

Edexcel International
London Examinations
GCE Ordinary Level

Mark Scheme with Examiners' Report

**London Examinations Ordinary Level GCE in
English Literature (7171)**

June 2002



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Mark Scheme and Chief Examiner's Report
June 2002

ENGLISH LITERATURE 7171

Mark Scheme

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ENGLISH LITERATURE 7171, MARK SCHEME

Observations on marking

Candidates will be expected to demonstrate:

- (a) a first-hand knowledge of texts and, where appropriate, close reading;
- (b) the ability to communicate sensitive, lively and informed personal response;
- (c) the ability to demonstrate some understanding and appreciation of authors' uses of characterisation, plot, narrative, setting and language.

When marking scripts these objectives are kept in mind. Questions are devised so that candidates who show an adequate knowledge and understanding of the books studied, and an ability to express that understanding in reasonably correct English, should obtain a mark equivalent to Grade C. Questions give scope for the display of critical awareness above the norm; evidence of this, and of personal response to the texts, must be generously rewarded.

Errors of fact, misquotation, repetition and gross irrelevance are penalised negatively, that is by withholding marks that might otherwise have been given.

Points of value should be ticked (X) in the body of the answers (not in the margin). Material that shows above average perception or originality should be identified by a vertical wavy line in the left-hand margin.

The 3-Band Marking Scheme

Each answer should be initially classified into one of 3 broad bands, and then placed precisely within it.

Do not attempt to subdivide the 20 marks for each question, either mentally or in writing, unless directed to do so. The listed qualities below are to be taken into account, but there is no 'weighting' for each and mixed profiles will be common – that is, the answer does not have to qualify under all three headings to be classified in the 'Good', 'Average' or 'Weak' categories.

Assessment Profiles

<i>The GOOD answer</i>	14 –20
(a) Content	Accounts and commentaries will give evidence of close reading of texts and mature understanding of themes, events, structure, characters and techniques – as appropriate. Close references and/or apt quotations will support the points made throughout.
(b) Relevance	The selection of material will be full, appropriate and clearly set out with the question borne in mind throughout the answer.
(c) Organisation and Style	Accounts and arguments will be presented with clarity and conviction. Style will be fluent, expressing informed personal opinion, response and appreciation.

Overall, the good answer should reveal thorough knowledge and understanding of the chosen texts, an ability to respond to them in terms of the questions, and sufficient command of English to convey the candidate's own critical response and enthusiasm convincingly.

<i>The AVERAGE answer</i>	8 – 13
(a) Content	Evidence of study and understanding of the texts will be given, with some appropriate references and brief quotations. There will be some recognition and appreciation of basic aspects such as themes, characterisation and language.
(b) Relevance	An identifiable number of appropriate points will be made, some developed more fully and confidently than others. Attention to the terms of the question will be evident in the selection of material and in the comments made on it.
(c) Organisation and Style	The account and/or argument will be coherent, and presented in reasonably clear and accurate English. Response to the texts will be evident from the candidate's comments and from the liveliness of his/her expression.

Overall the competent answer should be able to show sound knowledge, moderate understanding and some pleasure derived by the candidate from his/her reading.

<i>The WEAK answer</i>	1 – 7
(a) Content	This may be slight, lacking in specific reference or with details inaccurate; understanding may be limited or seriously flawed; quotations will be scarce and may be grossly inaccurate.
(b) Relevance	Ill-judged choice of material (or the unsuitable 'prepared' answer) could bring the answer into this category, or the question may have been misunderstood. Argument may be stated simply, without development.
(c) Organisation and Style	Difficulties in written English may inhibit coherent expression of ideas, or the answer may consist of very simple and undeveloped statements of facts. Evidence of enjoyment and response will be minimal.

Overall the weak answer will display evidence that the text (or part of it) had been read, and something retained, but the level will be very superficial.

Rubric

If more than four questions are attempted, all answers are marked and the mark for the best four which lie within the prescription of one drama, one poetry and two prose, are counted.

SECTION A: DRAMA

Macbeth

1. (a) Candidates must identify the *significance* of the passage in the play as a whole. Apt reference should be made to material which comes both before and after this extract. Simple summary or paraphrase cannot be rewarded.
- (b) Candidates must respond to both parts of this question. Candidates will be able to attain high marks if they are able to produce cogent and well substantiated reasons for the impressions they have formed of the characters.
- (c) The focus here must be on an exploration of the skills Shakespeare employs to make the deaths dramatically effective.

Total 20 marks

Romeo and Juliet

2. (a) Candidates must identify the *significance* of the passage in the play as a whole. Apt reference should be made to material which comes both before and after this extract. Simple summary or paraphrase cannot be rewarded.
- (b) Candidates must be very clear in their examination of the functions of these characters. A detailed knowledge of their actions which led directly or indirectly to the final tragedy must be clearly shown.

- (c) Close reference is required here as a general discourse on the differences between youth and age cannot be rewarded.

Total 20 marks

The Crucible

3. (a) Candidates must identify the *significance* of the passage in the play as a whole. Apt reference should be made to material which comes both before and after this extract. Simple summary or paraphrase cannot be rewarded.
- (b) Good candidates will avoid writing a simple character study and will make a genuine attempt to evaluate the degree of Abigail's 'evilness' as compared to other characters.
- (c) Candidates will be awarded high marks for being very specific in their answers, showing how fear is one of the main motivators in the play.

Total 20 marks

SECTION B: POETRY

4. The poem must be appreciated in a critical way. Valid comments and observations must be made. Evidence of a degree of personal response must be given. It is not sufficient to summarise or paraphrase, nor is it sufficient to list literary devices.
5. Candidates must be clear in their preference and give detailed reasons for their preference. Summaries of two poems with only a line or two about preference will not be able to rise above the low average category.
6. Candidates must be able to explain what the poet's response is to the world in which they live and then be able to go on to illustrate *how* the poet expresses this response.
7. Candidates must make a careful choice of poems here. The focus must be on how the poet or poets has/ have communicated the religious feeling.

Total 20 marks

SECTION C: PROSE

Pride and Prejudice

8. (a) Candidates are free to agree or disagree with the statement. The close reference to two or three characters should be such that their opinion is made clear and substantiated.
- (b) Candidates should be able to identify specific incidents which illustrate the vanity and conceit in each of the characters

Total 20 marks

Silas Marner

9. (a) The choice of incidents will be crucially important. However, a straightforward summary of these incidents will not attract high marks. Candidates must be able to explain *why* these incidents moved them and this will involve some discussion about the author's skills.

- (b) Candidates will be expected to offer a detailed knowledge of the functions of the two female characters.

Total 20 marks

Far From The Madding Crowd

- 10.** (a) A personal response is required here which has a firm basis in an exploration of each character. There must be at least two or three well substantiated reasons given for the candidate's choice. It is quite acceptable for a candidate to make a good case for feeling equal sympathy for both characters.
- (b) Close analytical observation is required here in order to illustrate Hardy's skills. Candidates who simply summarise two major events will be unable to gain high marks.

Total 20 marks

Animal Farm

- 11.** (a) A close knowledge of the final chapter is required here. Candidates must show both the animals' reactions and their own feelings about the events.
- (b) A careful choice of animals is necessary here and candidates must ensure that the characters chosen have different reactions. Candidates must also explain how these varying reactions add to our interest.

Total 20 marks

A Man Of The People

- 12.** (a) Candidates are free to decide on what they consider to be the central theme as long as it is plausible. Candidates must assess Achebe's degree of success in communicating it by referring closely to the text
- (b) Candidates must be clear in stating their opinions and then be able to substantiate the opinions with close reference to Odil's relationships with women *and* men.

Total 20 marks

Roll Of Thunder, Hear My Cry

- 13.** (a) The candidates need to show that they have considered the consequences of there being a child narrator. Candidates must show the relationship between Cassie's presentation of the two events and their own responses.
- (b) Candidates will need to display a detailed knowledge of the significance of the changing seasons and weather. Clearly explanations which are focussed on the significance will be awarded good marks.

Total 20 marks

July's People

- 14.** (a) The focus of the essay must be on providing an answer to the question of 'how successfully' Gordimer portrays those issues asked about. Obviously a clear understanding of the issues must also be displayed.
- (b) Candidates must be careful to select two parts of the novel which illustrate the qualities which they detail as admirable.

Total 20 marks

Into The Wind

- 15.** (a) Candidates must be very clear in an explanation of the extent to which their sympathies have been aroused. Detailed references will be expected to substantiate their opinions.
- (b) The focus of the answer must remain on the statement in the question. Candidates who write summaries of two short stories cannot be awarded good marks.

Total 20 marks

A River Sutra

- 16.** (a) Expect very detailed reference here along with a cogent explanation of why the story has been so memorable.
- (b) Candidates must provide evidence that they have thought about this issue. Candidates should be able to give at least two or three lessons learnt.

Total 20 marks

ENGLISH LITERATURE 7171, CHIEF EXAMINER'S REPORT

General Comments

Candidates prepare themselves very well for this examination as regards developing a firm knowledge of the texts. It is an unusual candidate who does not know the plot and characters very well indeed. It is therefore very frustrating to see that many candidates have not progressed to use this knowledge to good effect. A Literature examination requires candidates to be analytical and to respond personally to issues in the texts. There is still evidence of candidates attempting to fit some sort of a model answer to questions on the examination paper. This produces responses which are distorted and which lack personal response.

Candidates who attempt this paper cover a wide range of abilities and there were some very impressive answers offered.

Section A

Drama

Question (a) in this section continues to be a popular choice and there were some particularly good answers on the Macbeth passage. Unfortunately, far too many candidates take this question as an opportunity to summarise or paraphrase the passage. Clearly, this is not required and candidates must be encouraged to be guided by the bullet points. This type of question will only continue in its present form in the January 2003 session, in June 2003 the new format will be in place.

1(b): Weaker candidates offered straightforward character studies instead of illustrating the importance of these characters in the play as a whole. There were some curious confusions between Malcolm and Banquo and Macduff and Banquo. Several candidates also thought that Macbeth was Malcolm's elder brother.

1(c): Candidates were not lost for choice in the deaths they chose to write about. What was lacking however was a focus on how Shakespeare made the deaths dramatically effective. Centres would be well advised to prepare their students so that they are able to write about dramatic techniques and dramatic effectiveness in the Drama section of the paper.

2(b): Answers to this question ranged from the highly sophisticated to the very weak. Stronger candidates were able to demonstrate that they had a good understanding of the context of the play. Weaker candidates clearly had no such understanding and so comments were made which were totally inappropriate. Paris was condemned because he asked Juliet's parents for permission to marry her instead of asking Juliet directly. Juliet's mother was criticised because she made Juliet call her 'Madam'. Such errors in understanding are quite serious and clearly disadvantage candidates in their attempts to understand the texts.

2(c): Very few candidates attempted this question. Of those who did attempt it, many chose to compare Romeo and Friar Lawrence and one or two candidates were particularly withering in their comments about the Friar who was dismissed as 'old and past it'. Comparison and evaluation skills were markedly lacking in the answers.

3(b): As usual, very few candidates answered questions on 'The Crucible'. Some of the more able candidates produced very thoughtful answers to this question. Some tipped over into attempting to psychoanalyse Abigail and placed the blame for all of her behaviour on her childhood experience of seeing her parents murdered. Weaker

candidates saw her in a rather one dimensional way and argued that she is just very evil indeed and that is all that can be said of her.

3(c): Not many candidates attempted this question but of those who did there were some good answers. These candidates were able to pick up on the overall feelings of terror that are explored in the play and they were able to illustrate these with close reference to specific incidents and events.

Section B

Poetry

The January session will be the last time that poetry is examined in this way. In June 2003 candidates will be asked questions on poems from the Edexcel Anthology. There will, however, continue to be a question on an unseen poem as at present.

Question 4 proved to be a popular choice. Most candidates were able to write about the theme of the poem but few were able to analyse the poem in a meaningful way. There were some mechanistic approaches to an analysis but there were far too many candidates who summarised the poem and then wrote at some length about situations when they have had to make choices.

Question 5 attracted a fair number of candidates. Answers varied from the very well argued and illustrated to offerings of summaries of poems with little reference to the terms of the question. Candidates must be encouraged to focus more closely on the demands of the question.

Question 6 was very popular and elicited many answers that were based on poetry of the First World War. Some weaker answers made little attempt to fit what appeared to be pre-prepared answers to the question.

Question 7 was not popular at all but there were some good answers on poems that have not been commonly offered by candidates.

Section C

Prose, Questions 8 –16

Pride and Prejudice and Animal Farm remain very popular but Into the Wind and Silas Marner are also very popular choices.

At the end of each examination session this report highlights the need for candidates to read the questions carefully and select appropriate material to include in their answers. This selection process is still not evident in many answers. Candidates offer summaries of novels and short stories without pausing to consider what the question actually demands. The 'O' level examination never requires simple summaries or character studies, there is always a focus to the question which has to be considered. Question 8(a) for example did not require straightforward character summaries. A question was set which required candidates to think about and assess their own response to the statement made in the question. Examiners did not see enough candidates arguing their point of view here. One examiner complained that candidates did not always appear to understand what was meant by 'convincing'. Similarly, in question 8(b) weaker candidates were unable to focus their comments on the portrayal of vanity and conceit and instead wrote character studies of the three characters. Such responses cannot be awarded high marks.

A study of English Literature requires a personal response and this is all too often missing in candidates' answers. Questions 10(a) and 15(a) may be used as illustrations.

Both of these questions invited candidates to present their own views and yet far too many candidates ignored this invitation. The ability to present a point of view and substantiate that viewpoint is a key skill in the study of Literature and if a candidate wishes to be awarded a high mark then this skill must be evident. At the other end of the spectrum of course are those candidates who forget about the literary aspect of their answers and use questions as springboards to write about personal situations.

It has been noted in many of these reports that a good number of questions on this paper have more than one part. Question 11(b), for example, required candidates to write about the animals' responses and then to write about how these responses added to the interest of the novel. Far too many candidates responded to the first part of the question and ignored the second part. Another question which had two parts to it was 12(a). Candidates were asked to write about the central theme of the novel and then to assess how successfully Achebe communicated it. Weaker candidates wrote about the theme but failed to address the second part of the question.

Once again it appears timely to remind those who are preparing for this examination to re-read the 'Advice to Candidates' section on the front of the examination paper. Those answers which are awarded high marks are those which are well substantiated with close reference to and quotations from the texts. Candidates are able to offer far more convincing arguments when they can quote directly from the text and the inclusion of such quotation does have the effect of lifting the entire answer.

It continues to be a source of great dismay to examiners when candidates who know their texts well write, often at considerable length, on issues which are quite irrelevant to the question. The ability to see the demands of the question and shape an answer to those demands is a key skill. Nevertheless, examiners do also continue to be impressed by those candidates who have prepared themselves well for the examination and who offer focussed answers to the set questions. Such candidates have clearly studied the texts in some depth, thought deeply about the texts, and, just as importantly, have honed their skills in answering examination questions. These scripts are a delight to read and make the work of the examiner an enjoyable experience.

ENGLISH LITERATURE 7171, GRADE BOUNDARIES

Grade	A	B	C	D	E
Lowest mark for award of grade	42	33	25	21	15

Note: Grade boundaries may vary from year to year and from subject to subject, depending on the demands of the question paper.

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