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Examiners' Report Principal Examiner Feedback

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In English Literature (4ET0) Paper 1R

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Report to centres 4ET0 01 1806R

This paper worked as expected and questions attracted a range of responses across the levels. The most successful answers explored the text in relation to the question with use of well-chosen, relevant support and thoughtful personal engagement. It is clear that centres have learnt the lessons of previous series and there is very little evidence of aspects such as film versions of the texts, baseless narration or minimal support and development. The best answers offered poised literary criticism and analysis with lucid insights into aspects of language, form and structure and the context in which texts were written or set. Formulaic answers or answers following a particular given structure were particularly evident this year. While it is essential for students to plan and structure their work, acronym based formulae for answers have limited success in the experience of examiners and in particular do not support more able candidates to perform at the highest levels.

Individual questions

A View from the Bridge

1a) This question was answered effectively for the most part with many wide ranging responses that considered Eddie and Rodolfo's relationship. Better responses took a strategic approach, focusing on the development of the relationship and implementing views of the play's dramatic impact. They considered the nature of Eddie's homophobia and in some cases included insights into aspects of the play's context. Candidates working at the lower end of Level 3 and below tended to focus on narration of events with mixed success. Some responses lost focus on the question and found themselves writing simple character studies or moving into a discussion of Catherine.

1b) Examiners reported seeing some formulaic answers to this question on the theme of love which prevented some more able candidates achieving the perception and assurance required for Level 5. Unsurprisingly, many candidates focused on Catherine's relationships with Eddie and Rodolfo as well as the marriage of Eddie and Beatrice. Fuller answers reflected on Marco's familial love and his willingness to risk exile and imprisonment to honour it. They also considered the communal love of the Sicilian community in New York and Alfieri's charitable love for Eddie which both deplored and sympathised with his hamartia.

An Inspector Calls

2a) This proved to be a popular question with candidates exploring the character of Eva Smith/Daisy Renton and her importance to the play. The most competent responses dealt with the dramatic irony formed by the fate of this character and demonstrated sensitive awareness of Priestley's intention in constructing Eva/Daisy. Less successful responses offered character studies or narrative discussions without considering the importance of the character.

2b) This question required candidates to explore the importance of upper class views and was very popular. A significant number of candidates seemed unable to separate the classes defined within the play and placed the self-made, middle class, nouveau riche Mr Birling alongside the Crofts thereby missing a trick when it came to subtle analysis of the theme and its importance. Opportunities were

often missed to reflect on the difference in social background between the Birlings. The best answers discussed the importance of upper class views through a strategic, analytical approach, dealing with the lack of humanitarianism displayed by certain characters.

Henry V

3a) There were no answers to this question.

3b) A very few answers were seen to this question. Candidates who answered were able to explore different aspects of warfare with the best considering Shakespeare's dramatic portrayal of battle in the play.

Much Ado About Nothing

4a) Very few answers were seen. At least one candidate confused Don Pedro with Don John but most answers were able to write confidently and with support on this character.

4b) No answers to this question were seen.

Romeo and Juliet

5a) This text was not as popular as it has been in previous years. Some interesting answers were seen on the character of Juliet. Most were well-organised and used carefully chosen support to illustrate their arguments. Some noted that Juliet is more mature than Romeo and changes more during the play than he does. The best answers used her actions and relationships to build focused analytical responses.

5b) Few candidates answered this question, but those that did explored the characters of Mercutio and the Nurse with varying analysis of language and dramatic effects related to comedy, such as the scene where the Nurse meets with Romeo and his friends prior to the wedding of Romeo and Juliet. One or two excellent responses dealt with the Queen Mab speech and considered the nature of this alongside Mercutio's later word play and demise.

The Importance of Being Earnest

6a) A small number of answers were seen with most demonstrating at least Level 3 achievement. Most responses selected Jack or Algernon as the most interesting character but one or two opted for Lady Bracknell. Some very high quality answers were seen to this question with particularly impressive application of accurate quotation in support of their points.

6b) This question attracted a very small number of answers, but most of these were Level 3 or above with a number of impressive Level 4 and 5 answers. Lies and deception were dealt with effectively, with candidates discussing Bunbury and the misuse of the name Earnest. In some sophisticated and assured answers, candidates took a step back and applied the idea of Wilde's satire of the upper classes to the terms of the questions.

Pride and Prejudice

8a) Very few answers were seen to this question. Those who answered tended to achieve Level 3 or Level 4 with sound and thorough exploration of the characters of Mr and Mrs Bennet. Many candidates dealt with their incompatibility but few considered Mrs Bennet's triviality or Mr Bennet's sour wit.

8b) This question attracted a small number of answers with most focusing on the characters of Lydia, Wickham, Lady Catherine de Burgh, Darcy and Elizabeth to comment on the idea of reputation. Some wrote with great gusto on Mr Collins, clearly engaging personally with the character. The best answers recognised the notion that reputation is an artificial concept, often underpinned by hypocrisy and double standards.

To Kill a Mockingbird

9a) This question was considerably less popular than 9b, but those who responded tended to do well against the criteria. Boo's relationship with his father was well understood and often ably related to Boo's conduct, reputation and character. The best answers were able to explore the family in considerable and impressive detail.

9b) This question on the theme of mockingbirds was much more popular than 9a and a range of marks was seen with some particularly impressive and assured Level 5 responses amongst them. Some standard responses were seen that worked through possible mockingbird characters but many answers were engaging and offered enthusiastic personal views supported by well-integrated and accurate quotation. Many responses included relevant and developed detail with typical character choices including Tom Robinson and Boo Radley. More ambitious and original choices included Atticus, Dill, Miss Maudie, Mayella and Calpurnia, although some lacked consistent arguments for their choices.

The English Teacher

10a) This question on the presentation of Susila was answered by a number of candidates who for the most part performed well. Susila's role in developing and enhancing the character of her husband, Krishna, was ably and broadly exemplified. The quality of support was often very good.

10b) There were very few answers to this question on Indian culture and traditions but those seen considered aspects such as the spiritual experience of Krishna and the funeral of Susila in their responses.

Of Mice and Men

11a) This was an exceptionally popular question, attracting answers across the mark range. Many candidates approached the question by going through each character in turn and exploring why he or she is unhappy. This strategy left little time for argument about which character is most unhappy and tended to lead to some superficial answers. Many responses focused on Curley's wife or Crooks and stronger responses used the terms of the question to make comparisons which tended to be interesting and engaging as an approach. The very best answers considered unlikely characters such as Slim with original and perceptive

arguments. Weaker answers tended to be formulaic and repetitive e.g. 'Crooks is unhappy because...', 'Curley is unhappy because...' These tended to be narrative in nature and lacking in support with little consideration of Steinbeck's craft. A few used the quotation in the question to good effect.

11b) This was another very popular question. Formulaic answers tended to characterise low level 3 responses and levels below. Focus on the American Dream, rabbits and the land were competently dealt with by candidates working at Levels 3 and 4 with some exploring the dreams of Curley's wife with some sensitivity. The best responses considered Steinbeck's critique of the American Dream and many displayed effective underpinning views of the novel's structure, such as the circular nature of the novel and the chapter that takes place in Crooks's room. It was encouraging to see candidates stretching themselves beyond the obvious in this well-known text. A good deal of contextual detail was included with variable success.

