

English and English Language

General Certificate of Secondary Education **J350** and **J355**

Examiners' Reports

January 2011

J350-5/R/11J

OCR (Oxford Cambridge and RSA) is a leading UK awarding body, providing a wide range of qualifications to meet the needs of pupils of all ages and abilities. OCR qualifications include AS/A Levels, Diplomas, GCSEs, OCR Nationals, Functional Skills, Key Skills, Entry Level qualifications, NVQs and vocational qualifications in areas such as IT, business, languages, teaching/training, administration and secretarial skills.

It is also responsible for developing new specifications to meet national requirements and the needs of students and teachers. OCR is a not-for-profit organisation; any surplus made is invested back into the establishment to help towards the development of qualifications and support which keep pace with the changing needs of today's society.

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 specification 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.

OCR will not enter into any discussion or correspondence in connection with this report.

© OCR 2011

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: publication s@ocr.org.uk

CONTENTS

General Certificate of Secondary Education

English (J350) and English Language (J355)

EXAMINERS' REPORTS

Content	Page
A641 Reading Literary Texts	1
A643 Speaking and Listening	3
A651 Extended Literary Text and Imaginative Writing	5
A680 Information and Ideas – Foundation Tier	7
A680 Information and Ideas – Higher Tier 10	

A641 Reading Literary Texts

General Comments

In a small entry for this first session, candidates were well prepared, especially considering they had had only one term in Y10; however their relative lack of maturity was evident in the depth and quality of analysis produced under controlled conditions. The candidates appeared to have completed the tasks within the time limit allowed. Where notes were included with the work as was evident with some candidates, these were very helpful in seeing how the final task had been produced. Although there was some clear variation in terms of length, each task was well within the 1000 word limit recommended so that each candidate was not going over the total of 3000. Some may have benefited from developing the ideas further in order to access Bands 1 and 2.

Although discussion with centres has indicated that a wider range of texts is being prepared, the work from this session was on *Of Mice and Men*, *Romeo and Juliet* and the poetry of Wilfred Owen. All candidates completed the set tasks on these texts rather than the themed task, which is an option available not just for centre-chosen texts.

In their dealing with the texts, there was evidence of some sound understanding and a generally clear focus on the tasks. The social and historical context of texts was addressed in all three tasks, however, there was some tendency to begin with the seemingly obligatory biography of the writer or the conditions at the time of writing, or intermittent comments on context not grounded in the text or used to illuminate understanding. Nevertheless, the very best used it to develop their exploration of the characters' loneliness in *Of Mice and Men*, the pride and honour of male characters in *Romeo and Juliet* and the ways in which Owen shows that for soldiers, war was not a sweet and noble thing.

Task Specific Notes

Romeo and Juliet

*How does Shakespeare show the importance of pride and honour to **one** or **two** male characters in the play?*

Whilst Tybalt, Capulet and Romeo were the characters generally selected for exploration by candidates, the roles of Mercutio and Friar Lawrence were also mentioned. Some candidates diluted the strength of their exploration by dealing with too many characters, and centres are advised that the instruction to deal with one or two characters as the central focus of the response is to enable them to deal with them in more detail and depth.

Candidates showed a strong engagement with the play. The strong middle band responses seen showed a secure knowledge and understanding, with some awareness of how characters revealed their sense of pride and honour in different ways, and some appreciation of the difference between pride and honour. To access the top two bands, candidates needed to explore the language and dramatic devices used to present pride and honour in the male characters, using short, apt quotations as the basis for analytical comment rather than explanation. Lower band responses tended to focus on characters' actions, often leaving the link to pride and honour more implicit than explicit, and using quotation to support an account of events. Such quotations were often introduced by paraphrase and then followed by a translation. It was pleasing to note the sustained use of the text at virtually all levels and the absence of confusion with the modern film version of the play.

Of Mice and Men

"Guys like us are the loneliest guys in the world".

How far does Steinbeck's presentation of the relationship between George and Lennie challenge this idea?

The responses to this task showed candidates enjoying the opportunity to write about the central relationship and appreciating the contextual reasons for characters' loneliness, referring to the lack of stability, trust and harshness of ranch life. Some of the stronger, secure middle band responses explored the differences between George and Lennie's relationship and others on the ranch, often picking up on Lennie's cry of "Not us, because I got you to look after me and you got me to look after you" to reflect on how this stopped them being lonely. There was some insight evident in comments referring to the way that even George and Lennie were, at times, lonely. There was a tendency to explore the ways in which Steinbeck presents the theme of loneliness and discuss which characters are lonely and why, rather than using examples of these other characters to show how the relationship between George and Lennie is different, hence losing a focus on the question even in the stronger middle band responses. To access the top bands, candidates needed to ensure this tight focus on the task set with quotations being used to show an understanding of the writer's purpose and of how meaning is created. Lower band responses generally commented in a straightforward way on how and why characters are lonely, with some reflection on how George and Lennie support each other, but a greater degree of narrative where the relevance was implicit.

Wilfred Owen

How far does Owen challenge the idea that it is not a sweet and noble thing to die for one's country?

The poems chosen to answer this question included *Dulce et Decorum Est* (from which the reference to "sweet and noble" in the task is drawn), *Anthem for Doomed Youth*, *The Sentry*, *Dead Beat*, *Strange Meeting* and *Disabled* and it was pleasing to see the level of understanding, with very little confusion or distortion of meaning, evident in the candidates' responses. Some chose to include up to five poems which, with a recommended word limit of 1000, inevitably limited the depth of their analysis. There was a sound appreciation of Owen's experiences of war and of how this affected his attitude to it, all being able to see how his poetry expresses his negative feelings. At the lower levels this was expressed in terms of the physical suffering and by reference to the horrible conditions faced by the soldiers, with some relevant quotations used as evidence, whereas the more secure middle band responses also showed some insight into the mental suffering of the soldiers. Whilst there was some awareness of Owen's tone in the stronger responses, and in the top Band 3 answers an ability to reflect on how choices of language create meaning, the majority tended simply to name devices and be more limited in their ability to explore the effect created. At the lower band level, candidates showed some straightforward understanding and often self penalised by writing very little. Although it was evident that only the stronger candidates understood the reference within the question, they were all able to show a grasp of how Owen's poetry reveals the horrors of war, making their responses more directly relevant to the question than was often the case in *Of Mice and Men*.

The quality of the responses across all three genres was generally very consistent, with the poetry being the slightly stronger overall.

A643 Speaking and Listening

General Comments

With Centres still delivering the legacy specification to their Year 11 groups and this being the first opportunity to enter candidates for this unit since its inception in September 2010, the entry, as expected, was very small. Also with changes to the terminal rule, Centres may use any of the Controlled Assessment units for final assessment. However early entry serves to confirm a Centre's practice, giving valuable feedback.

Task Setting

The requirement to cover the three different contexts is familiar from the legacy specification, so Centres are experienced in setting appropriate activities to meet this aspect of Speaking and Listening task setting. However attention is strongly drawn to the new requirement of the "real-life context in and beyond the classroom". This is not extra to the basic three contexts, but must be included as an aspect of any one of them; at the discretion of a Centre, as appropriate to the situation. Centres must adapt activities, or develop new ones, to take this requirement into account.

Similarly, with the crossover of this unit with English Language A652 Section A, Centres may take this opportunity to review completely the bank of tasks used.

Record Keeping

A key part of the process is record keeping. Centres are advised to maintain on-going records for all candidates, perhaps making use of a centrally held database of marks for candidates, with written comments. These procedures help to prevent problems arising from staff absences, changes of staff and the like, and also help in the selection of the three activities to be used to form the basis for final assessment. The OCR designed form covers all the necessary elements required by the external moderator.

The Application of the Criteria

The starting point for this must be achievement as set against the performance criteria, fixing first on the band and then on a mark within the band range. Comments on achievement, on candidates' assessment forms, should make reference to the band descriptors and give a mark out of 40 for each separate context. The final mark is based on a mathematical calculation; the three separate marks totalled and divided by three. Centres are advised to check the final calculation carefully. No assumptions should be made as to a link between bands/marks and grades.

Internal Standardisation Procedures

Good practice is to use cross moderation of groups, joint marking exercises, reorganisation of groups for assessment and department Inset training using filmed evidence. Attention is drawn to OCR's Training and Guidance DVD issued to Centres Autumn 2010, for this unit. This provides vital support for all Centres, in assessment and task setting.

Administration

The administration of this unit provided few problems this series. However, Centres must familiarise themselves with the deadlines and procedures pertinent to this unit (please see 'Speaking and Listening instructions for A643 and A652' on the OCR website). All paperwork must be sent to the moderator by the deadline set.

A651 Extended Literary Text and Imaginative Writing

Candidates were well prepared, some very impressively so, after, effectively, one term in Y10. Controlled Assessment is NOT "coursework" in the tradition of previous specifications – work may not be quite as polished in appearance and certainly not nearly as long – but there are opportunities for spontaneity, concision and risk taking that were perhaps less evident previously.

Most assessments, annotation and summative comments were clear and helpful: as requested, most kept strictly to the band descriptors and pointed out good candidate use of these in the body of the response as well as giving a concise summary at the end. Some work contained insufficient annotation and commentary: some pages had no teacher marks at all. This was, possibly, the result of teachers taking work in between sessions and marking it after the first of the sessions but not between them. The importance of marking the whole piece, when it is complete, using the rubrics and with the moderators as the audience cannot be over emphasised.

In a few cases the summative comments were a trifle over-enthusiastic and seemed to provide a self-fulfilling prophecy of the mark the work should receive. However, all the marks were within tolerance, some just so. In some cases stronger performances on the Extended Literary Text compensated in some measure for generosity to the Imaginative Writing.

The word counts for the tasks (1600 for the Extended Literary Text and 1200 in total for the two pieces of Imaginative Writing) should be taken as suggestions: but the time limits are definitely limits. That is not to say that candidates are best served by writing throughout the time available: further pondering, consideration and refinement and judicious editing can also be a part of the time taken up by the assessment. Many candidates fulfilled all the relevant band descriptors in work of 1600/1200 words or less, including those in the upper bands.

Extended Literary Text

All work seen was on either "Of Mice and Men" or Romeo and Juliet". This reflects the enduring popularity of these two with both students and their teachers. It also suggests that centres are making some shrewd decisions about which texts will serve two purposes: in this case Extended Literary text and either the A661 Shakespeare and Film or A663 Prose from Different Cultures. It may also reflect decisions taken to begin reading for the course at some stage of Y9.

Much of the work was rigorous, thoughtful, well informed and relevant throughout. Challenging rival interpretations of both texts were argued with cogent support and consistent intelligence. This applied as much to interpretations of "disadvantaged" in the novel as "fate" in the play. Candidates who referred to the Greek myth of the fates challenged themselves to integrate what they knew into a relevant and coherent response: most were successful. Most candidates grappled with rival interpretations of the writer's perspective. Some of the best responses were successful in differentiating reader/writer responses and placing each into context. What is not required is a paragraph or more on the writer's biography or the social/ cultural/ historical conditions prevailing at the time of composition. Some of the weaker responses reflected a measure of this. Many responses used a considered and often simple but effective appreciation of dramatic irony to show how meaning is conveyed: others gave knotty close readings of individual lines/ phrases/words from each text.

Pleasingly, there was little evidence of “scaffolding” or rigorously pre-ordained, teacher generated essay structures: the stronger candidates showed plenty of evidence of individuality and originality in their responses, for example, arguing that Curley is as disadvantaged a character as any in “Of Mice and Men”.

Some of the work lacked the development of a continuously coherent argument or was inconsistent in quality. Given the amount of time available for planning the work, there should not be occasion for unsubstantiated assertion or random personal reactions. As I suggest above, neither is there room for lengthy recapitulation of the plot.

Imaginative Writing

It was pleasing to see that responses covered both genres and all the alternatives offered in the satellite tasks. The best work showed great ambition, often introducing a sub genre to develop what was prompted in the tasks. For example, Victorian style melodrama in “Trapped” and the diary of a Police Officer: a great deal of discussion and preparation was evident with ambitious choices of structure and vocabulary as a result. Again the better work was spare and pithy, rather than rambling and repetitious.

Less successful work paid insufficient attention to genre and was rather inconsistent in narrative voice and development. Some work tended to strain the imagination of the most generous moderators and some was, frankly, rather naïve in the characters and events chosen – possibly a consequence of very early entry for the examination.

Although what is asked for is generally in line with some of the sorts of writing candidates will have been used to producing for a very long time, it is well worth challenging assumptions and looking at the particular details as the planning gets underway.

Most centres included candidate notes, which looked helpful and non prescriptive, though some were plainly over long. Centres had obviously looked with care at the band descriptors for AO 4/3. In a few cases there were many more error types (as opposed to one off errors) than had been marked. As much evidence as possible should be marked, to show how the judgment of this Objective has been derived.

A680 Information and Ideas – Foundation Tier

General Comments

The question paper proved to be accessible and of an appropriate level of demand for the tier. Candidates clearly engaged with the reading material on the topic of orang-utans; both texts in different ways dealt with the threats these creatures face.

Candidates had for the most part been clearly prepared for the new format of the question and answer booklet used at Foundation Tier. The spaces provided for answers reflected the relative weightings of questions, and the majority of candidates took due note when framing their answers. If candidates feel they need to write more, they should do so on additional examination paper (appropriately headed and attached to the booklet). They should not write outside the spaces provided in the actual booklet.

The new A680 Information and Ideas paper is similar in content to the legacy 2431, Non-Fiction, Media and Information paper. An important difference is the increased weighting for Writing, up from a third to half of the paper. There was evidence at the top end of the range of a greater focus on planning and structuring writing responses, which reflected teachers' good work in preparing candidates for this new paper.

Individual Questions

Question 1

- (a) From **paragraph one** (beginning 'Orang-utans are our close relatives...'), write down **two** things that make orang-utans almost human.
- (b) From **paragraph two** (beginning 'That's not surprising...'), write down **two** facts about adult male orang-utans.
- (c) Give **two** possible meanings of the title 'Orang-utans: Just Hanging On'.

1(a) – 1(c). As with the legacy paper, Question 1 begins with a number of questions requiring short responses. The space for answers is deliberately restricted, to signal to candidates the relative brevity required in answers. The majority of candidates coped very well with this innovation and answered these part-questions concisely. Selective copying of phrases (for example, 'auburn hair' and 'grasping hands' in 1(a) is fine. Verbatim copying of whole sentences is not acceptable. It is not, for example, a safe strategy to write out in one box a sentence containing five points. There were some instances of cramming two answers in one box and leaving the second box blank – true of both 1(a) and 1(b). 1(c) proved to be the most discriminating of these three part-questions. The metaphorical sense of a species surviving ('holding on') was not grasped by all candidates.

1(d) Re-read the passage from **paragraph three** beginning 'The natural habitat...' to the end of the text.

Using **your own words as far as possible**, outline what you learn about orang-utans and the threats they face.

Examiners saw some very competent responses, where candidates were able to convey their understanding clearly and largely in their own words. These successful answers included information about the threats facing orang-utans as well as more straightforward general information about these creatures. It was pleasing to see that very few responses included material intended for part-questions 1(a) – 1(c).

As is customary with this type of question, it was possible for clearly focused responses to 1d to gain higher marks with fewer points than responses which had more points but which, to varying degrees, were more reliant on the original wording of the text. The strategy of altering the occasional word will not lead to high reward; although this appears to do more than slavish copying, it is an approach that still relies too heavily on lifting from the original text.

A few candidates showed understanding of the passage but adopted the unhelpful approach of quoting and commenting on key words. This approach is more properly suited to, and tested in, Question 2b.

Question 2

- (a) *The leaflet encourages you to support the campaign to protect orang-utans. How do the **headings** and **photographs** help to do this?*
- (b) *The leaflet encourages you to support the campaign to protect orang-utans. How does the **language** in the leaflet help to do this?*

In your answer you should write about:

- **Information** used in the leaflet
- some of the **words** and **phrases** used in the leaflet.

The text, taken from a charity leaflet, was found to be accessible and engaging. This question covers similar territory to the Media question in the legacy 2431/01 paper. The key difference is the provision of two part-questions in the new A680/01 paper. The first deals with aspects of presentation (here, headings and photographs); the second with the effects of words and phrases.

2(a). This was generally done well. There appeared to be fewer of the type of generalised comments that might be made of any media text – such as 'bold headings attracting the eye' or 'colour photographs drawing you in'. Stronger responses clearly identified *specific* headings and commented appropriately on their *particular* effects. This part-question is worth a possible 6 out of 20 marks, and almost a page of the booklet is provided for a response. Candidates should be taught to be selective; there is no need to be exhaustive. If candidates write beyond the space provided, there is a danger that insufficient time will be spent on 2b, weighted at 14 out of 20 marks.

2(b). Examiners saw some really strong, analytical responses at the top end. In these responses, an appreciation of the leaflet's purpose was evident in both the choice of information and in the quotation of particularly striking words and phrases – together with thoughtful comment on their effects on the reader. Less successful strategies included making general unsubstantiated assertions, listing quotations without comment, and the simple naming of linguistic devices ('rule of three' being a favourite).

More space is provided for an answer to 2(b) than for 2(a), to reflect the greater weighting, though once again candidates should be selective rather than try to be exhaustive. Thoughtful comment on the effects of a few chosen words or phrases is a better strategy than a mechanical listing of words or devices without specific comment.

Questions 3 and 4

3 *'Everybody should support at least one charity.'*

Write your views.

4 *A magazine has a regular feature entitled 'If I ruled the world...' in which writers put forward their own ideas about how to make life better.*

Write your own article for the magazine.

You could write about:

- *who you want to make life better for;*
- *what you would do;*
- *why you think it matters.*

Most candidates engaged successfully with the tasks, which proved to be of about equal popularity.

There was no more evidence than usual of rushed final answers. Indeed, many of the more successful candidates appeared to be aware of the higher profile given to Writing in this paper (compared with 2431/01) and allocated space in the booklet to planning and developing their responses.

Stronger responses to Question 3 saw the statement not just in terms of money, and came up with a reasoned argument about alternative ways of giving and the benefits derived from supporting a charity. Not surprisingly, given the topic of the Reading section, many mentioned animal charities for endangered species, though charities supporting cancer research and returning servicemen were also popular.

Question 4 was almost always enthusiastically answered but the content was sometimes less convincing. Many talked about alleviating poverty in the world and helping the homeless but then could not develop their ideas and tended to repeat points. Some saw it as a means of obtaining untold wealth, some of which would be spent on others but also on cars, houses and games consoles! A minority drifted off the point altogether or forgot about the title, responding solely to the first bullet point instead.

There may be some advantage in teachers stressing to candidates the importance of devoting time to brainstorming ideas and then working out an appropriate structure for their responses to Questions 3 and 4. Those candidates who did this generally wrote more clearly, and shaped their material more effectively to gain maximum impact on the reader. In these responses could be discerned an obvious attempt to provide development and a sense of direction, leading to a generally well-handled ending. The writing of those who did not plan effectively tended to become rambling and repetitive, with paragraphing absent or haphazard. Candidates should not feel obliged to use all the space provided just because it is there. A shorter, more controlled piece of writing will lead to a higher reward than a longer, rambling answer which loses or lacks focus. It was noticeable that those who wrote excessively also made the greatest number of spelling and punctuation errors. There are clear lessons here about how candidates might improve their Writing performance.

A680 Information and Ideas – Higher Tier

General Comments

This was the first sitting of the Information and Media examined unit for the new English and English Language Specifications and, not surprisingly, was taken by fewer than 1,000 candidates. Examiners had the impression that, in many cases, Centres appeared to be testing the water to gain some understanding of the current capabilities of their students and of the standards of the examination.

Although the cohort who took the paper was not fully representative of the full range of candidates, there was, nevertheless, evidence of a wide range of achievement. A small number of candidates scored highly on all questions; however, a much larger number performed at a level which, on average, was significantly lower than that of candidates for the equivalent Higher Tier paper (2431/02) for the legacy 1900 Specification. In fact, many candidates would appear to have been somewhat optimistically entered for the Higher Tier paper and Examiners felt that they would have been able to give a fairer indication of their capabilities had they taken Foundation Tier: this is a demanding examination and on the evidence of the performance of many of the candidates, Centres might want to rethink the policy of entering students for it after only one term of studying at Key Stage 4.

Many responses contained evidence of immaturity of examination technique; the paper is 2 hours in length with equal weighting of marks between Section A (Reading) and Section B (Writing). However, for Section A, candidates are required to read two quite demanding previously unseen passages and then to answer three questions testing both their understanding of content and their appreciation of the techniques of the writers; Section B requires the writing of one piece of continuous prose for which between 350 – 450 words is adequate. On the evidence of many of the responses to this paper, future candidates would be advised to spend comparatively more time reading the passages and answering the questions relating to Section A and to ensure that they do not write at unprofitably great length in response to the writing tasks in Section B. In particular, greater focus on planning and organisation of answers would have resulted in more successful answers to the writing tasks. Such attention to planning would also have reduced the number of scripts in which candidates obviously had afterthoughts about what they had written and included extra sentences indicated by a system of asterisks at various points in the middle of or at the end of answers to other questions; although these additional points were taken into account when assessing the quality of the responses this approach, nevertheless, can lead to confusion for those who are marking the scripts.

Comments on Individual Questions

Question 1

*Referring carefully to the magazine article [asbo elephants], outline concisely how the work of Doug Groves helps both elephant and human beings. Use **your own words** as far as possible.*

This question effectively required candidates to *summarise* key points from the article, relating specifically to Doug Groves' work with elephants and the human beings with whom they come into contact. The most successful responses showed clear understanding of both the task and the passage and carefully selected relevant points such as Doug's rehabilitation of elephants who were in danger of being shot for their behaviour; the care he showed to them while reforming them and the way in which he used the elephants in his Project to educate local people and visitors so that they could learn to understand and respect the animals so that conflicts over land between humans and elephants could be resolved and that the interaction between the two species could be increasingly safe.

However, less successful responses lost clear focus on the task and lacked the overview of the material required to achieve marks in the Band 4 range and above; candidates were instructed to answer concisely and it is important to understand that this should not be taken to mean 'as briefly as possible'. A good response to this task (and to similar tasks in future) requires selection of a good range of points relating to the question and then a focussed recounting of them, avoiding unnecessary details and personal comment. With this task Examiners are looking for candidates to demonstrate a secure understanding of the passage (hence the requirement to use own words), an overview of the material and a clear focus on the task. Successful responses are very much dependent on careful reading of the passage and preliminary note-taking before the final response is written. Those candidates, for example, who confused the writer of the article (Nick Smith) with Doug Groves did not convince that they had a secure understanding of the passage.

Question 2

Explore how the article [asbo elephants] portrays the elephants. In your answer refer to both the **presentation** and the **content** of the article.

In this new paper, the testing of candidates' understanding of writers' techniques has been split into two questions, rather than the one, overall question set for the legacy papers. It is important for candidates to note, therefore, that Question 2 focuses on appreciation of the content and presentational features of the article, while understanding of the way a writer uses language is tested in Question 3.

Perhaps not surprisingly, most candidates focussed their responses to this question on the photographs that accompanied the text. There were some relevant and well-explained comments about how the angle from which the large photograph was taken presented the elephants as imposing and fearsome, comparing this with the smaller photographs showing the elephants interacting affectionately with humans and explaining how this portrayed the differing aspects of the reformed characters of the animals; other responses simply said that one photograph was big and the others were not as big, which did not explain their effectiveness. It cannot be emphasised too strongly that the key word in this question (and in Question 3) is *how* and it is, therefore, important that candidates make some attempt to justify and explain their points in relation to the terms of the question; simply describing the layout and content of the article is not enough to qualify a response for a mark in Band 4 or above. Similarly, it is important that all comments made are supported by appropriate textual references.

As a general rule with Higher Tier questions, although 'presentation' includes the requirement to comment on the layout of a passage it is expected that, to access the higher bands of the mark scheme, candidates should also consider the ways in which the passage under consideration presents a particular idea through structure and organisation of content. In this particular passage, relevant content points included the fact that the elephants for whom Doug Groves is responsible had been involved in the deaths of human beings but are presented in the article as possessing other more gentle characteristics and are described by Doug and the writer almost as if they are human children. Many candidates made reference to the detail that Jabu is known as 'the sand-kicker' although only a small number moved on to the next stage of explaining how such a comment enhanced the way in which the elephant was portrayed.

Question 3

*How does George Orwell convey his thoughts and feelings to the reader? In your answer, refer to the **language** he uses and the **tone** created.*

This question specifically required candidates to show appreciation of the way the writer's language conveyed his feelings to the reader. It is a powerfully written account and it was pleasing to see candidates responding to the honesty of Orwell's writing. However, although

most were able to point out that he did not want to shoot the elephant and that he only did so because the crowd pressured him into it, far fewer wrote sufficiently developed explorations of his account to explain how these and other feelings were communicated. It is hoped that with this type of task candidates will do more than simply hunt down linguistic devices and patterns (such as 'the rule of three') - which may or may not have been present in the passage or in the author's mind when he wrote it - and go on to make some comment about how such devices may help to convey the author's thoughts or feelings to the reader; in fact, in a good response to this task the naming of a literary device is less important than the ability to explain its effect. It is equally important that any comments made should be supported by appropriate textual references or quotations.

As with Question 2 there were also many short and under developed responses to this task, and many which showed only limited understanding, both of the complexity of the writer's feelings and of how to explain how his language and tone conveyed them. For example, there were many generalised comments such as 'the writer's tone is that of someone who doesn't want to shoot the elephant' with no subsequent reference to the words used to illustrate this statement. More promising were responses which referred to the writer as 'an absurd puppet' being pushed to and fro by the will of the crowd or to the 'preoccupied grandmotherly air of the elephant' and most successful of all were those which mentioned these metaphors and then went on to explore the implications of them and of how they respectively helped to crystallise the writer's feelings about his relationship with the crowd and his feelings towards the elephant. As with the other tasks in Section A, there was some evidence of less than careful reading – some candidates apparently did not read the introductory paragraph at all, and appeared to be under the impression that the account described an event that happened within the United Kingdom as opposed to a village in Burma.

Centres are advised to encourage candidates to spend time reading the passages and questions in Section A carefully and thinking about what is required, before starting to write their answers.

Section B

Although, on the whole, candidates performed more successfully in response to the writing tasks, many wrote at unnecessary length producing unplanned, unstructured and unparagraphed essays that deteriorated in quality and accuracy of expression the longer they went on.

Question 4

*Do we worry too much about the welfare of animals? **Write your views.***

There were a few very pleasing responses to this task: essays which were mature in content, expression and organisation with fully convincing and sophisticated arguments expressed in wide and appropriate vocabulary.

However, many candidates were not fully successful in controlling the discursive approach required by this task and struggled to sustain a coherent line of argument. Frequently, such responses began with an initial attempt at taking a balanced approach, considering both the pros and cons of the proposition but then lost track of where they were going and fell into contradictory and confusing arguments which lacked clarity, especially when sidetracked into discussing the rights and wrongs of animal testing for both cosmetic and medical research. Such responses consisted mainly of generalisations, with insufficient examples to support the assertions that were made. Most Examiners felt that many responses could have reached a higher band than actually achieved had the candidates written less and planned more.

Question 5

*A local newspaper is featuring a series of article called 'Help!' **Write an account for the newspaper of a time when you, or someone you know, needed help.***

Of the two writing tasks, this proved to be the more accessible; most candidates were capable of writing at least a straightforward narrative which was relevant to the suggested subject matter. Only a very few responses, however, made any conscious attempt to meet the 'newspaper article' requirement and, of those few, most considered that writing in columns with an occasional interspersed illustration was all that was required. Those candidates who attempted to adopt an appropriate tone are to be congratulated.

There were, nevertheless, some competently structured and engaging narratives, occasionally written in an effective ironically amused tone. However, there were also many unstructured and unfocussed accounts which would have benefited from more careful initial planning in which the key elements of the story were clearly identified. Greater concentration on appropriate vocabulary choices would also have increased the immediacy of many accounts.

Examiners expressed the following concerns about the number of responses to both writing tasks that failed to observe the basic rules of written expression. As previously mentioned, the uncertain paragraph structure of many essays resulted in uncontrolled development of ideas; other responses were simply too long and unstructured. The attempts to write at length in a limited time frequently resulted in incorrect sentence separation, with the comma and full stop being used interchangeably. The lower case "i" was frequently used incorrectly and there was a lack of capital letters for place names. In general, handwriting and presentation in many scripts were of a less than satisfactory standard.

In conclusion, it would seem that the paper allowed all candidates to respond at levels appropriate to their ability. There were some very good responses indeed but many which could have been better had certain points, such as precise focus on the requirements of the questions and careful planning of the structure of the answers been more secure. It is hoped that the content of this report will provide future candidates for this paper with advice and examples of what needs to be done in order to achieve the best results of which they are capable.

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

For staff training purposes and as part of our quality assurance programme your call may be recorded or monitored

Oxford Cambridge and RSA Examinations
is a Company Limited by Guarantee
Registered in England
Registered Office; 1 Hills Road, Cambridge, CB1 2EU
Registered Company Number: 3484466
OCR is an exempt Charity



OCR (Oxford Cambridge and RSA Examinations)
Head office
Telephone: 01223 552552
Facsimile: 01223 552553