

GCE

Edexcel GCE

English Language and Literature (8179)

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Winter 2006

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Examiners' Report

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Unit 6381: The Spoken Word

January 2006

Section A

Candidates found the two extracts very accessible with the majority able to comment meaningfully on each. It was widely noted that candidates seemed more confident dealing with the speech than with many of the other genres of text set alongside the transcript in Section A. A range of literary/rhetorical features were discussed with a clear sense of audience and purpose.

Literary and linguistic terminology was used effectively by many candidates and relevant approaches were generally adopted. Candidates should be encouraged to comment upon (rather than note, or describe) the presence of non-fluency and other linguistic features of text A. There was still a tendency for some candidates to simply identify features which enable a text to be categorised as spoken or written, without commenting upon the effects or significance of those features.

Similarly, a characteristic of higher band responses remained the ability to link linguistic and literary features of the given extracts to the attitudes and values they reveal. The second bullet point begins 'show how speech ... reveals attitudes and values' - this means more than 'say what the attitudes and values of the speakers are'. Some candidates dealt with language features separately to attitudes and values and thus responded to the second bullet point by addressing the content of the extracts rather than features of their language. In some extreme examples, candidates did not move far beyond expressions of disgust at the perceived disrespect of the two speakers in Text A - perhaps missing the point that this was private, informal chat, rather than public statement.

In Text A, a significant number of candidates confused informality of register with dialect, or 'class', sometimes also making unfortunately judgemental comments about the 'poor' English of these 'lower class' speakers (which, incidentally, they were not).

Section B

Henry V, *Much Ado About Nothing*, *The Importance of Being Earnest* and *A Doll's House* remain the most popular texts.

On this paper, question (a) type tasks tended to have a narrower focus than question (b) types. Question (b) type questions were more popular than in the past, in some cases proving as popular as their type (a) equivalent. When attempting type (a) questions candidates are expected to address the extracts, even if as 'a starting point'. Some of the questions do not include the 'starting point' prompt and obviously require candidates to focus to a significant extent upon the extract provided (see, for example, 3(a) or 5(a)).

Examiners reported few obvious problems with timing. On the whole, candidates left sufficient time to complete their responses to the play. A significant number of centres are recommending to candidates that they answer Section B before Section A.

Shakespeare: *Henry V*

Question 2(a)

This question invited responses to two extracts. Candidates are expected to know the text in sufficient detail to be able to explore some features of the given extracts. Higher band responses contrasted the language of each extract and considered other relevant material.

Question 2(b)

This question was slightly more popular. Many candidates impressed with the range and detail of their textual knowledge. The best responses shaped relevant knowledge to specifically address the issues of 'complexity' and 'contradiction', rather than repeat prepared essays on Henry with different issues as the focus.

Shakespeare: *Much Ado About Nothing*

Question 3(a)

Higher band responses addressed the question (rather than write at length on Beatrice's attitudes, for example), explored the language of Leonato in the extract in detail and considered the attitudes of a range of other male characters.

Question 3(b)

This question was not as popular as (a), although there were some excellent answers, reaching the upper end of Band 5 by demonstrating insightful appreciation of the importance of disguise in speech in a range of characters and contexts in the play.

Wilde: *The Importance of Being Earnest*

Question (4a)

The extract question on Chasuble and Prism attracted relatively few responses. Although there were some very confident answers, a number of candidates tackled the question without appreciating the satirical function of either character, treating them as further examples of the Victorian upper class.

Question 4(b)

This was a popular question and there was some confident discussion of the comic significance of the chosen character. Algernon was the most popular choice. Lower band responses struggled to address the significance of comedy or how it is generated, tending to describe some comic contributions to the plot. In a few cases, candidates discussed a number of characters rather than focus upon one.

Ibsen: *A Doll's House*

Question 5(a)

This was a popular question. Many candidates were able to discuss Nora's language in the extract in detail and contrast it with her language and behaviour elsewhere in the play. However, a very significant number of candidates wrote about changes to Nora and Helmer, and all the changes in Nora, rather than focusing upon the extract and the changes in Nora's attitude towards Helmer, as the question directed. Candidates should be advised to read questions carefully and to answer the question set.

Question 5(b)

Although there were some excellent answers, synthesising knowledge of language and literature, plot, character and thematic concern. Some candidates were limited to plot summary.

There were too few responses on *The Rover* and *Trelawny of the Wells* to provide informed feedback.

GCE English Language and Literature Statistics - Winter 2006:

Unit 1: 6381/01 - The Spoken Word

Grade	Max. Mark	<u>A</u>	<u>B</u>	<u>C</u>	<u>D</u>	<u>E</u>
Raw Boundary Mark:	100	73	63	53	43	34
Uniform Boundary Mark:	90	72	63	54	45	36

Edexcel Advanced Subsidiary and Advanced GCE

GCE English Language and Literature (8179/ 9179)

Set texts

Range of reading

'English Literature' includes American and Commonwealth writing, and significant works in translation may also be included. The set texts are drawn from a range of historical periods between 1370 and the present day, and candidates are required to study a range of texts, which must include:

- AS
 - a range of literary and non-literary texts, including a minimum of two texts covering two literary genres (prose, poetry and drama) one of which must have been published before 1900. The non-literary texts must include both spoken and written language.
- A2
 - a wider range of literary and non-literary texts, including two additional literary texts and at least one text published before 1770 ensuring coverage of prose, poetry and drama. The additional non-literary texts must include both spoken and written language.

The following texts are set for this specification:

Unit 1: The Spoken Word (Closed Text)

Section A: Unprepared Analysis

This section will consist of an unseen extract which may involve a transcription of spoken language.

Section B: Pre-1900 Drama Unit

The following texts will be set in January 2006, June 2006, January 2007, June 2007, January 2008 and June 2008.

- Shakespeare: *Henry V*
- Shakespeare: *Much Ado About Nothing*
- Wilde: *The Importance of Being Earnest*
- Ibsen: *A Doll's House*
- Pinero: *Trelawney of the Wells*

Candidates study one of the above texts.

Unit 2: Desk Study

This unit sets pre-released textual material for writing tasks.

Unit 3a: Shorter Fiction Study

There will be a free choice of text for this unit.

Unit 3b: Shorter Fiction Study (Open Text)

The following texts will be set in June 2006, June 2007 and June 2008:

- Angela Carter: *The Bloody Chamber* (Vintage ISBN 0099588110)
- W Somerset Maugham: *Collected Short Stories Vol. 1*: (Mandarin ISBN 074930345X, or *Collected Short Stories Vol. 1* (Vintage ISBN 0099287390)
- James Joyce: *Dubliners* (Penguin ISBN 0141182458)
- Alice Munro: *Selected Stories* (Vintage ISBN 0099732416)
- F. Scott Fitzgerald: *The Diamond as Big as the Ritz and Other Short Stories* (Penguin Popular Classics ISBN 0140622381). All stories in this volume are prescribed.

Candidates study one of the above texts.

Unit 4a: Writing for Different Audiences and Purposes

There will be a free choice of at least two texts selected from a variety of literary and non-literary sources for this unit.

Unit 4b: Writing for Different Audiences and Purposes

Candidates will be given two texts as stimulus material. The texts will be drawn from literary and non-literary material.

Unit 5: Wider Reading (Open Text)

The following texts will be set in June 2006, June 2007 and June 2008:

Section A: Pre-1770 Poetry

- Chaucer: *The Merchant's Tale*, editor Hussey (CUP ISBN 0521046319)
- Milton: *Selected Poems* (Dover ISBN 048627554X)
- Dalglish (editor): *Eight Metaphysical Poets* (Heinemann ISBN 0435150316)
- *Edexcel Poetry Anthology* (Section Two)
- Pope: *The Rape of the Lock* (OUP ISBN 0198319584)

Candidates study one of the above texts.

Section B: Modern Literature

Drama

- Friel: *Translations* (Faber ISBN 0571117422)
- David Mamet: *Oleanna* (Methuen ISBN 0413626202)
- Tom Stoppard: *Jumpers* (Faber ISBN 0571145698)

Poetry

- Sylvia Plath: *Selected Poems*, editor Hughes (Faber ISBN 0571135862)
- Grace Nichols: *The Fat Black Woman's Poems* (all four sections) (Virago ISBN 0860686353)
- *Edexcel Poetry Anthology* (Section One)

Prose

- Margaret Atwood: *Surfacing* (Virago ISBN 0860680649)
- Julian Barnes: *Flaubert's Parrot* (Picador ISBN 0330289764)
- Doris Lessing: *Memoirs of a Survivor* (Flamingo ISBN 0006493254)

Candidates study **one** of the above texts.

Unit 6: Genre Studies (Closed Text)

This unit will focus on unprepared texts and extracts. Students will be required to read and understand the stylistic features and characteristics of both whole texts and extracts from the following areas: a) travel writing; b) letters, diaries and journals; c) biography and autobiography; d) speeches; e) reportage; f) scientific writing. Examples of suggested texts for this unit are given in the list of *Textbooks and Other Resources* on page 37 of the specification.

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