

Moderators' Report/  
Principal Moderator Feedback

June 2011

International GCSE  
English Literature (4ET0) Paper 03

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## Principal Moderator's Report 4ET0/03 Summer 2011

Though the new anthology no longer groups poems by themes, centres on the whole still tended to make their selections focusing on the tried and tested themes of love, death, memories, childhood etc. The centres that, with careful supervision, allowed their candidates to put their own slant on some of the topics, even though tackling the same poems and themes, tended to elicit a more engaged response e.g. instead of the popular question "How do the poets deal with the theme of love in your chosen poems?", one candidate wrote on the question "'Love conquers all.' To what extent do your poems support this claim and which poem captures love best for you?" – not much different but the question encouraged a more precise focus and personal response. Similarly instead of very general questions on childhood and/or memory some candidates were guided to focus a little more precisely e.g. "Explore how the poets treat the subject of a significant memory from childhood." or "How do the poems represent the notion of regret through the passage of time?"

Some interesting, less common, topics included: "Explore how women are presented in the poems."; "How is power, or lack of it, shown in your chosen poems?"; "How do the poets give a portrayal of perpetual perseverance?" etc.

Compliance with the new requirement for the reference to three wider reading poems in addition to those for detailed study was uneven in some centres. Candidates varied between referring to 3 to 6 poems in total. Some but all centres had taken account of this in their marking.

While a few centres kept to the well-known poems from the previous anthology for their wider reading, there was, nevertheless, a huge range of interesting poems chosen which made the moderation of the work especially enjoyable. Some centres, extremely helpfully, included copies of the wider reading poems with their sample.

The treatment of these wider reading poems varied greatly. Though the specification only asks for 3 poems to be studied in depth and reference to 3 further poems, some candidates treated all 6 poems in equal detail. There is no penalty for this but in many cases it was done at the expense of real in-depth analysis of the anthology poems or of clear focus on the topic. At the other extreme some references were extremely cursory – no more than, for example, "Another poem about childhood is Roger McGough's 'First Day at School'" or "'Digging' also has a lot of metaphors".

While the references to the wider reading will vary depending on the level of the candidate, it would be expected that those in the higher bands would draw out and analyse one or two points of the poem and explain the choice; those in the middle would develop some idea of the poem and why it was chosen, and only those at the lowest levels would have nothing more to say than naming the poem and theme. Most candidates structured their work to draw comparisons between the wider reading poems and the anthology poems. This is not a requirement of the specification; it did, however, make it easier for candidates to integrate the wider reading.

Most centres interpreted the assessment criteria accurately and consistently but a significant number did not seem to be aware of the difference between appreciation of language and style (Band 15-18) and analysis (19 and above). Some centres confused, and over-rewarded, the spotting and naming of figures-of-speech with the criterion 'use some technical vocabulary in the analysis' (23 and above). A typical example from 'Poem at 39' is "She creates a lively image of him as a man who does everything with great joy with the metaphor 'He cooked like a person dancing in a yoga meditation'". The comment of the marker showed this had been assessed as evidence of Band 23-26 analysis when, in fact, though the figure of speech is named and there is clearly appreciation of the effect of the use of the word 'dancing', there is no close analysis of 'dancing' or 'yoga meditation' or indeed the unusual choice of the poet to put them together. Band 15-18 criteria would have matched this particular statement more closely. Likewise one candidate's words "Onomatopoeia is used to convey the musical sound of the piano" were praised for the use of a technical term in analysis despite the fact there was no analysis.

Overall the change to the requirements in the introduction of wider reading brought about a considerable increase in engagement with the texts by the candidates, the majority of whom obviously enjoyed making the link between their own reading and the selected set poems and as a result probably gained more satisfaction from studying the poems selected for them in the anthology.

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