edexcel

Examiners' Report/
Principal Examiner Feedback

Summer 2014

Pearson Edexcel International GCSE
in English Literature (4ET0)
Paper 01

Edexcel Certificate in English
Literature (KET0)
Paper 01

PEARSON

Edexcel and BTEC Qualifications

Edexcel and BTEC qualifications are awarded by Pearson, the UK's largest awarding body. We provide a wide range of qualifications including academic, vocational, occupational and specific programmes for employers. For further information visit our qualifications websites at www.edexcel.com or www.btec.co.uk. Alternatively, you can get in touch with us using the details on our contact us page at www.edexcel.com/contactus.

Pearson: helping people progress, everywhere

Pearson aspires to be the world's leading learning company. Our aim is to help everyone progress in their lives through education. We believe in every kind of learning, for all kinds of people, wherever they are in the world. We've been involved in education for over 150 years, and by working across 70 countries, in 100 languages, we have built an international reputation for our commitment to high standards and raising achievement through innovation in education. Find out more about how we can help you and your students at: www.pearson.com/uk

Grade Boundaries

Grade boundaries for this, and all other papers, can be found on the website on this link:
http://www.edexcel.com/iwantto/Pages/grade-boundaries.aspx

<u>General Points</u>

There were a large number of entries for the exam this series and the full ability range was seen by examiners, from Levels 1 through to 5. Generally speaking, Part a) questions were more popular than Part b) and, on the whole, candidates tended to be less successful with thematic questions. Having said this, some very astute and well-referenced answers were seen on Part b) questions. 'An Inspector Calls' and 'Of Mice and Men' retained popularity with 'Romeo and Juliet', 'To Kill a Mockingbird', 'A View from the Bridge' and 'Pride and Prejudice' also attracting many answers. 'Henry V' enjoyed an increase in popularity as well. All texts on the syllabus had at least a few answers this series. Where candidates were more successful they read the question carefully and made a response that consistently addressed the whole question. They also had an awareness of writer's craft and linked this to a wide variety of techniques, drawing on evidence from the text. The very best responses articulated a strategic overview of the text; expressed clear understanding of the writer's effects and made succinct comments, calling on deftly-handled and well-chosen quotations. It was pleasing to see candidates of all abilities attempting to use quotations and to make specific reference to details of the text.

Candidates were less successful when they did not focus on the question or when they came to the exam with an 'ideal' question in mind which they tried to reshape into an answer to the question. The result of this was often limiting because the answer could be partly relevant. It was very clear to see when candidates only had knowledge of a film version of a text – these interpretations can be very helpful, but only as a support to the text itself rather than a replacement.

Rubric infringements still feature, but these are increasingly few and far between. Some candidates are still struggling to balance the timing of answers, spending too long on one at the expense of the other.

<u>'A View from the Bridge' (Questions 1a and 1b)</u>

Question 1a was the more popular and confidently answered of the two on this text. Some very good answers were seen to 1a with many candidates reaching Levels 4 or 5 in their effective understanding and interpretation. Some particularly astute answers used specific and focused textual detail about Alfieri and his role to build perceptive and assured arguments. 1b required an exploration of the play's settings in the play. Candidates struggled more with this, especially in terms of identifying settings, relating these to themes and generally managing the task. Some less successful candidates wrote exclusively about themes without mentioning setting at all. The best answers wrote about the apartment, Red Hook, the bridge, the telephone booth and Alfieri's office with some considering the social and historical settings in relation to key themes.

<u>'An Inspector Calls' (Questions 2a and 2b)</u>

In terms of 2a, most candidates had opportunities to respond to the straightforward question of Sheila's change throughout the novel. Many were confident writing about this character, arguing the relative nature and extent of

change in others with some effective engagement. 2a was very popular, attracting answers across the ability range. Quotations were often well chosen and there were fewer occasions when the film had obviously taken the place of the play as study focus. These occasions tended to be in answers at Levels 1 or 2. 2b required candidates to write about the theme of wealth. Those who attempted this tended to find it more difficult, with a number merely listing the trappings of wealth and prosperity evident in the Birling and Croft families. Some considered successfully how the dress and *mis en scene* of the scenes communicate a prosperous household. Others drew on ideas of Capitalism and Socialism as a representation of wealth or the lack of it. This proved to be a distraction for some candidates while others handled it as a means of more broadly analysing the concept of wealth. This question was less popular than 2a and attracted a mixed response.

'Henry V' (Questions 3a and 3b)

It was pleasing to see a greater number of answers to questions 3a and 3b which have been less frequently seen in earlier series. Those candidates who answered on 3a tended to trace Henry's development from Prince Hal to King Henry, often in a well-managed and fully supported way. Strong knowledge of the play and the detail of Henry's development were assets in many answers. 3b was less popular and successful. The theme required candidates to hold an overview of the play which a number struggled to do. Candidates of all abilities answered on these questions with relative success, including at Levels 1 and 2.

'Much Ado About Nothing (Questions 4a and 4b)

Questions 4a and 4b proved more popular than usual this series but still attracted relatively few answers. Responses varied considerably in quality and approach, particularly in the case of 4b where there were some insightful and wide-ranging responses to the exploration of humour in the play. In 4a, candidates were able to address 'Hero's relationships', going well beyond the obvious characters and evaluating how the relationships are presented by Shakespeare. In the best responses, Beatrice is discussed as a key, pseud-parental influence. This play seemed to attract some particularly enthusiastic and refreshing personal engagement from candidates which strengthened the quality of answers at all levels of ability.

'Romeo and Juliet' (Questions 5a and 5b)

Question 5a was extremely popular with candidates, with 5b less so. 5a required candidates to write about Romeo's friends. Although Mercutio, Benvolio and Balthazar featured regularly, there was a wide interpretation of 'friends', sometimes stretching the definition very far. Some even considered the character of Tybalt to be a friend of Romeo. The question proved particularly discriminating in terms of knowledge and understanding as candidates had to really know the play to succeed. Many rose to the challenge, offering specific and focused arguments that demonstrated their engagement and insight. In terms of 5b, some candidates argued that Fate is one of a number of themes, a number confidently arguing that Fate is not the most important. Lucid, analytical arguments were put forward by the most able candidates. Some very good Level 5 answers were seen, but also a significant number of Level 3 and 4

responses. As in previous series, references to the modern film version of the play at times took over from engagement with the text. All levels of ability were evident in these answers and both questions offered something for all to achieve.

'The Importance of Being Earnest' (Questions 6a and 6b)

Questions 6a and 6b attracted a reasonable number of answers this series, with 6a tending to catalogue the relationship between Algernon and Cecily (who they are, how they meet and how their relationship develops) rather than discussing Wilde's presentation. The best answers analysed Wilde's style and craft in dramatising the characters for theatrical purposes. As is often the case with this text, many answers were very strong and focused. In 6b, the question of town and country in the play offered the chance to discuss and make contrasts. This was less popular than the character question but attracted equal success. Some excellent answers were seen to both questions.

'Our Town' (Questions 7a and 7b)

More answers on this play were seen this year, although it is still studied by relatively few candidates. In 7a, the word 'generations' led to some misunderstanding, although there were opportunities within this question to address the passing of time and how this relates to another generation. This sometimes led to a discussion of the relationship between 'times' within the play, and what the next generation reveals about the characters, now that time has moved on. 7b, apart from identifying the 'love' between Emily and George, tended to attract simple responses that missed the ambiguity caused by the time shift in the play. Subtle points were sometimes missed, but there were some thoughtful and personal reflections on Wilder's presentation of love in the play.

'Pride and Prejudice' (Questions 8a and 8b)

Question 8a on the characters of Mr and Mrs Bennet offered candidates plenty of material to work with and bring to the argument. Some candidates fell foul of not adequately selecting from the vast amount of information they knew on these characters. In this way, the answer discriminated very well between Levels 2, 3 and 4 in particular. More successful answers commented on the material in a more strategic way, noting how Austen presents characters through events and exchanges. These tended to use apt, well-integrated quotation to support arguments and developing personal views. Balance between the characters was not a problem in most answers. In terms of 8b on the theme of pride, Mr Darcy was predictably the focus of most answers. This is not surprising given the stimulus quotation offered. These answers were largely relevant and confident throughout the levels achieved.

'To Kill a Mockingbird' (Questions 9a and 9b)

Question 9a required candidates to choose the character they considered most memorable to write about. This question attracted some very astute and assured answers. Choosing the character proved a challenge for some with one or two 'false starts' in evidence. Atticus Finch and Boo Radley were most popular

choices, but Scout, Calpurnia and Tom Robinson were also seen. Explaining reasons for the choice was straightforward in most cases once candidates got going. 9b focused on the theme of innocence and was quite popular, attracting some lively, original and thoughtful answers. Views drew on expected characters such as: Scout, Dill, Tom Robinson and others. Some candidates expressed a sophisticated view of innocence by including naivety (Mayella Ewell), innocence of wrongdoing (Tom Robinson) and relating the 'mockingbird' motif to the theme of innocence, as well as Atticus's tolerant attitude to others (such as his dealings with Mrs Dubose and Walter Cunningham.)

'The English Teacher' (Questions 10a and 10b)

10a and 10b attracted more answers than usual. The growing popularity of some of the historically less chosen texts on this paper seems to reflect a desire by some centres for variety and diversity; this approach can engage candidates effectively. 10a required candidates to consider Krishna's development in the novel, allowing less able candidates to trace the storyline and implicitly address the question, while better answers presented sophisticated and well supported insights. 10b focused on the theme of death in the novel. It seemed to present a number of candidates with more difficulty as some missed the point of the question. Better answers considered Narayan's presentation of attitudes to death, such as the range of spiritual beliefs and their implications for individual characters in the novel.

'Of Mice and Men' (Questions 11a and 11b)

11a was by the far the most popular prose question on the paper, with candidates of all levels of ability answering on Curley and his wife as the source of most of the trouble on the ranch. Many candidates were able to make the most of the opportunity to balance focus on both characters, with very few heavily concentrating on one at the expense of the other. The best answers responded to the 'How far do you agree?' aspect of the question. Once again, I am impressed to read fresh interpretations and responses to this text each series. Candidates do seem to enjoy this text and seem able to get a great deal from it in terms of understanding and appreciation of Steinbeck's craft as a writer. 11b was also extremely popular with the theme of disability attracting discussion of Curley (crushed hand, but, interestingly also his height and 'Napoleon' complex were considered to be disabilities by some candidates) and his wife as well as more obvious examples. Disadvantage became a relevant and discriminating part of discussion, while the least able responses focused on each character that they felt related to the theme.

'Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry' (Questions 12a and 12b)

A very limited number of responses were seen to this text. 12a required candidates to write about the lessons learned by Cassie in the course of the novel. Often these did not go beyond simple statements about Cassie's discovery of injustice, prejudice and racism. More effective responses kept in mind the idea of Cassie learning through experience and some were well-supported by close reference to the text. 12b offered a broad scope for a range of views to be developed. The second half of the question invited candidates to agree or disagree, thereby discriminating effectively across the ability range. Often there

was no counter argument, although some candidates saw the green shoots of hope amongst the Great Depression and the brutal experiences of racism and hatred.

'Nineteenth Century Short Stories' (Question 13a and 13b)

13a and 13b were rarely answered. These questions allow for a wide range of choice and originality. 13a responses considered Hop Frog as an unusual character with chosen accompanying characters including Tony Kytes and Lou the Prophet. 13b answers focused on the creation of fear in 'The Stolen Bacillus' often accompanied by 'An Arrest' or 'The Adventure of the Speckled Band'. The best answers offer a balance between the two stories and are well supported by specific detail from the text or direct quotation. The full ability range was seen in answers to these questions.