

Edexcel International
London Examinations
GCE Ordinary Level

Mark Scheme with Examiners' Report

London Examinations Ordinary Level GCE in English Literature (7171)

January 2003



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April 2003

Order Code UO013330

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Mark Scheme and Chief Examiner's Report
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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 informal personal response;
- (c) the ability to demonstrate some understanding and appreciation of authors' uses of characterisation, plot, narrative, setting and language.

When marking scripts you must bear these objectives 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 must be penalised negatively, i.e. by withholding marks that might otherwise have been given. Please show in the left-hand margin where such penalties have been incurred.

Points of value must be **✓ticked** 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.

Please document all your marking wherever possible by means of written comments in the margin and at the end of the answer – explanations of how assessments have been made are often immensely valuable to the Chief Examiner.

The 3-Band Marking Scheme

Try to secure a satisfactory spread of marks over the full range available. It is unwise to speculate where grade boundaries will be established; the Assistant Examiner's job is to be as consistent as possible throughout the marking period so that the merit order for that allocation of scripts is reliable.

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 – i.e. the answer does not have to qualify under all 3 headings to be classified in the 'Good', 'Average' or 'Weak' categories.

Assessment Profiles

The GOOD answer	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.

The AVERAGE answer	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.

The WEAK answer	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, mark all answers and allow the best four that lie within the prescription of one drama, one poetry and two prose.

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 beware of writing simple character studies or descriptions of the relationship. The focus must be on how the relationship impacts on the play.
- (c) Candidates are free to agree or disagree with the statement but the choice of scenes will be important as will the presentation of clear argument.

Total 20 marks

Romeo and Juliet

2. (a) Candidates must identify the *significance* of the passage in the play as a whole. Apt references should be made to material which comes both before and after this extract. Simple summary or paraphrase cannot be rewarded.
- (b) A sound knowledge is required here and answers should be detailed in their explanation of the Nurse's functions. Candidates must also be clear in describing and substantiating their own impressions.
- (c) Candidates must be careful to answer both parts of this question. Actual instance of humour cited must be precise and well referenced.

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) A sound knowledge of the dramatic qualities of the play is required here.
- (c) The focus of the answer must be on showing what is of interest in the characters. Simple character descriptions cannot rise above the low average category.

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. The focus of the answer must be on the comparative success of the poets to portray people. Candidates must be careful to note that the question asks for 'different kinds' of people.
6. Both similarities and differences must be made clear. Candidates have been advised in the question to concentrate on two particular aspects and so expect a firm focus on those aspects.
7. A careful choice of poems is necessary here. Candidates who try to force a poem into the question will be unlikely to attain good marks.

Total 20 marks

SECTION C: PROSE

Pride and Prejudice

8. (a) Candidates will be able to identify at least three reasons for the novel's continuing popularity. The reasons should be well substantiated with reference to the text.
- (b) A clear understanding of the nature of the conflicts must be displayed along with an explanation of how these conflicts impinge on the plot development.

Total 20 marks

Silas Marner

9. (a) A careful tracing in the effects of the death on a variety of appropriate characters is required here.
- (b) Candidates must be able to put forward a cogent argument for whatever their opinion is.

Total 20 marks

Far From The Madding Crowd

10. (a) Candidates may look at the rustic characters either individually and/or as a group, taking care to highlight their importance in plot development and in the creation of atmosphere.
- (b) Candidates must be careful not to write a straightforward description of the relationship. The focus of the answer must be on what is learnt about Bathsheba through an examination of her relationship with Troy.

Total 20 marks

Animal Farm

11. (a) Detailed and thoughtful responses are required here which are substantiated by close reference to the text.
- (b) There are two parts to this question and both must be answered in some detail.

Total 20 marks

A Man Of The People

12. (a) Candidates should be able to give highly detailed responses here and both Odili and Mr Nanga should be discussed in some depth.
- (b) Both parts of this question must be answered. The impressions formed must be carefully explained.

Total 20 marks

Roll Of Thunder, Hear My Cry

13. (a) Candidates must remain focussed on the violence in the novel and not allow themselves to enter a general discussion about the justifiability of violence in the world.
- (b) Candidates must offer a thoughtful analysis of the functions of the characters and then explain clearly their personal impressions.

Total 20 marks

July's People

14. (a) Candidates must be very clear in their identification of emotions.
- (b) Candidates should isolate, identify and critically judge Gordimer's description of village life. Simple descriptions of life in July's village cannot be awarded good marks.

Total 20 marks

Into The Wind

15. (a) The focus of the answer must be on answering how effectively Dahl surprises us and makes us laugh. Summaries of the story will not be awarded good marks.
- (b) Candidates are free to offer their own theories in answer to the question but they must be well substantiated with reference to at least two stories.

Total 20 marks

A River Sutra

16. (a) Candidates must refer very closely to the novel in order to substantiate their opinions.
- (b) An analysis of the ways in which Mehta presents character is required here; simple character description cannot be rewarded.

Total 20 marks

ENGLISH LITERATURE 7171, CHIEF EXAMINER'S REPORT

General Comments

This was the last session of the present form of the O level Literature examination. The revised syllabus will be examined for the first time in May 2003. The number of candidates entered for this examination was comparatively small and many centres entered only two or three candidates.

Overall, candidates have a good knowledge of the texts that they have prepared for the examination. However, what is still lacking is the really close reference to the texts and quotation which would lift so many answers. Candidates continue to suppose that simple summaries are adequate when in fact there is always a requirement for some analysis and explanation. Advice about this will be equally relevant to the revised syllabus, which will be examined in June 2003.

Section A

Drama

Responses to questions 1(a), 2(a) and 3(a) continue to be of a disappointing standard. Candidates do not make full use of the prompts that are given to guide them. Very few respond to the invitation to discuss the passages as pieces of drama and even fewer candidates seem to be able to discuss the use of language in the passages. Candidates far too frequently simply summarise the given passage and then concentrate on writing simple character descriptions.

Question 1(b) was a popular question with those candidates who had prepared '*Macbeth*'. Weaker candidates failed to focus on the fact that the question was asking how the relationship between husband and wife influenced the plot and events and instead they tended to write about Macbeth's influence and then about Lady Macbeth's influence. Stronger candidates were able to offer some interesting insights which remained relevant to the terms of the question.

Question 1(c) was not answered by very many candidates. It does seem to be the case that candidates are not always encouraged to think of the text that they are studying as a piece of drama which is designed to be acted on stage. Candidates were not able to offer convincing reasons for their opinions.

Question 2(b) was the most popular of the questions asked about '*Romeo and Juliet*'. Strong candidates were able to write clearly about the importance of the Nurse and explain how they felt about the Nurse at different points in the play. Weaker candidates simply wrote character studies of the Nurse with little reference to the specific terms of the question.

Question 2(c) Very few candidates attempted this question but there were some very interesting responses which showed careful thought.

As in previous years, very few candidates attempted questions on '*The Crucible*'. Of those candidates who did respond to this play most chose to answer Question 3(c).

Section B

Poetry

Examiners remain concerned that candidates all too frequently write summaries of poems in this section with little attention to the actual requirements of the questions. Candidates must respond to the specific terms of the questions and they must be very careful in their choices of poems.

Question 4 was quite popular but few candidates were able to write about the poem in an analytical way addressing any of the bullet points given for guidance. Some candidates allowed themselves to stray right away from the question and write at some length about their own experiences of first love.

Answers to Question 5 were often weak as candidates made poor choices of poems. It appeared that some candidates were determined to use poems they had prepared, with little or no thought about their suitability.

Question 6 was quite popular and most candidates chose to take war as their subject.

Very few candidates attempted Question 7.

Section C

Prose

The pattern of choice of texts continues to be much the same as in previous years with most candidates choosing the traditional texts along with *'Animal Farm'*.

Candidates must be encouraged to read questions carefully and to respond in a focused way. Unless all parts of a question are attempted candidates cannot expect to receive high marks. Both Questions 8(a) and (b) were popular. In Question 8(a) candidates were able to identify the perennial topics and themes which have engaged readers past and present. In Question 8(b) it was a shame to see that a number of candidates failed to note that they had to write about only two pairs of characters. Similarly, a number of candidates failed to focus on the conflicts between the characters and how they contributed to the development of the plot; such candidates wrote character studies and so clearly could not access the higher marks. Question 9(a) was a popular choice; there was a wide range of responses varying from the very weak which were able to note only one or two points, to very thorough answers. The overwhelming majority of candidates who answered on *'Far From The Madding Crowd'* chose Question (b) and those candidates who remained focused on the question were able to offer some good responses. *'Animal Farm'* remained as popular as ever in this examination session but there was not one particular question which was more popular than the other. When a question requires candidates to write about a particular event or incident, as in question 11 (b), candidates must be very clear in identifying that event or incident. Examiners note that there is often a vagueness in the answer and candidates write about several events without being specific. Question 13(b) was quite popular but weaker candidates saw it only as an opportunity to write character studies. Such candidates failed to answer the two parts of the question, which were to do with the functions of the characters and the impression that the characters had made on the candidate. As is so frequently written in these reports, candidates must be reminded that questions will always require more than simple character studies. Candidates would also do well to remember that the personal response, which is well substantiated with close reference to the text, is always welcomed.

Although the majority of candidates know the content of the texts, if they want to gain high marks they must heed the advice on the front of the examination paper, to support answers with examples and quotations.

ENGLISH LITERATURE 7171, GRADE BOUNDARIES

Grade	A	B	C	D	E
Lowest mark for award of grade	38	29	21	18	14

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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