

Mark Scheme (Results)

Summer 2008

GCE

GCE English Literature (6396/01)

SECTION A: UNPREPARED PROSE OR POETRY

This Section targets Assessment Objective AO3 and also assesses AO1 and AO2ii.

Answer either Question One or Question Two in this Section.

1. Read Text A on page 2 of the insert. It is taken from the novel *A Change of Climate* by Hilary Mantel, published in 1994 and set in Norfolk in 1980. Ralph and Anna Eldred are concerned about their son, Julian, who has dropped out of university and has been spending much of his time with a girl called Sandra Glasse who lives with her mother in a remote cottage near the coast.

Examine the ways in which Mantel presents the setting and the characters involved here. Remember that your answer should include some discussion of form, language and structure.

AO3 Candidates are told at the outset that this is an extract from a novel so there should be no problems in identifying the genre. All candidates are likely to note the descriptions of the weather and setting but a discriminator will be how effectively they link these observations to their overall reading of the passage. Lower band answers should pick up on the explanatory nature of the opening paragraph but will probably treat the passage sequentially and may focus on the character of Mrs Glasse and the oddities of the situation. Higher band answers can be expected to explore the shifts in the narrative method and to consider the implications of the dialogue in their assessment of the two characters. They may pay some attention to the final paragraph and to the hints of a transforming process at work in the final sentence.

AO1 The key elements here are the quality of the candidate's own writing and the way in which they structure their response. It is likely that lower band candidates will adopt a paragraph by paragraph approach and concentrate on content rather than on Mantel's methods. Higher band answers are more likely to organise their responses in a more purposeful way and to write with greater fluency, giving a holistic reading of the passage which takes account of the impact and effect of the author's choice of lexis.

AO2ii Candidates are not expected to find direct parallels here but to bring their experience of literature to bear in considering the passage in a linguistic and literary way. Lower band answers may well provide quite a sensitive response to the passage but fail to elaborate on the means by which they have arrived at this reading. Higher band answers, by a close exploration of textual detail, will offer a confident and sustained personal reading of the passage based on carefully selected material.

(Total 50 marks)

2. Read Text B on pages 3 and 4 of the insert, 'Letter to Barbados' by Ted Walker, published in 1973.

Consider the ways in which the writer develops the overall situation here. Remember that your answer should include some discussion of the form, language and structure of the poem.

A03 The poem is very accessible and the title alone directs candidates to the nature of the piece. Lower band answers may well work their way through the poem, concentrating more on content than on form; where form is treated it is likely to be descriptively rather than with any sense of how it is used by Walker. Higher band answers are more likely to take account of how the variety of rhythms and conversational tone combined with descriptive detail enable the poet to analyse and come to a realisation of the depth of his own reaction to his brother's absence. Of course, not all candidates will see it entirely in these terms but higher band answers will combine a sensitive analysis of linguistic detail with an overall sense of how the poet's mood is developed through the poem, possibly noting and commenting on such features as the elusive half rhyme.

A01 The content, structure and situation of the poem are very accessible and all candidates should be able to understand and engage with the situation being described. The question clearly asks candidates to consider style and content in their answers. Lower band answers are likely to explore the content of the poem without defining too clearly the way in which the accumulating detail is being used by the poet. Higher band answers should respond to the poem as a whole and structure their responses clearly, showing perception in their analysis of linguistic detail and expressing it accurately and fluently.

A02ii Candidates need to be writing about this piece with a constant awareness that this is a poem. It is possible that lower band answers may follow the title and opening line and refer to the piece as a 'letter' but it is to be hoped that the detailed comments they make on form and content will clarify that they recognise they are dealing with a poem, even if their comments may be lacking in analysis and detail. Higher band answers should be more incisive, commenting perhaps on such features as the tension between the neat stanzas and the conversational tone and assessing what these contribute to the impact of the poem as a whole.

(Total 50 marks)

TOTAL FOR SECTION A: 50 MARKS

SECTION B: COMPARATIVE STUDY

This Section targets Assessment Objective AO2ii and also assesses AO4 and AO5.

Answer ONE question from this Section.

If you answered the unprepared prose question (Question 1) in Section A, you must answer on either poetry or drama (Questions 6 to 8) in Section B. If you answered the unprepared poetry question (Question 2) in Section A, you must answer on either prose or drama (Questions 3 to 6) in Section B.

3. The Comic Perspective: *Pride and Prejudice* and **either** *Emma* **or** *Larry's Party*.

- (a) 'Although these novels contain much that is comic, their real subject is the serious issue of an individual's search for his or her true home in the society being portrayed.'

Compare and contrast your two novels in such a way as to explore in some detail the extent to which you agree with this claim.

AO2ii Candidates are being asked to compare and contrast their chosen novels in terms of how the comic perspective relates to the novel as a whole. Lower band answers may either agree or take issue with the proposition and display their textual knowledge in an assertive way rather than as reasoned argument; they may also treat their texts separately rather than interweaving their commentary. Higher band answers should explore the proposition more thoughtfully, comparing and evaluating their texts in some detail and seeing how the comic perspective is integral to the provision of positive outcomes for individuals.

AO4 Candidates are asked for a personal response here and some may take issue with 'the real subject'. Lower band answers may ignore the first part of the proposition and present their material in a largely descriptive way with little clear argument. Higher band answers will take a variety of critical positions, pursuing their points in a sustained and well supported argument.

AO5ii The question points to 'the society being portrayed' which serves as a clear reminder to the candidates of the need to consider relevant contextual factors. Lower band answers, particularly if they have studied the two Austen novels, may pay some attention to the position of women but are unlikely to develop this. Higher band answers should explore how the resolutions of their two novels are firmly rooted in their socio-historical, marital and economic contexts.

(Total 50 marks)

3. The Comic Perspective: *Pride and Prejudice* and **either** *Emma* **or** *Larry's Party*.

- (b) 'In comic novels such as these it is often difficult to establish the moral viewpoint of the narrator.'

Compare and contrast the novels you have studied in some detail and in such a way as to show how far you have found this to be the case.

AO2ii The candidates are clearly directed to compare and contrast their texts in terms of the narrative method and their experience of it as readers. Lower band answers are likely to see this as a question about irony and to draw attention to well rehearsed examples in their texts with little attempt at comparison. Higher band answers may well consider similar material but should range more widely, interweaving their comments on the two texts in a sustained and analytical way.

AO4 Candidates are asked for a personal response but this does need to be firmly grounded in the texts. Lower band answers are likely to be written descriptively and may not develop a very clear argument in response to the proposition. Higher band answers will assess their own experience against other interpretations, exploring shifts of narrative viewpoint and using a range of textual evidence to arrive at their own judgement.

AO5ii The focus on narrative viewpoint is intended to direct the candidates not only to the context of personal reading but also to the social and moral contexts of the novels. Lower band answers may rely on a largely personal response, drawing contrasts between then and now rather than exploring more widely. Higher band answers should consider and evaluate the particular contexts as a determining factor in the choice of narrative viewpoint.

(Total 50 marks)

4. The Tragic Perspective: *Wuthering Heights* and **either** *The Return of the Native* **or** *Petals of Blood*.

- (a) 'It is hard to regard as wholly tragic characters who in their defiance of social conventions are presented as being so clearly bent on their own destruction.'

Compare and contrast the two novels you have studied in such a way as to explore in some detail your reactions to this view

AO2ii Candidates should not find themselves short of material here but what will be a discriminator is the extent to which they explore and analyse similarities and differences within their chosen texts. Lower band answers are likely to rely on a catalogue approach and to develop some similarities and differences between their texts but without exploring in great detail. Higher band answers will be more selective, exploring and analysing links between their texts in a clearly structured way.

AO4 The statement is clearly contentious and candidates are asked for a personal response although lower band answers may well tend to focus on the second part of the proposition and write descriptively or voice their opinions in an assertive way with little clear textual support. Higher band answers will take on board the elements of the question, perhaps with some consideration of 'wholly tragic', and will reach their own judgements by a confident and wide ranging evaluation of their texts.

AO5ii The question's reference to 'their defiance of social conventions' gives candidates the clear direction to consider context here and all the novels provide plentiful material. Lower band answers are likely to give examples of what characters do while higher band answers, using similar material, should explore and analyse in a way that focuses on the issues raised in the question.

(Total 50 marks)

4. The Tragic Perspective: *Wuthering Heights* and **either** *The Return of the Native* **or** *Petals of Blood*.

- (b) 'The landscape and the society in which the characters are placed make a tragic outcome inevitable.'

Compare and contrast your two novels in such a way as to explore in some detail how far you would agree with this claim.

AO2ii The terms for comparison are clearly laid out in the question and candidates should not find it difficult to select relevant material. Lower band answers may treat their texts separately and rely on a descriptive approach. Higher band answers will be more incisive and selective in their commentary, analysing and exploring the similarities and differences between their texts in some detail.

AO4 Candidates are, of course, free to accept or reject the question's critical proposition here. Lower band answers may not find it contentious and are likely to provide a commentary which is largely illustrative. Higher band answers may well focus on 'inevitable' and will agree or otherwise with the proposition by a consideration of a variety of interpretations and textual evidence.

AO5ii 'The landscape and the society' clearly directs the candidates to the social and historical context of the novels. Lower band answers may focus more on the place than the social environment. Higher band answers will evaluate more carefully the links between time and place in exploring the similarities and differences in their chosen texts.

(Total 50 marks)

5. Divided Societies: *North and South* and **either** *Hard Times* **or** *Atonement*.

- (a) 'A central concern of these novels is to explore the uncertain relationship between personal morality and social justice.'

Compare and contrast the two novels you have studied in such a way as to explore in some detail your response to this claim.

AO2ii The question directs the candidates to compare and contrast their texts from a particular focus and much will depend upon which two novels have been studied. Nevertheless, lower band answers should not find it difficult to select examples which show the conflict between personal morality and social justice but they may define these more loosely or treat each text separately. Higher band answers may select very similar material but may look more closely at divided societies in terms of the impact on individuals and will be more incisive and analytical in terms of the comparison and contrast they offer.

AO4 Candidates may or may not agree with the proposition but the extent to which they explore the terms of the question is likely to be crucial. Lower band answers are more likely to accept the proposition and to write descriptively. Higher band answers should explore such terms as 'central' and 'uncertain relationship' in articulating their own well supported response to the question.

AO5ii Moral and social context are clearly referred to in the question, inviting candidates to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding of the socio-historical context of their chosen novels. There is a wealth of material in all three novels although lower band answers may rely on a narrative or descriptive approach. Higher band answers should analyse more carefully, using the material to further extend and strengthen their comparison.

(Total 50 marks)

5. Divided Societies: *North and South* and **either** *Hard Times* **or** *Atonement*.

- (b) 'Within these novels it is the women who are most able to perceive the divisions in society but also the least able to effect any change in that society.'

Compare and contrast your two novels in such a way as to explore in some detail how far you agree with this claim.

AO2ii Candidates are clearly directed to consider the role of the female characters within the novels they have studied and there should be no shortage of material here. Lower band candidates are likely to exemplify cases of division and draw some parallels between their texts, without exploring in any great detail. Higher band answers will draw on similar material but will be more selective and analytical in developing similarities and differences between their texts.

AO4 Candidates are being asked for a personal response and there is room for a variety of interpretations here. Nevertheless, lower band candidates may tend to accept the proposition rather unthinkingly and respond in an illustrative and assertive way. Higher band answers should adopt a more questioning approach, balancing their arguments with a careful selection of textual detail.

AO5ii 'The divisions in society' points to the need for candidates to include contextual material in their responses though the range will, of course, depend on which two novels have been studied; gender issues are also clearly highlighted for consideration. Lower band answers are likely to make general points to show how their chosen novels are products of their time. Higher band answers are likely to weave their contextual knowledge into their overall comparison, thereby strengthening their exploration of the similarities and differences between their texts.

(Total 50 marks)

6. Broken Communication: *The Tempest* and **either** *Who's afraid of Virginia Woolf?* **or** *Translations*.

- (a) 'In the isolated worlds presented in these plays, the arrival of outsiders provides a direct challenge to the existing ways in which people communicate.'

Compare and contrast the two plays you have studied in such a way as to explore in some detail how far you would agree with this claim.

AO2ii The question clearly directs candidates to a consideration of the role of communication in their chosen texts. Lower band answers may respond descriptively without drawing close comparison between their texts. Higher band answers should interweave the comments on their two texts and select precise detail to illustrate the similarities and differences between their texts.

AO4 A discriminator here is likely to be the extent to which the candidates engage with the question. Lower band answers, seeing the word 'communicate', may well present a range of pre-packaged material, showing knowledge of their texts but not adapting it to the particular demands of the question. Higher band answers are likely to consider the proposition more carefully and come to their own conclusions by a thoughtful evaluation of their texts.

AO5ii The question invites candidates to consider the social and historical contexts of the plays they have studied. Lower band answers may present their knowledge in a rather general way, not integrating it closely with their textual commentary. Higher band answers should use the contextual material to reinforce points they have established in their overall argument, showing what the context contributes to the whole.

(Total 50 marks)

6. Broken Communication: *The Tempest* and **either** *Who's afraid of Virginia Woolf?* **or** *Translations*.

- (b) 'Actions speak louder than words; that is the true message of these plays for a twenty-first century audience.'

Compare and contrast the two plays you have studied in some detail so as to make clear your own reaction to this assertion.

AO2ii The question reminds candidates of the comparative nature of the task. Nevertheless, lower band answers may well write about their texts separately, making little attempt to draw them together. Higher band answers should forge links between their chosen texts, showing a secure knowledge and understanding of their nature.

AO4 Candidates are asked for a personal response but they will need to develop this persuasively, by close reference to the texts. Lower band answers may seize upon the first part of the proposition and make their points assertively with a limited range of textual reference. Higher band answers should engage more thoughtfully with the proposition and establish a view, whatever it may be, by evaluating a wide range of textual evidence.

AO5ii 'For a twenty-first century audience' clearly directs candidates to consider the context in which the texts were written and in which they are understood. Lower band answers should not find themselves short of material here but they are likely to present it for itself rather than integrating it into their response as a whole. Higher band answers should be more selective but will, in any case, explore the importance of contextual factors in considering the similarities and differences between their texts.

(Total 50 marks)

7. Nature and the Imagination: *The Prelude* Books 1 and 2 William Wordsworth and **either** *Selected Poems* John Keats **or** *Selected Poems* Edward Thomas.

- (a) 'Although these poets may be characterised as 'Nature poets' their central concern is not with Nature; it is with the human subject.'

Compare and contrast the writings of your two poets in such a way as to show in some detail the extent to which you agree with this claim.

AO2ii The areas for comparison and contrast are clearly set out in the question. Lower band answers may well approach the task in a rather general way, not establishing clear similarities and differences between their chosen poets. Higher band answers should address the terms of the question more carefully and range through their texts exploring and analysing the relationships between them.

AO4 Candidates are being asked for a personal response here but much will depend on the extent to which they engage with the terms of the question. Lower band answers may well write somewhat assertively and offer only a narrow range of material. Higher band answers should explore the apparent contradiction in the proposition more thoughtfully, probably establishing some distinctions between Wordsworth and their second poet. In any case, they will offer a range of textual evidence in arriving at a personal judgement. As always it will be the quality and persuasiveness of the argument which will be the discriminator here.

AO5ii Historic and artistic contextual implications are highlighted by the references to 'nature' and 'the human subject.' Lower band answers are likely to skim over these, showing some general awareness only. Higher band answers should explore the contexts in which the poetry was written more precisely, integrating this material with their evaluation of the similarities and differences between their chosen poets.

(Total 50 marks)

7. Nature and the Imagination: *The Prelude* Books 1 and 2 William Wordsworth and **either** *Selected Poems* John Keats **or** *Selected Poems* Edward Thomas.

(b) ‘..... the earth
And common face of Nature spake to me
Rememberable things’.

Compare and contrast the work of the poets you have studied in such a way as to explore the importance to the poets of the 'rememberable things' that they have derived from nature.

A02ii The quotation is intended to direct the candidates to a comparison of the particular impact of nature upon their chosen poets. Lower band answers will have little difficulty in demonstrating their knowledge by selecting 'rememberable things', but may not develop any close comparison of their texts. Higher band answers will structure their comparisons to assess the importance of these experiences to their poets by detailed textual exploration.

A04 Candidates are being asked to assess the importance to the poets of their experience of nature. Lower band candidates may do little more by way of argument than assert that what the poets remember must be of importance to them while higher band answers should pursue a more rigorous assessment, offering their own interpretation of the relative importance of 'rememberable things' to their chosen poets.

A05ii The personal poetic experience is clearly at the heart of this question. Lower band answers are likely to rely heavily on the biographical context, particularly in reference to Wordsworth, and the influence this has had on the poetry. Higher band answers may well draw upon similar material but will be mindful of the need to explore and evaluate its importance to the poetry in greater detail.

(Total 50 marks)

8. The Social Observer: *Songs of Innocence and Experience* William Blake and **either** *The Best of Betjeman* **or** *Selected Poems* WH Auden.

- (a) 'It is the sufferings of society as a whole rather than that of individuals that is the primary concern of these poets.'

Compare and contrast the writings of your two poets in such a way as to show in some detail how far you agree with this claim.

AO2ii Candidates are presented with a straightforward proposition upon which to focus their comparison and lower band answers will not find themselves short of relevant material although they may present it in a fairly unquestioning way. Higher band answers, while probably drawing on similar material, will explore the claim more incisively, selecting from a range of poems in their exploration of the proposition

AO4 The proposition itself is contentious and 'primary concern' is deliberately there to develop discussion and argument. Nevertheless, lower band answers may present only a limited range of material, possibly in a rather assertive way. Higher band answers may well conclude that the primary concerns of their chosen poets, particularly if these are Blake and Betjeman, are rather different, but whatever their opinion they will have arrived at it by persuasive argument and convincing textual evidence.

AO5ii The candidates are directed by the question to consider the personal, socio-historical and moral context of their chosen texts. Lower band answers may well spend more time on Blake than their second poet and may tend to impose their contextual knowledge whilst higher band answers will evaluate more thoughtfully the connections between the life and times of their poets and their poetry.

(Total 50 marks)

8. The Social Observer: *Songs of Innocence and Experience* William Blake and **either** *The Best of Betjeman* **or** *Selected Poems* WH Auden.

(b) 'They are all acute observers of society, but what distinguishes these poets from one another is the attitude they take to what they observe.'

Compare and contrast the two poets you have studied in such a way as to explore in some detail your reaction to this judgement.

AO2ii This question directs the candidates to compare and contrast the poets they have studied primarily in terms of attitude and tone. Lower band candidates should have no difficulty in selecting relevant material but this may turn into something of a catalogue without developing much clear comparison. Higher band answers will be more precise in selecting material and will move with confidence between their chosen poems to illustrate similarities and differences between their chosen texts.

AO4 Candidates need to focus on the terms of the question and choose their material appropriately. Lower band answers are more likely to rely on a few pre-selected poems, which may be only partly appropriate to the task. Higher band answers will be more rigorous, highlighting relevant material from both their poets and moving between the texts in a well structured and compelling argument.

AO5ii The social context is clearly highlighted in the question. Lower band answers are likely to present such knowledge for itself, rather than to integrate it into their response as a whole. Higher band answers will use their material more selectively, exploring the connections between the contemporary society and the individual poet's reactions and attitude to it.

(Total 50 marks)

TOTAL FOR SECTION B: 50 MARKS

TOTAL FOR PAPER: 100 MARKS

END