

Examiners' Report November 2008

IGCSE

IGCSE English Literature (4360 01 & 02)

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4360 01 IGCSE English Literature

Introduction

The winter and summer 2008 examinations successfully enable a wide range of candidates to show their knowledge, understanding and appreciation of the Drama and Prose texts they have studied.

The candidate is expected to make two responses, one on a Drama text and one on a Prose text in one and a half hours. The candidate should spend forty five minutes on each response.

Almost all candidates divided their time equally between the two sections; few candidates missed out on marks because they did not read the questions carefully. Candidates might benefit by highlighting the key words in each question to avoid any misunderstanding.

Centres are very familiar with the expectations from this examination; the administration of paperwork and packaging was of a very high standard.

Candidate choices - Texts

Of the five choices available on the two sections of the examination paper, familiar Drama the text '*Julius Caesar*' seemed less popular this series and more candidates opted for the play '*A View from a Bridge*' and '*A Doll's House*'.

The Prose text '*Pride and Prejudice*' proved unsurprisingly to be the most popular choices and a proportionate move for the text of '*An English Teacher*' was present.

Candidates need to respond to the question asked.

The best answers support perceptive commentary with brief and appropriate evidence. These candidates offer insightful and detailed material, often a personal response, which is focused with detailed analysis and are therefore credited with higher marks.

There were fewer candidates scoring within Range 5, many because statements had not been accompanied with an appropriate length of explanation.

Weaker candidates often tend to re tell the story; fewer candidates wrote character narratives or recycle material. Range 1-2 responses still demonstrated some focused appreciation for the text. This is a move in the right direction.

4360 02 English Literature

Introduction

The winter 2008 examination successfully enables a wide range of candidates to show their knowledge, understanding and appreciation of the poems in the Poetry Anthology they have studied.

The candidate is expected to make one response, in forty five minutes, on two poems from the anthology booklet. Candidates should spend a short period of time selecting appropriate poems for the question and highlight the key words to avoid any misunderstanding.

Centres are familiar with the expectations from this examination and time management did not prove problematic.

Candidate choices

Candidates chose between two questions. The first question proved to be the least popular; often demonstrating a developed understanding of theme and purpose.

The second question allowed candidates to freely choose two poems and presented an opportunity to make a personal and authentic response. There are still too many responses that appear to be 'prepared' often with lengthy introductions that at times were irrelevant to the question set.

Candidates need to respond to the question asked.

The best answers supported evaluative commentary with brief and appropriate evidence. These candidates offered a personal and original response, and were therefore credited with higher marks.

It was pleasing that centres had taken note of m last report as fewer candidates, inevitably scoring in Ranges 1 and 2, made references to technical terms without having any real understanding of their purpose and effectiveness.

However, centres still need to discourage candidates from focusing on one poem at a time and then adding an ineffective short conclusion.

Candidates are likely to score higher marks if they compare and contrast two poems alongside one another, demonstrating a sound awareness of the links between these poems whilst remembering to clearly reference throughout.

4360 03 IGCSE English Literature Coursework

Most candidates confined themselves to dealing with the themes of childhood, nostalgia etc. linked to the sections of the Anthology. A few allowed themselves a more varied selection of poems by exploring the poets' thoughts, but not confining themselves to that section, or the experiences of victims. The great majority of candidates have learned to maintain the focus on the question all through their work though a few did lapse into a general summary or commentary.

Almost without exception centres awarded candidates extremely high marks but it should be noted that 'presenting points in a focused and analytical manner' is a requirement for the highest grades and too often the high marks awarded didn't acknowledge this. Understanding of the general content was good but the detail was covered too haphazardly. Quotations were interwoven to help convey the meaning but often fragmented so were in fact confusing rather than otherwise e.g. One candidate wrote 'the poet's use of contrasting words is smartly relevant Trust.....doubtkeep.....losing' without any further explanation. Another example that failed to make the point was 'the poet uses and to emphasize poverty'.

The better candidates attempted some detailed analysis but very patchily and without consistency across the poems. Many just listed figures of speech, especially alliteration, and linked them to the atmosphere, and sometimes the senses, but there was little precise analysis of why the poet had chosen these particular words. Some rather bizarre conclusions were drawn e.g, (referring to Half-past Two) 'slotted back is a metaphor which adds a note of regret' In some cases there was analysis of structure but no link between this and the message of the poems.

Careless errors, unmarked by the teachers, made nonsense of some points e.g. writing about For Me From You one candidate spent one paragraph explaining the implication of the repetition of the word march ten times to emphasise the husband measuring everything he gave. The word should, of course, be 'much'. Another candidate wrote 'Achebe told us in the poem that the mother was sinning in her eyes; this was a metaphor to make sure that she still loves her child a lot with her last active love as a mother.'

The candidates appeared to engage with the poems and gain a lot from studying them. Appreciation of the general effects of the language is clear but the next stage must be the systematic and precise analysis to explain these effects. Proof reading to eliminate the major errors will avoid marks being lost unnecessarily.

IGCSE English 4360 - Opt 1

Papers:

01 WRITTEN (DRAMA AND PROSE)

02 WRIT.ALTERNATIVE (POETRY)

Grade	*	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	U
Upr	100	71	64	57	50	42	34	26	18
Lwr	72	65	58	51	43	35	27	19	
Cum %	.0	7.7	17.9	48.7	79.5	94.9	100.0	100.0	100.0

IGCSE English 4360 - Opt 2

Papers:

01 WRITTEN (DRAMA AND PROSE)

03 COURSEWORK (POETRY)

Grade	*	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	U
Upr	100	76	66	56	47	39	31	24	17
Lwr	77	67	57	48	40	32	25	18	
Cum %	2.5	10.0	37.5	67.5	92.5	97.5	97.5	97.5	100.0

IGCSE English 4360 - Opt 3

Papers:

01 WRITTEN (DRAMA AND PROSE)

03T TRANSF.COURSEWORK(POETRY)

Grade	*	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	U
Upr	100	76	66	56	47	39	31	24	17
Lwr	77	67	57	48	40	32	25	18	
Cum %	16.7	25.0	25.0	58.3	91.7	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

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