or dreams, increased our understanding of Santiago or Manolin.

Question 5

How far does the picture of Okonkwo presented here reflect the way in which his character is portrayed elsewhere in the novel?

AND

Question 6

How does Achebe show the importance of ceremonies and rituals in Umuofia?

There were many outstanding responses to these tasks. The best examined in considerable detail the respected, dismissive, arrogant, fearful and impetuous Okonkwo portrayed in the passage and so representative of his entire being in the rest of the novel. Equally, candidates drew upon the whole range of ceremonies and rituals that bind Umuofia together in times of celebration and need, establishing a pattern of life and unity of purpose. In both cases, candidates revealed genuine engagement with the whole text through short, pertinent references which were invariably focused on the question.

Middle range candidates had some grasp of how far the Okonkwo of the passage is reflected elsewhere in the novel, or indeed suggested a few ceremonies or rituals that were of some importance, but often failed to support their comments with pertinent reference and quotation. These very accessible tasks should have encouraged a close study of the text where Okonkwo and the importance of ceremonies and rituals are so clearly captured for the reader.

The least successful responses struggled to find useful references in the extract and text. Their scripts were almost invariably marked by very superficial analysis that lost focus on the task. Unsupported narrative was very much in evidence in responses that were frequently very short.

Section B

Writing to Analyse, Review, Comment

Question 7

How far does your own experience lead you to believe that men and women have equal chances in life?

You could comment on your experience at home or in school, or your knowledge of the wider world.

Examiners reported good performance on this task with candidates constructing engaged, analytical responses. The use of connectives to structure thought and expression, suggested in previous reports to Centres, benefited candidates considerably in rationalising their considerations.

The best responses were tremendously wide ranging, analytical and thought-provoking, balancing the historical/global perspective learned at school with intense personal insight, particularly at this time in candidates' lives. Many good responses went on to examine, in virtually flawless English and with a mature range of vocabulary and expression, how men and women deserve equality, but not at the expense of what makes them so wonderfully different. Such candidates invariably introduced their own viewpoints which they interwove with the stimulus material in a logical structure with a clearly identifiable effective opening and a strong personal summation.

Responses in the middle and lower ranges, on the other hand, tended to rely heavily on the importance of a few very obvious examples of equal/unequal chances in life in practical terms, or did little more than paraphrase the stimulus material provided. The least successful frequently fell into a discussion of whether the writers were the sex most deserving of chances, one enquiring rather provocatively: 'If they are going to be doing the washing of clothes and cooking of food, what is the point of them learning a skill?'

Writing to Argue, Persuade, Advise

Question 8

“Boys and girls should be taught separately.”

Write the words of a speech to your fellow students arguing your point of view.

High level responses revealed a confident, persuasive tone, frequently marked by an assured use of rhetorical questions and a well-judged application of exclamation marks to enliven them. Such responses were very convincing in their address to an audience who were drawn into the debate through their own experience of school/college life. Such work was invariably influenced by cogent argument, with as many arguing for as against the statement. Indeed two very discrete camps emerged, the one populated by those who believed that the opposite sex was destructive to schooling, only capable of messing about, chattering, cheesy pranks or deep debate over make-up, and those who believed that schooling should reflect the society into which young citizens will eventually enter. Clearly the topic had engaged candidates, many of whom were determined to encourage others to share their passionate views.

The majority found an appropriate tone of address, a rational development of ideas and a powerful conclusion suitable for the purpose of the task. One such candidate, considering the impact of girls in the classroom, simply concluded: ‘They distract boys from their education, principally, by using one of their greatest weapons – seduction! They employ this to manipulate the boys like puppets.’

Responses at middle and lower levels were at ease with the subject matter of the task, but frequently failed to convince Examiners that their arguments had any persuasive merit. The instructions clearly asked for a targeted, personal response which should have opened up many opportunities for persuasion. However, at the lowest level, candidates merely saw the task as an opportunity to embark on a rather superficial attack on the opposite sex without rationale, ignoring the requirement to argue their point of view. Centres are advised to ensure that candidates are aware that the appropriate tone and form are key indicators to Examiners with regard to the award of marks in such tasks.

This task enabled candidates to give a very clear indication of their abilities, and Examiners noted that a significant majority of responses revealed genuine engagement with the issues surrounding the relative merits of single sex teaching, celebrating our diverse education in its many forms, cogently brought together with considerable maturity of thought and expression.

2433/01 Literary Heritage and Imaginative Writing (Foundation Tier)

General Comments

There was greater evidence this year of candidates planning each of their tasks. This was particularly noticeable and helpful in the reading questions. It meant, generally, that candidates did not repeat a point and covered a good range of material and ideas. In Question 1, stories were often appropriately sequenced. In a few instances only the opening sentence had been copied out, which suggests either a lack of familiarity with the question format or a reluctance to sit the examination, as this question is worth 50% of the total marks. However, rubric errors were frequent in the Literary Heritage section, with candidates often answering on Shakespeare but not on Poetry. It was unclear whether this was the result of a lack of time management by the candidates or because the poems had not been fully studied. Often only one poem was discussed rather than two, or answers were based on all three listed poems.

Comments on Individual Questions

Writing to Explore, Imagine, Entertain

Question 1

*Copy out the sentence below, and then continue the story. Create a **mood and atmosphere** appropriate to this opening.*

As more and more people arrived the noise level grew, until...

This opening was given in order for a sense of mood and atmosphere to be established from the outset. For responses in Bands 4 and 5, the specified genre needed to be used at least in a straightforwardly consistent way. This took many forms with the most successful, as is usually the case. Responses centred around situations the candidates were familiar with, including: football matches, talent shows, parties, personal tragedies. An imaginative element was obviously needed here as well, linking to direct or second hand knowledge and experience. Stronger answers focused on building up a sense of anticipation or mystery, while less successful answers often very quickly relied on matter-of-fact dialogue or moved in to the *Inform, Explain, Describe* triplet. Characters who experienced extremes of emotion, both positive and negative, and who became part of the development were more convincing, while less successful answers relied on violent action for no apparent reason. A few candidates wrote in the passive voice with vague reference to characters but most soon adopted the first person singular and maintained this narrative standpoint throughout the story. The instructions to candidates in the second bullet point of the question state that a complete story is not necessary. An 'appropriate point' was achieved in most cases with the use of a cliff-hanger or an attempt to solve the 'mystery'. Some still used the anti-climactic 'then I woke up' ending, usually to little effect.

There were some problems with tenses, across all the Bands. The opening sentence, although clearly in the past tense, led some candidates immediately into the present tense. If a first person narrative is to be established, then the use of the past tense is advisable. Some candidates made the occasional slip, generally with 'would', 'won't' or 'can't', but these were not serious errors. Consistent misuse of tenses and insecure sentence structure resulted in responses lacking in control.

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Many candidates attempted, with varying degrees of success, to use 'interesting' vocabulary. All attempts were credited as far as was possible, and candidates should be encouraged to be ambitious, even if the spelling may not be secure. A successful story, establishing mood and atmosphere, will necessitate the use of varied vocabulary.

Paragraphing was often absent or very insecure when used, especially if dialogue was introduced. Many potentially higher band answers did not understand the importance of correct paragraphing and this led to many such responses being marked as 'Best-fit' across the band boundary.

Although some allowance is made for the fact that this is first draft writing, candidates are instructed to leave time to check and correct their stories. A low mark will be awarded for AO3(iii) if sentence structure is repetitive, mainly simple, lengthy or uncontrolled. Similarly, if punctuation is basic and insecure with frequent lapses at sentence boundaries, then only a mark in the lower bands can be applied. The secure spelling of complex regular words is needed, apart from an occasional slip, to score a mark in Band 4.

Section B

Reading: Texts from the Literary Heritage

Shakespeare

As in previous years, *Romeo and Juliet* was the choice of the vast majority of candidates. They showed an ability, across all the bands, to respond to the questions. More successful responses were able to use quotation and textual reference to support their answers, rather than just comment or make inappropriate reference to the film. Lower band responses relied on narrative and assertions, often distorted, with very little or no textual support. Candidates are well-advised to make use of the bullet points which reinforce the key aspects of the response. The addition of the play's title in each question has considerably reduced the number of rubric errors but there is still evidence of just a few candidates answering on the 'wrong' play.

Much Ado About Nothing

Question 2a

Choose **one** or **two** moments in *Much Ado About Nothing* which clearly show Benedick's character.

Write about how his character is shown in:

- what he does and why
- the words he uses.

Candidates who chose Question 2a clearly understood the main aspects of Benedick's character and were able to link him with other characters and to comment on his relationships and inevitable change in attitude to love.

Question 2b

Write about **one** or **two** moments in *Much Ado About Nothing* which you find amusing.

In your answer you should write about what you find amusing in:

- the situations the characters are in
- the words they use.

Although Examiners were prepared to accept the candidates' idea of 'amusing', the response to this question was disappointing, showing little real understanding of the chosen situations or how these related to the rest of the play.

Romeo and Juliet

Question 3a

In what ways is the character of Tybalt important in the play Romeo and Juliet?

In your answer you should write about:

- *what Tybalt does and why*
- *the effect of his death on both Romeo and Juliet.*

The importance of the character of Tybalt encouraged a wide range of responses. The better answers in Band 4 and Above Band 4 discussed both bullet points, supporting apt comments with appropriate reference to the text. Straightforward understanding included the point that the lovers' fate was inevitable following the murder of Tybalt by Romeo. Less successful answers generally ignored the second bullet point, concentrating just on the fight scene with Tybalt, Romeo and Mercutio. A frequent misconception was that Tybalt fought Romeo because he had discovered that Romeo was married to Juliet. Only a few candidates produced a purely narrative response with no quotations at all from the text.

Question 3b

*Write about how **one** or **two** moments in Romeo and Juliet show the relationship between an older and a younger character.*

In your answer you should write about:

- *what the characters do and why*
- *the words they use.*

There was widespread misinterpretation of which characters were 'older' and which were 'younger'. The most common response was based on the idea that Romeo was older than Juliet or that Juliet could count as older because she was more mature. Better choices focused on either Juliet and her mother or father or the Nurse, and Romeo with the Friar. These responses could deal with the change and breakdown in relationships, and how important these elements were to the plot and the outcome of the play as a whole.

Poetry pre-1914 or post 1914: *Opening Lines* (OCR)

The three main elements the Examiners looked to reward were: a straightforward understanding of each poem; a focus on the task; the beginning of an ability to identify important words or phrases and to illustrate their effects. Candidates who gave a relatively full response to each chosen poem showed less of a tendency to identify numbers of stanzas (frequently referred to as paragraphs), rhyme schemes and various technical devices without any particular reference to the question. However, many candidates still felt the need to 'translate' or paraphrase each quotation, particularly in the pre-1914 sections. It was clear that, yet again this year, a few candidates were confused between the two War sections and either answered the pre-1914 War section using First World War poems or tried to answer pre-1914 War with reference to trench warfare. The most frequent rubric error was to refer to all three poems in one section. In each case, the best responses to two poems were credited. As in previous years, a penalty was imposed on answers which discussed only one poem. There were a few instances where candidates merely copied out a poem or poems with no comment at all. Regrettably, these responses could not score any marks.

Section C: War

Question 4

How do the poets use words and images to show people's reactions to war, in **two** of the following poems?

(Page 38) Southey After Blenheim

(Page 41) Brontë Song

(Page 42) Hardy The Man He Killed

There were only a few responses to this section with some candidates, as mentioned above, possibly answering on the 'wrong' War section. The level of understanding was generally very limited but some candidates grasped the main ideas stated in the poems – notably the soldier's questioning of war and the down-to-earth tone expressed by Hardy. These points and comments by the children and old Kaspar on the 'famous victory' in *After Blenheim* would have qualified for a mark at least in Band 5. In *Song* some understanding of the devastation and despair caused by war would have been typical of a Band 5 response. A 'little understanding' could be applied to most of the responses to Hardy and Southey but the responses to Brontë hardly produced even a 'few straightforward points'.

Section D: Town and Country

Question 5

How do the poets use words and images to show how hard life can be, in **two** of the following poems?

(Page 46) Raleigh The Nymph's Reply to the Shepherd

(Page 54) Hood The Song of the Shirt

(Page 56) Blake London

This section was the more popular of the Pre-1914 poetry, and responses spanned all bands. All candidates had some understanding of how life was depicted by the poets. The best answers were those that remained focused on the question and found examples in their chosen poems to show how the poets expressed the harshness of everyday life and its consequences. Most candidates across the bands understood the need to try and quote from the texts to support each point made, but did not always include a relevant or apposite comment. *The Nymph's Reply* was discussed by only a few candidates who did not always fully comprehend the ideas realised in the poem. Blake was similarly treated by candidates who could illustrate only a basic understanding, usually of the setting of the poem in *London*. There were many historical misconceptions and the more complex images proved very difficult for the lower band candidates to grasp. There were, however, some comments made, occasionally with support, on the sorrow in people's faces; the fear in the infants' cries and the extremely unpleasant jobs that some people had to do. Hood was generally understood and some reference to language was made, notably the use of repetition and the first person narrative voice, even at the lowest level. However, once again the context was misunderstood in places and thus the general tenor of the poem.

Section G: How It Looks From Here

Question 6

Show how the poets use words and images to help the reader think about life in a new way, in **two** of the following poems:

(Page 88) Porter A Consumer's Report

(Page 98) Dunn I am a Cameraman

(Page 100) Pugh Sometimes.

There were very few responses to this section. Candidates were generally confused as to the ideas embedded in each poem. Dunn was understood by a few but the 'story' of the poem was retold rather than being commented upon. Porter and Pugh were attempted by only a few and there was clearly much misunderstanding, leading to Examiners thinking that this section had possibly been attempted by mistake or as an unseen.

Section H: Poetry of the 1914-1918 War (ii)

Question 7

How do the poets use words and images to show the effects of war on women, in **two** of the following poems?

(Page 111) Nesbit Spring in War-Time

(Page 111) Brittain Perhaps-

(Page 112) Keown Reported Missing

This was the most popular section of poetry, producing, therefore, a great range of responses. In response to *Spring in War-Time*, candidates were able to understand the effect of the recent past on the woman and to comment on the language used to portray such understated emotions. Answers placed in the lower bands were still able to understand the loss felt by the woman and the extreme regret stated by 'we never built our nest'. However, some higher band answers were beginning to engage with the significance of the natural imagery. *Perhaps-* was also accessible on various levels but was possibly the most challenging of this set of poems. Sadness and loss were understood but there was much speculation as to who *R.A.L.* was and this added to some candidates' misunderstanding of the sentiments expressed. Answers rewarded with a mark in Bands 4 or 5 would have been able to refer to repetition and its effect on how the woman saw her future. *Reported Missing* was often paired with *Perhaps-* and some grasped the significant differences between the situations of the two poets. The idea of the woman in the poem being in denial was accepted and many could find apt quotations to support this repeated idea. Many candidates could really engage with the poets' thoughts and feelings for loved ones lost during the war.

2433/02: Literary Heritage and Imaginative Writing (Higher Tier)

General Comments

Examiners were impressed by the quality and depth of the best answers produced under such rigorous time constraints, and the freshness of response evidenced at all levels. While it was heartening to see the level of engagement with some questions, there was a marked imbalance observed in the narrative skills required for the imaginative writing question and the analytical skills required for the Literature. This was particularly pronounced with responses in the Band 4 range which often demonstrated very competent writing but only limited reading skills, and at the Band 1/2 borderline where, conversely, good reading skills sometimes added significantly to sustained but not entirely convincing writing skills.

Although candidates from some Centres had clearly mastered exam technique, a major concern was the allocation of time to each question. It cannot be emphasised too strongly that in this examination, within the limitations of first draft writing, we are looking across all the questions for samples of the quality expected in coursework, but not the quantity or length. In whichever order candidates choose to tackle the questions, it is essential that they allow sufficient time to plan and develop each answer and that their aims are realistic given the time allowance clearly indicated at each stage of the paper. This also means that introductions and conclusions to the literary tasks should be brief and strictly functional.

Comments on Individual Questions

Section A

Writing to Explore, Imagine, Entertain

Question 1

*Copy out the sentence below and then continue the story, establishing a **mood and atmosphere** appropriate to this opening.*

As more and more people arrived the noise level grew, until...

The generic mark scheme for imaginative writing clearly places great emphasis on structure, coherence and paragraphing – hence the wisdom of careful planning before commencing writing. Similar emphasis is given to establishing the genre, and engaging the reader through choice of vocabulary and the use of other appropriate narrative devices in the development of an effective mood or atmosphere in a convincing setting or situation. Here, many candidates excelled, producing imaginative scenarios ranging across political meetings, gigs, sporting events, earthquakes and even hospital waiting rooms; some were highly unusual, such as a Russian prison cell where Tzar Nickolai awaited his execution. Inevitably, many candidates, not only boys, seized on the opportunity to describe one of the most memorable football matches they had seen. The best responses were skilfully crafted, capturing in original detail the mood swings and individual reactions of the spectators, the associated noise, smells and even tastes of such an event; the least successful instantly launched into an action-packed account, often little more than a basic football commentary. This limitation also tended to be the hallmark of those who chose instantly to move on from the opening sentence into a mafia, drug-related, terrorist or haunted house action plot, at best establishing a degree of atmosphere if they explored the thoughts and feelings of the protagonist.

Examiners were delighted to find many candidates are now familiar with the concept of producing a workshop exercise, a section or chapter, not a whole convoluted story. While an exceptional response can produce more than three sides of skilfully crafted writing, even within the tight time allowance, it cannot score more than full marks: normally two sides of average handwriting and spacing are ample to demonstrate the quality of coherence, organisation, and sustained development required to achieve a Band 1. Sadly, less successful responses are often in inverse proportion to the quantity they contain: vocabulary tends to become more bland and repetitive, sentence structures more rambling and confused, or conversely increasingly simple or even in note form, the more pages that are written. Although Examiners bear in mind that this is first draft writing, a number of marks are needlessly lost through failure to control sentence structures, in particular sentence endings; failure to punctuate or even to paragraph dialogue and through an abundance of spelling errors. Candidates are advised to allow themselves time to check their work for accuracy. Where technological advances may have undermined the habit of indicating paragraph openings by indentation, candidates would be well advised to leave a space between each paragraph. Hedging of bets by giving a full stop a tail, or following a comma by a capital letter, only confirms the Examiner's impression of an insecure grasp of basic punctuation. However, in assessing the seriousness of errors, Examiners bear in mind the ambition of the vocabulary and sentence structures attempted; simple writing, however accurate, receives limited reward.

Section B

Reading: Texts from the Literary Heritage

Shakespeare

In this section, we are looking for an analytical rather than narrative approach; some evidence of a sound understanding of the whole text including plot, themes, structure and characterisation, and sufficient familiarity with the text to be able to produce apt and pithy quotation and/or textual reference in support of points made. As there are barely 30 minutes allocated to this question, at best 25 minutes' writing time, we would expect only three to four points to be made fully per answer or a wider range at a slightly more superficial level; nevertheless, all should be directly focused on the question. We have accordingly set questions that will enable candidates to concentrate on one character/one theme in the context of the whole play, or on one or two scenes/moments that offer opportunity within a limited section for close textual analysis together with a recognition of how these contribute to the play as a whole. The best responses demonstrate perceptive understanding by avoiding repetition and developing points by as wide a range of illustration as possible, and by establishing links to thematic issues where relevant. It is important that candidates avoid choosing quotations that merely confirm narrative events, but instead learn to select a few very short snippets that show motivation, characterisation or hold thematic significance. It is good practice always to provide a short comment that explains how the language conveys this. Most candidates are to be congratulated on knowing their chosen play thoroughly and largely understanding the issues involved.

Much Ado About Nothing

Question 2a

*How does Shakespeare present the character of Benedick in Much Ado About Nothing?
You may choose to focus your answer on **one** or **two** moments in the play.*

Although few Centres offered *Much Ado* for this examination, the answers to this question were largely well done. The best offered a perceptive overview of Benedick's words and actions in the context of the play, in particular the thematic issues as a foil to the relationship between Claudio and Hero and as a contrast to the men of Messina who were too bound by convention and concern for their reputation to recognise the innocence of Hero. They analysed his humour and the way he changes once he believes that Beatrice loves him, again related to the thematic issue of deception and misunderstanding. Straightforward responses merely produced a character study and relied on quotation to imply a response to the 'how' element in the question. Successful answers focused from the outset on how he is presented, analysing what is revealed by some of his scathing retorts to Beatrice, their exchanges of wit, as well as his response to other characters, particularly Claudio.

Question 2b

*In what ways does Shakespeare create humour in Much Ado About Nothing?
You may choose to focus your answer on **one** or **two** scenes in the play.*

Although very few chose this question, there were some sound responses to the 'merry war' between Beatrice and Benedick, and many found humour in the way such a 'pronounced' bachelor could so readily be taken in by his friends' plot and change so quickly that he would even 'kill Claudio' at Beatrice's command.

Romeo and Juliet

Question 3a

How does Shakespeare make the character of Tybalt important in the play Romeo and Juliet?

The least successful responses largely used a narrative approach, accompanied by overlong or not necessarily helpful quotation. Many candidates concentrated on the opening brawl scene, the Capulet Ball, or the killing of Mercutio. Stronger answers were able to identify this as a pivotal scene in the plot and trace the chain of events leading to the tragic outcome. The best responses grasped the opportunity to analyse Tybalt's role in terms of the thematic issues in the play, such as the embodiment of hatred in his pursuit of the feud, his link with the Fate of the lovers as foretold in The Prologue and his effect on the audience. Some answers were impressive in the neat way they used short, aptly chosen snippets of quotation to support the points they made, and were able to draw not only on Tybalt's own words, but the views of others, including Mercutio, Juliet, the Nurse and Lady Capulet on his death, thus providing a convincing response to the 'How' element in the question, not only in terms of presentation but also in choice of language. Less impressive was the confusion with possible film versions of the play, with Tybalt being motivated to kill Romeo in order to put an end to his relationship with Juliet, a chase ending up on a beach, and Tybalt being shot.

Question 3b

Explore some of the ways in which Shakespeare presents the relationship between older and younger generations in Romeo and Juliet.

*You may choose to focus your answer on **one** or **two** scenes in the play.*

The best answers focused immediately on the role of the Nurse in the play in her relationship with Juliet and then Romeo – Romeo with Friar Lawrence, or Juliet and Capulet, and/or Lady Capulet. Few, however, used the opportunity to explore thematic issues such as different approaches to love or the feud. Many weaker responses lapsed into narrative mode or showed only a simplistic understanding of the relationships. For example, Capulet was berated for his anger on being thwarted by Juliet, with no mention of his earlier concern for her happiness with Paris, nor the reasons why he was now anxious to bring the marriage forward. Similarly, the Nurse was presented as the loyal friend, completely ignoring her final betrayal of Juliet and its consequences. Far too frequent was the impetuous choice of the relationship between Romeo and Juliet – even where an attempt was made to justify this in terms of a possible age gap or the way Juliet was more mature than Romeo in behaviour. The question is clearly asking for a relationship that crosses the span of a generation.

POETRY pre-1914 or post-1914: OPENING LINES (OCR)

This was the section that provided the greatest variation in standards, as, in order to answer the question at the highest levels, it was essential to be able to understand and comment on the poets' use of language and/or other techniques. The wording of all the questions invites an analysis of how elements are portrayed or presented – it is not asking for a narrative account of what is actually happening in the chosen poems or a translation of what the poet is saying. The best responses have to be sharply focused and concisely worded; there is no time to give a biography of the poet or a synopsis of the society of his/her time.

Clearly, in each question, the poems vary in the richness of opportunity offered to explore the use of language and form, but in the time allowance responses can only aim to make four to six fully-developed points across the two poems of their choice. Candidates needed, first and foremost, to show they fully understood the tone and authorial purpose of each poem, as related to the question, and how this was conveyed, while always looking closely at the text to identify clear examples of precise use of language and other techniques employed by the poet. However, too many continued to adopt a formulaic approach, naming techniques employed (or even not employed) without providing examples or explaining their effect, and sometimes without ever identifying the main purpose of the poem.

Although many candidates may find it easier to sustain an analytical approach by structuring their answer as a comparison, there is no requirement in this unit to compare the two poems, and some may well prefer to tackle each entirely separately, even though thematically they will share some similarities or contrasts. Neither do we expect each poem to be given equal treatment: often candidates will best be able to demonstrate their true potential by devoting more time to the poem that inspires them the most, provided that they give the second sufficient attention to show some understanding of the themes and techniques used and make their comments relevant to the question. Conversely, there is no advantage in referring to all three poems, as this tends to dilute the effectiveness of the analysis: we offer three solely to provide some element of choice.

SECTION C: War

Question 4

Explore some of the ways in which the poets present different reactions to war, in **two** of the following poems:

- (Page 38) Southey After Blenheim
(Page 41) Brontë Song
(Page 42) Hardy The Man he Killed.

The response to this question was often disappointing as many candidates revealed considerable misunderstanding of the poems, particularly of *Song*, where few saw the significance of the final stanza. Many, indeed, claimed that the poem was celebrating war for the triumphs of reversing fortunes, hunting down their foes and seizing their property. Where references were made to rhyme schemes or general structure, these were often entirely unrelated to the question. Similarly, although most responses to Southey recognised that Kaspar could not remember the reasons for the fighting, they failed to appreciate the irony in the repetition of 'famous victory' as the main way in which the poet's anti war feelings were being presented. Many lapsed into a narrative account of the finding of the skull and the subsequent conversations. Hardy proved the most accessible, though the least successful responses largely paraphrased that war is strange when it means it is your duty to kill someone you might have shared a drink with. However, better responses saw how Hardy was presenting the futility of war through the strong doubt expressed by the narrator through, for example, his use of the dash in the third stanza, the 'of course he was' and the 'although' running through into the next stanza where he reflects on the lack of personal motivation, almost accident of circumstance, that brings men to enlist on either side.

Section D: Town and Country

Question 5

Explore some of the ways in which the poets reveal the harsh realities of life, in **two** of the following poems:

- (Page 46) Raleigh The Nymph's Reply to the Shepherd
(Page 54) Hood The Song of the Shirt
(Page 56) Blake London.

The best answers on Raleigh established instantly that the reply was to Marlowe's unrealistically romantic 'shepherd', before exploring the examples of how, over time, everything, including love, changes for the worse. There was scope then to explore examples of alliteration, such as the effect of 'pretty pleasures' and 'rivers rage and rocks grow cold', 'wayward Winter', the repetition of 'soon' and the effects of the structure and rhyme scheme. Hood proved the most accessible with responses showing strong engagement with the woman's plight, and a clear understanding of some of the devices used to convey the relentless, monotonous nature of her toil and the toll it was taking on her life. Here, and for Blake, it was helpful to refer in passing to the Industrial Revolution, but only in passing, not a paragraph, to show understanding of the comparison to a steam engine. Those who really understood *London* were impressive in their analysis of 'mind-forged manacles', the 'blood down palace walls', and the significance of the whole of the final stanza. Conversely, attempting to use the last stanza instantly betrayed those who were out of their depth, with confusion over whose infants shed tears, and a medieval-type plague. However, most responses could be rewarded for identifying the impression of universal misery, the exploitation of human labour and the state being to blame.

Section G: How It Looks From Here

Question 6

Explore some of the ways in which the poets help the reader to think about life in a new way, in **two** of the following poems:

(Page 88)	Porter	A Consumer's Report
(Page 98)	Dunn	I am a Cameraman
(Page 100)	Pugh	Sometimes.

Some candidates are to be congratulated on how well they understood these challenging poems. The best answers went on to select and explore some of the phrases/jargon used by Porter, such as 'economical', 'left an embarrassing deposit', 'heat resistant' and 'best buy', to convey a rather cynical/less than enthusiastic view on life. Responses to Dunn focused largely on 'I robbed them of privacy', 'Politics softens everything' and 'Life tells the biggest lies of all'. It would be impossible to do justice to all the ideas in this poem, but careful planning was necessary to achieve coherence and convey understanding of the poem as a whole rather than just disconnected snippets. Though deceptively short, there is considerable detail in Pugh worth analysing, but few picked up more than 'will step back from war' and the final two lines. Less successful responses missed the basic premise that Porter was considering life throughout his 'report', that Dunn was largely criticising those who think their pictures convey the 'truth', and was actually refuting the claims by his 'young friends' that films 'will not lie', and that the seeming optimism of Pugh is counterbalanced by the emphasis on 'sometimes'.

Section H: Poetry of the 1914-1918 War (ii)

Question 7

Explore some of the ways in which the poets show the effects of war on women in **two** of the following poems:

(Page 111)	Nesbit	Spring in War-Time
(Page 111)	Brittain	Perhaps-
(Page 112)	Keown	Reported Missing.

This section proved a popular choice and produced some highly competent responses. Many identified the sense of loss felt by those at home, made more poignant by their observations of the natural world around them, and the reminders of past experiences they would never again share with loved ones. The best responses, having established the feelings of grief and/or denial, remained focused on how this was conveyed and were, for example, able to explore the effects of the symbolism and irony in the imagery used by Nesbit, or the repetition of 'Perhaps' and 'Although' in Brittain, or the scornful use of alliteration in 'piteous platitudes of pain' and the irony/hysteria in 'I laugh! I laugh!' in Keown. Weaker answers tended to produce a general synopsis of the consequences of war on women, with very little close reference to the text. Others merely paraphrased the poems, or relied heavily on the text to express any understanding. There was some misunderstanding as to whether Brittain still hoped R.A.L. would return, whether Nesbit's violets had truly lost their scent through war-damaged soil, and that she was walking through actual snow. Regrettably, there were the valiant but misplaced attempts to analyse rhyme schemes and structure without any real understanding of their effects.

2434: Literary Heritage and Imaginative Writing (Written Coursework)

General Comments

This year a large number of Centres again submitted coursework before the deadline in May, and this meant that Moderators could begin the process promptly. However, there was still a minority of Centres who were late despatching both marks and sample folders which slowed down the process for some Moderators.

Again, it was generally pleasing to see the diligent and conscientious approach of Centres in applying the assessment criteria. Teachers seemed confident in the application of assessment criteria, and the detailed annotated comments on coursework showed the hard work of the majority of teachers in delivering the coursework component.

In the majority of cases, the coursework assessment forms were filled in accurately, and detailed teacher comments were helpful to Moderators in establishing what mark had been awarded. Most Centres showed clearly the breakdown of marks for the writing piece and this made the moderation process much easier.

Interestingly, this time, there were fewer examples of the 'bulk' folder and teachers are clearly now rewarding quality rather than quantity.

In the future, Centres might like to address the following minor points:

- **MS1 Mark sheets:** Many Centres are still sending carbon copies of marks to Moderators that are illegible. These have to be returned to schools for marks to be indicated clearly, before the moderation process can begin. It would be helpful if Centres checked the legibility of mark sheets before despatching them to Moderators. A number of Moderators also commented that there were an increasing number of occasions when the transfer of marks from the folder to MS1 was inaccurate.
- **Centre authentication forms:** Centres are reminded that signed authentication sheets are necessary for each unit (2434 and 2443/2447), and a number of Moderators commented that they had to ring Centres to ask for these to be provided.
- **Application of assessment criteria:** Most teachers are now very skilled at applying the assessment criteria accurately, but where Centres marks are outside of tolerance, there is often evidence that teachers have made little effort to annotate students' work and there is little or no evidence of marking in Bands, with just an overall grade given at the end of the work. When this occurs, Moderators have reported that teachers seem to lose sight of the bands more easily, and constant referral to the wording of the assessment criteria throughout the course might help eliminate this problem.

AO 3.2 READING

AO 3.2 (iv) and (v) again proved to be the biggest differentiators. AO 3.2 (iv), selecting material and making cross references, was something only the most able candidates could do.

Response to Shakespeare

The majority of Centres again chose *Romeo and Juliet* or *Macbeth*, but there were also some interesting responses to *Henry V*, *Twelfth Night* and *Much Ado*.

Candidates seemed generally confident in understanding plot, themes and character, and the more able candidates were able to comment on language and its effect.

Centres demonstrated a varied approach to the interpretation of 'Shakespeare's stagecraft'. Centres are reminded that 'theatricality' involves an awareness of the whole play, and

candidates who submit detailed responses to specific scenes are often disadvantaged when their work is assessed against the criteria for the higher Bands if they cannot make some reference to a specific scene in the context of the whole play.

In this entry there seemed to be an increasing number of Centres who had included an empathic response to either *Romeo and Juliet* or *Macbeth* as their writing piece. Again it is worth stressing that the 'imagined response' by its very nature often limits the opportunity to show an appreciation of the whole play, and the most able students might be disadvantaged by such a task if they aim to achieve the highest grades.

Generally, an increased number of candidates demonstrated an understanding of language and form, and the range of more challenging tasks which had been set by Centres helped to encourage candidates to move away from mainly narrative responses.

It was encouraging to see many examples of challenging and exciting tasks, and teachers are to be congratulated for the wide range of stimuli that they have clearly developed to make the coursework unit on Shakespeare as interesting and demanding as they have.

Response to poetry

Again, as in January, 3.2 (v) was the greatest differentiator. Candidates are still showing their expertise in identifying structural and presentational devices but cannot always then go on to show their effects upon the reader.

Most Centres are now only comparing two poems. The most popular pairings were again *The Charge of the Light Brigade* and *Dulce et Decorum est*, Blake's *London* and Wordsworth's *Westminster Bridge*, as well as love poetry. The danger of comparing a post-1914 poem with a pre-1914 poem is that there must be a greater emphasis upon the analysis of the pre-1914 poem to meet the assessment criteria for 2443. It is important to note that candidates entered only for English do not have to include a comparative aspect to their work.

Generally, Centres are to be congratulated for the stimulating and challenging responses that they have enabled candidates to achieve. Some of the best responses were from candidates who had clearly been able to comment critically on both structure and effect of the poems, and showed appreciation of the function of form and language in ways that were personal and enriching for the reader.

AO3.3. Writing

Again, it was encouraging to see the diversity of responses, with some candidates clearly taking the opportunity to display their creative talent. Centres seem to have encouraged more candidates to be aware that the quality of a response is not always commensurate with the length of it. As a result there were fewer lengthy mini-novels and more succinct, sharper pieces.

Moderators reported a generally higher standard overall, with an interesting range of narrative allowing candidates to write creatively and engagingly. This time there was a wide range of engaging responses and a number of Centres have clearly urged candidates to go for the unexpected and make an impact upon the reader from the outset. This led to more candidates attempting tasks where they could demonstrate a response which could meet the whole range of assessment criteria. For this examination, at least, 'The Assassin' also seemed to have died a death!

Overall, Centres are to be congratulated for their generally consistent application of the assessment criteria in relation to a range of interesting and demanding tasks. It would seem that more and more Centres have embedded effective means of teaching coursework into their long term planning at Key Stage 4, and there is extensive evidence of effective implementation of assessment criteria and internal standardisation. Teachers are to be complimented for their hard work in providing practical and supportive feedback in their detailed annotation of students' work and for their dedication in making the coursework component an interesting and challenging element of the GCSE course.

2435 Speaking and Listening Coursework

This component continues to be successful, with Centres maintaining or adopting good practice, such as producing clear reports and judgements firmly rooted in the assessment criteria, setting appropriate tasks and ensuring secure internal moderation procedures are in place. Repeatedly, candidates have achieved their potential. Visits to Centres have been profitable with Centres responding to this requirement in a positive and professional manner, working happily with the criteria and processes, and acting upon the advice given.

However, there are some points to note regarding the associated administration, that will help to sharpen good practice and increase efficiency. The majority of Centres met the coursework deadline date, sent all the relevant paperwork and the Centre-chosen sample – in other words doing all that was possible to aid the Moderator and the moderation process. Unfortunately, these Centres were in marked contrast to those which required Moderators to do a great deal of chasing up of Centre Authentication forms and Internal Standardisation forms, together with requests for the actual sample, which is selected by the Centre and which should accompany the MS1 mark sheets. Thus, despite procedures and pro-forma letters sent by the Board and individual Moderators to assist Centres with the process and act as reminders, a great deal of needless time was spent on administration problems. This inevitably leads to a slowing down of the whole process. Attention is therefore strongly drawn to the Administration Guidance booklet sent to all Centres and available on the web site to help with this aspect of the Unit.

Similarly, the quality of the MS1 mark sheets seems to be an on-going problem, with the Moderator's copy often being difficult to read. It is, therefore, important that Examination Officers or the designated person in charge of this aspect of administration checks that the copy is clear and legible, with marks accurately transcribed, before sending it off. Moderators have reported an increase in clerical errors in this series.

As regards the candidates' assessment records, it is important that all the necessary information is included and all relevant sections completed. Individual Centres will have had very specific feedback, in the form of the Report to Centres, where there may have been shortcomings. However, once again, a check before records are dispatched to Moderators would help the whole process. The internal standardisation process should include record keeping, the writing of reports and a check on how records are presented, with good practice being shared and adopted throughout a department. As always, the majority of Centres presented full and detailed records. Many Centres now maintain an on-going, centrally-held data base of marks for candidates, together with written records. These procedures help to prevent problems arising from staff absences, changes of staff and the like.

Some Centres continue to submit only the details for the final three activities used for assessment, rather than using the record sheet, as just that, a record of major assessment opportunities throughout the course, and then selecting the final three from this to form the basis of the overall mark. Centres may mistakenly think that Moderators require a 'best' or clean version of the records and that weaker, earlier assessments may be detrimental to their candidates. The opposite is in fact good practice, as it allows a Moderator to gain a full picture of a candidate's work and progress, helping in the understanding of the final mark awarded, where strengths and weaknesses have been balanced out.

With regards to task setting, full and detailed descriptions give Moderators an opportunity to comment on the appropriateness of tasks set. Centres have continued to set tasks suitable for their candidates, but it is worth emphasising that for the higher bands, candidates must be set challenging tasks and be moved out of the familiar towards more stimulating and original materials, situations and audiences. The converse is also true, with weaker candidates being set tasks which are self-penalising. Candidates with little empathy for Literature may well achieve greater success with non-literary based tasks.

Report on the Units taken in June 2008

Some Centres are still having problems with the drama-focused context. Moderators have reported candidates reading scripts or simply discussing a play. Tasks do not have to be based on a drama text or even a literary text; indeed, more scope may be granted if candidates are freed from such tasks to create independent roles for themselves. Attention is, as always, drawn to the now three Inter-board training and guidance videos/DVDs; a fourth will be issued next academic year.

Advisory and moderation visits to Centres were successful. Moderators witnessed much good work being done at all levels. The visits, as always, provide an opportunity for much fruitful discussion with teachers.

Centres with difficulty administering and assessing speaking and listening coursework are thankfully a minority.

Teachers are again to be congratulated for their continuing commitment and hard work in preparing candidates and assessing them for this Unit in an objective and wholly professional manner; many thanks for this.

Grade Thresholds

General Certificate of Secondary Education
English (Specification Code 1900)
June 2008 Examination Series

Unit Threshold Marks

Unit		Maximum Mark	A*	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	U
2431/1	Raw	63				53	45	37	30	23	0
	UMS	62				54	45	36	27	18	0
2431/2	Raw	90	75	69	62	56	47	42			0
	UMS	90	81	72	63	54	45	41			0
2432/1	Raw	63				56	48	40	32	24	0
	UMS	62				54	45	36	27	18	0
2432/2	Raw	90	78	71	63	56	46	41			0
	UMS	90	81	72	63	54	45	41			0
2433/1	Raw	41				34	29	24	19	14	0
	UMS	41				36	30	24	18	12	0
2433/2	Raw	60	51	46	40	34	28	25			0
	UMS	60	54	48	42	36	30	27			0
2434	Raw	40	38	34	29	24	18	13	8	3	0
	UMS	60	54	48	42	36	30	24	18	12	0
2435	Raw	40	37	33	27	21	16	11	7	3	0
	UMS	60	54	48	42	36	30	24	18	12	0

Specification Aggregation Results

Overall threshold marks in UMS (i.e. after conversion of raw marks to uniform marks)

	Maximum Mark	A*	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	U
1900	300	270	240	210	180	150	120	90	60	0

The cumulative percentage of candidates awarded each grade was as follows:

	A*	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	U	Total No. of Cands
	6.3	17.4	24.3	23.4	15.7	7.6	5.1	0.2	0.0	53842

53842 candidates were entered for aggregation this series

For a description of how UMS marks are calculated see:
http://www.ocr.org.uk/learners/ums_results.html

Statistics are correct at the time of publication.

OCR (Oxford Cambridge and RSA Examinations)
1 Hills Road
Cambridge
CB1 2EU

OCR Customer Contact Centre

14 – 19 Qualifications (General)

Telephone: 01223 553998

Facsimile: 01223 552627

Email: general.qualifications@ocr.org.uk

www.ocr.org.uk

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Facsimile: 01223 552553

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