Examiners' Report
Principal Examiner Feedback

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Pearson Edexcel IGCSE
In English Literature (4ET0) Paper 01

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This series, the paper performed well across the ability range with popular questions largely repeating the patterns of previous series with *A View from the Bridge* and *An Inspector Calls* proving most popular. Interestingly, *Much Ado About Nothing* enjoyed something of a revival with an increased number of responses to the a) option in particular. Romeo and Juliet maintains a sound level of popularity. In terms of popularity the prose element was dominated by *Of Mice and Men* as is usually the case. *To Kill a Mockingbird* was also popular in terms of take up, but most texts were evident and some increasing in popularity such as *Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry!* Film based responses were much less seen in the course of marking with better use of text and supporting detail to form responses. Examiners reported seeing interesting and focused work with much relevant analysis and many answers reaching Levels 4 and 5 in the mark range.
The quality of quotation and directed reference used was largely good and often combined with sensitive personal engagement. The best answers were able to integrate understanding of the significance of social, cultural and historical context to the texts studied. This is beginning to include more reference to aspects of literary context with accurate consideration of bildungsroman, comedy and tragedy among other terms.

A View from the Bridge

1a

This was an extremely popular question with a full range of responses seen across the levels. Most answers were relevant and backed by specific textual evidence. The best answers structured their arguments around the relationship between the two characters with seamless links to social and cultural context. Reference was made to Alfieri's role as a Chorus with discussion of the play's similarity to Greek Tragedy. Some candidates working in the lower middle of the range tended to treat the characters separately, although where these were more successful, weighting was equal between Eddie and Alfieri. Weaker answers relied on narrative recount although this was rarely seen by examiners.

1b

This question was also popular. It required candidates to write about the theme of conflict in the play and a wide range of relevant variations were seen. Candidates working at lower Level 3 and below tended to narrate all incidents in the play where conflict was present e.g. the chair raising episode. This led to a lack of focus on the question. More successful responses were frequently seen with perceptive consideration of the idea of internal and external conflict throughout the play. These often linked their analysis to Eddie's hamartia and tensions caused by different cultural priorities and the changes emerging in American communities.

An Inspector Calls

2a

This question was extremely popular with candidates of all abilities answering. It required candidates to explore the characters of Eva/Daisy and Sheila with the quotation suggesting contrast as a focus for candidates to structure their answers around. It proved accessible to candidates working at either end of the mark range although some less confident responses struggled to maintain a balance between the two characters. Most explored the idea that both Eva and Sheila act as vehicles for Priestley's socialist views. Some interesting ideas relating to the role of Gerald emerged, using his involvement as a construct for highlighting the differences of the women's lives to the audience. Some excellent reference to dramatic irony and other valid techniques enabled candidates to do well in the higher mark ranges.

2b

The theme of power proved a popular question with candidates alongside 2a. Better quality answers were succinct and made evaluations that could be developed. The erosion of Mr Birling's power after the arrival of Inspector Goole was one example. Weaker responses often focused too much on stage directions with the lighting when the Inspector arrives being frequently mentioned with variable levels of clarity and explanation. The idea of power linked to gender was evident in many strong answers and some sophisticated essays considered the idea of innate power against perceived power. Abuse of power was commonly raised and usually led to well-developed arguments. Quotation was used accurately in many cases with relevant application. Some superb work was seen in response to this question.

Henry V

3a

This question required candidates to write about Henry's enemies. Although a range of answers was seen, this text tends to attract answers of Level 4 and Level 5 quality. Candidates wrote largely of the French as enemies but also considered the three traitors and the actions of Bardolph in their answers. Some very strong answers used the idea of Henry's friendships as a dramatic comparison to his enemies. This included Henry's relationship with his soldiers and often featured the 'band of brothers' quotation.

3b

This question asked candidates to consider the significance of the theme of love in the play. Most argued that love was not as strong a theme as war or power for example, but some answers went along with the terms of the quotation in the question and argued for love as a strong focus of the play's concerns. Love of country, comrades and power were discussed alongside the romantic love evident in Act 5 when Henry woos Catherine. While a

number of excellent responses were seen, some candidates struggled with the debate style nature of the question. The best answers were able to integrate their excellent knowledge and understanding of the play with a strong personal engagement and ability to argue.

Much Ado About Nothing

4a

A greater number of candidates than usual answered on this question which required candidates to explore the characters of Claudio and Don Pedro. A small number wrote about Don John instead of Don Pedro, compromising their success as a result. Some answers demonstrated surface level analysis only and there was evidence of a formulaic response from some who even wrote PEE next to the paragraphs they were writing. While this kind of system forms a supportive structure for some, it was felt by some examiners that this limited development for some candidates. There was imbalance in some responses with some responses focusing more on Claudio than Don Pedro. Better candidates brought in themes of power, jealousy and chauvinism in their discussion of the two characters. The best answers confidently explored both characters, considering their dramatic function and effects of their interaction.

4b

A smaller number of candidates answered this question than 4a. The question focused on the concept of forgiveness. A mixed range of responses were seen with some very good answers offering excellent support and development of ideas. The majority of answers focused on Hero's forgiveness of Claudio but some candidates also wrote about Don Pedro's forgiveness of Don John. Better candidates were able to explore how Hero's forgiveness was assumed by Leonato and Claudio and Margaret's innocence only proved by Borachio and not her own testimony for her to be forgiven.

Romeo and Juliet

5a

This question attracted a fair number of responses and examiners reported positive approaches from candidates working at all levels. This question required discussion of the relationship between Juliet and the Nurse. This was accessible particularly to candidates working at Levels 3 and 4. These responses focused largely on the maternal role of the Nurse in Juliet's life, although some struggled to go further than this point. Stronger answers considered the Nurse's role in Juliet's relationship and her function in the play's unfolding action. Although seen less frequently, references to film versions of the play detracted from the accuracy of some answers.

5b

This question was quite popular with candidates and examiners reported seeing some very accomplished responses. Use of the quotation within the

question prompted some compelling and sophisticated answers with candidates following a structured argument rather than a formulaic approach. Most candidates were able to use the Prologue as a starting point to discuss fate and there were some good answers discussing the impact of the theme on the play's unfolding action. Some good work was seen that argued against fate being the most important factor. Alternative ideas placed blame on Friar Lawrence, free will and the feud amongst others.

The Importance of Being Earnest

6a

This question required candidates to explore the character of Algernon as an entertaining character. Some candidates struggled with the debate aspect of the question with a few missing the key word: 'entertaining', resulting in some straight narration of Algernon's role in the play. Better answers were able to explore how he represents the upper classes with clever integration of contextual factors in the most effective arguments. Some very adept analysis of the scene with the cucumber sandwiches was seen.

6b

This question was less popular than 6a. Candidates working in the middle and lower range of the mark scheme tended to narrate aspects of the play relating to courtship and marriage. The best answers explored both parts of the question with insight into contextual aspects that informed the play and some excellent analysis of characterisation and dramatic effects.

Our Town

7a

Very few responses were seen to this question which required candidates to write about the character of The Stage Manager. Some thorough discussion was seen with general build up to focus on the role of this character. One answer used an effective reference to the train to Boston as a point of contextual significance.

7b

Very few responses were seen to this question on family life. Only a very few answers looked at the idea of its importance, but the use of Emily and George as a common example tended to encompass the centrality inherent in the question. Some work seen at Level 3 considered the Webb and Gibbs family and the impact of everyday life. One interesting answer considered the idea that The Stage Manager has no family.

Pride and Prejudice

8a

This text is becoming more popular with a wider range of candidates and they appeared to relish the opportunity to write about Mr Collins and Lady Catherine. Some very mature insights were seen from candidates working at Levels 4 and 5. The best answers were characterised by apt and accurate supporting quotation. They drew on a range of evidence with some exploring satire and Austen's use of the characters for social commentary. Weaker responses selected episodes with an often narrative approach. Candidates at all levels tended to present a balance between the two characters in their answers.

8b

This classic question on the presentation of pride was answered by a fair number of candidates. Responses tended to focus on the characters of Elizabeth Bennet and Mr Darcy as would be expected. Some interesting ideas were seen on pride as a barrier to personal growth and happiness and a broad range of relevant evidence was used to support. Some candidates struggled with the concept of pride while the best answers offered compelling and sophisticated analysis with erudite personal engagement.

9a

This question on Atticus as a strong character proved very popular with a wide range of answers seen. Some excellent Level 5 responses went beyond the idea of Atticus as single parent to reveal strands of his integrity running through the plot. His role as a moral compass guiding his children was also evident in a number of answers. Many answers, especially at Levels 3 and 4, focused on the trial of Tom Robinson as a way into discussing Atticus's strength while some sustained discussion in secure Level 4 responses continued to explore the racist context of the setting. Many candidates used discriminating detail, displaying their deep knowledge and understanding of the text.

9b

This question on the importance of law was less popular than 9a. Some candidates struggled with the concept and turned to narration of events involving the law. Better answers saw candidates bringing in aspects from across the novel such as Boo avoiding the legal system twice and the significance of the lynch mob as a form of vigilante justice opposed to the law. These approaches showed a thorough and often perceptive appreciation of the novel.

The English Teacher

10a

More responses to this text were seen than in previous series. The question required candidates to write about the character they felt most sympathy for in the novel and to explain their reasoning. The most popular choice was Krishna but some answers chose the Headmaster, his wife or Susila. Answers seen were largely Level 3 and 4, but personal engagement was a strength of most responses regardless of level, demonstrating the enthusiasm held by candidates who studied this text.

10b

This question proved less popular than 10a. It required candidates to consider happiness and sadness in the novel. Most responses relied on narrative, selecting different moments of happiness and sadness to address the question. These included Krishna's joy in his newfound domestic bliss with Susila and Leela but also his sadness when they quarrelled over the alarm clock. Most dealt with Krishna's profound sadness at his wife's illness and death. The best answers ranged across the novel and characters to provide an analytical overview of the themes with some drawing in references to contrast.

Of Mice and Men

11a

This was by far the most popular question on the paper attracting answers from candidates working at all levels. Some excellent responses were seen on Candy with candidates engaging perceptively with the character and his significance to the novel's action and concerns. Some genuinely original personal analysis continues to emerge when candidates study this novel. One interesting example of an argument put forward that Candy empowers himself by disempowering others e.g. Crooks and Curley's wife. Candy's involvement in the 'dream' was discussed by many candidates some of whom confidently developed their view of his participation in rendering the 'dream' a tangible possibility for George and Lennie. Less successful answers offered character sketches in varying levels of detail, while a number took a scatter gun approach and wrote down everything they knew about the character. The symbolism of Candy's dog was often discussed, sometimes with genuine insight and sensitivity.

11b

This was also a very popular question with many excellent answers seen. The theme of respect engaged many high ability candidates to explore aspects such as lack of respect; how respect is earned or commanded and the role and importance of respect on the ranch and to society at the time Steinbeck was writing. Some very thoughtful discussions were seen at Levels 4 and 5 with many considering the contrast between the respect that Slim engenders and the respect that Curley commands through fear. A

number linked this to the notion of hierarchy on the ranch. The best candidates were able to explore Steinbeck's use of foreshadowing through the theme of respect, offering accomplished analytical responses. A few answers resorted to narration but this was far less seen on this question than on 11a.

Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry!

12a

More candidates than usual studied this text and the question on Papa Logan and his brother, Hammer, attracted a good number of responses. Most held a balance between the two characters, considering their relationship as well as their roles as individuals. In many cases, use of direct reference was impressive and accurately applied to discussion. The full range of ability was seen with the best candidates offering perceptive arguments with sensitive appreciation of context.

12b

This question enjoyed similar popularity to 12a with candidates finding much to write about the theme of poverty. The most effective responses looked at the struggle of the Logans compared to the black share croppers and the relationship between poverty and race. Comparisons were made with Harlan Granger and other white characters with the car and school bus used as examples of privilege in stark relief with the poverty experienced by members of the black community.

Nineteenth Century Short Stories

13a

This question attracted a fair number of responses and it was pleasing to see the impressive range of knowledge and understanding in many answers. Largely, answers were of Level 3 or 4 but some very accomplished Level 5 answers were also in evidence. Candidates demonstrated confidence with *News of the Engagement* as the given story and were able to write in detail about character. Different stories paired with this included: *The Woman's Rose*, *Twenty Six Men* and a Girl and *The Unexpected* with one or two answers using *The Yellow Wallpaper* in interesting ways. Balance between the stories was good with only a few focusing largely on one story. The quality of specific textual support was excellent.

13b

This question also attracted a fair number of responses with a relatively wide range of achievement seen. Most were Level 3 and 4 as with 13a. The theme of mystery engaged a range of candidates who in many cases enjoyed writing about relevant aspects of writer's craft used to create intrigue and tension. Stories used alongside *The Adventure of the Speckled Band* included *An Arrest* and *Napoleon and the Spectre* but *The Yellow Wallpaper* was seen as well. As with 13a, the quality of detail and textual

support was impressive in many answers. A balance was achieved between the stories in most cases with only one answer seen focusing more on a chosen story than the given one.