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Report on the Units

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CONTENTS

GCSE English (1900)

REPORTS ON THE UNITS

Unit/Content	Page
Chief Examiner's Report	1
2431/01 Non-Fiction, Media and Information	2
2431/02 Non-Fiction, Media and Information	6
2432/01 Different Cultures, Analysis and Argument	11
2432/02 Different Cultures, Analysis and Argument	14
2433/01 Literary Heritage and Imaginative Writing	20
2433/02 Literary Heritage and Imaginative Writing	26
2434 Literary Heritage and Imaginative Writing	34
2435 Speaking and Listening	37

Chief Examiner's Report

In total, over 41,000 candidates were entered for the various units at this session, with a large number of them completing aggregation for the examination as a whole. Examiners for all units report that, in general, centres appeared to have entered most candidates appropriately for either Higher or Foundation Tier papers but, as always, there were some who would appear to have been over-ambitious in attempting Higher Tier papers. Overall, the question papers themselves allowed candidates to respond with interest and to achieve results commensurate with their ability. Detailed comments from the Principal Examiners for each unit are to be found elsewhere in this report but the following points of more general interest are relevant to all centres preparing candidates for future examinations of this Specification:

- Examiners for all units expressed concern that many candidates are losing marks unnecessarily by failing to observe basic rules of paragraphing and punctuation. In particular, the apostrophe of both possession and omission has now become a seriously endangered species.
- Examiners for all units were also concerned that, when writing analytically about a text, increasing numbers of candidates are making relevant and appropriate comments but failing to support them with specific references to and quotations from the texts. Without such textual support it is not possible for answers to reach the highest mark bands.
- The Principal Moderator for Unit 2434 (Written Coursework) has commented on the number of administrative errors emanating from a large number of Centres. While OCR fully understand the pressures that Centres are under at this time of year, it is important that administrative procedures are adhered to – the new Specifications, which will be first examined in 2011, comprise 60% Controlled Assessment which will involve increased administration by Centres. It is in everyone's interest – not least that of the candidates – that administration runs smoothly.
- Examiners for all units report that when answering the writing tasks, the best results are achieved by candidates who write from their own experience.

2431/01 Non-Fiction, Media and Information

General Comments

In general, the examination paper was thought by all Examiners to be of an appropriate level of difficulty and comparable to those of previous years. Centres are now very familiar with the format of this paper and with the requirements of the different tasks. Most candidates were therefore able to spend their time purposefully, with reasonable attention to all three parts.

Performance in the reading tasks was much as expected. Some candidates were able to score highly, whereas others were unable to write full answers and thus differentiation was achieved. The fact that they were able to identify the qualities and achievements that made *Cutty Sark* such a special ship was evidence that almost all candidates had at least a straightforward understanding of the first reading passage. The attempted analysis of the writer's presentational and linguistic techniques showed an intelligent engagement with the second passage and an adequate understanding of the questions with analytical comments varying from the perceptive to the superficial.

Section B, the essay task, was clearly enjoyed by candidates, who took advantage of a writing task that enabled them to write in a genuine and personal way about something that was close to their hearts. They could write about their favourite object or place and this gave them scope to write from real experience in order to show what they could do. Even the less successful pieces were written with feeling and there were very few mundane, mechanical responses. Indeed, for the first time for many years, a great many candidates scored more highly for writing than for reading – to the delight of many Examiners.

The paper as a whole worked well at all levels, eliciting some impressive work from the most successful, and being accessible to nearly all.

Comments on Individual Questions

SECTION A

Question 1 (a)

In the final paragraph, to what did Captain Woodgett compare the Cutty Sark?

Almost all candidates scored the mark here. The few who did not, probably didn't understand that 'like' introduced the comparison, rather than reflecting the word's current colloquial usage.

Question 1(b)

From the paragraph beginning 'This was a time when...' (lines 19 to 24), why did some merchants believe that teas was better carried in a sailing ship than in an iron steamship?

Most candidates earned one mark but failed to mention that sailing ships were wooden, as opposed to the allegedly contaminating iron in steamships.

Question 1 (c)

From the paragraph beginning 'This was a time when...' (lines 19 to 24) what caused the age of the tea clipper to end in 1877?

Almost everyone scored the maximum two marks.

Question 1 (d)

What made the Cutty Sark such a special ship in its day?

Use your own words as far as possible.

There was a full range of responses here, from detailed and well-organised to very brief. Many candidates either misunderstood or failed to spot the phrase 'in its day' in the question: they therefore provided irrelevant material about *Cutty Sark's* historical significance, its value to tourism and its status as a national treasure in London. In answer to this question, candidates needed to show their understanding of the first reading passage by a relevant selection and organisation of the content. A good number missed the whole of the section on the tea trade and moved straight to the Australian wool trade.

This was probably the least well answered question and there were very few relevant, succinct answers expressed in candidates' own words. The phrases 'racing Australian wool around Cape Horn' and 'Queen of the Cape Horn wool race' seemed to be understood in a sporting rather than a commercial context. There was less copying out of chunks of text than in previous years, though some points arrived in bunches ('beauty of design', 'largest and fastest'). There was a difference between those responses that simply repeated information and those that were able to focus on 'special'.

Question 2

How does the writer celebrate the importance of the Cutty Sark?

In your answer you should write about:

- The **presentation** of the article
- The **information** given about the importance of the Cutty Sark
- The **words and phrases** which celebrate the ship's importance.

Analysis of the writer's presentation and linguistic techniques is what is required in answer to Question two and candidates are now being well prepared for this. It is true that the less successful candidates merely listed language points rather than evaluating them, and also made generalised comments that could have applied to any article, but the more successful candidates read with some degree of insight. The discriminator in the marking of this question is not just the identification of emotive words and phrases but the explanation of language in relation to the writer's purpose. Most candidates did attempt to comment on language, and were able to unpack quotations effectively.

Most candidates had been well prepared for the presentation section and were capable of applying their understanding of media techniques to the presentational features of the given text. They genuinely appreciated the power of the photograph and made apt comments on how the destructiveness of fire was portrayed in the 'image'.

There were many thoughtful answers, including one that recognised that the article started sadly, moved on to achievements which made *Cutty Sark* a special ship, and finished on a note

of hope. There were many examples of perceptive reading of the text and a good understanding of authorial purpose as shown by the phrasing. What was impressive was the willingness of candidates to tease out the significance of selected images. Those who astutely observed that the author was using the pronoun 'we' for persuasive effect were rewarded accordingly. Some noted that the ship was referred to by a feminine pronoun. It was pleasing to see that many referred to language that was 'flattering' or 'complimentary' or 'exaggerated' rather than 'positive', which has become such an undifferentiated, catch-all term.

SECTION B

Question 3

Describe an object or place which is special to you.

Explain what makes it so special.

Most candidates were stimulated by this topic to produce thoughtful and, sometimes, heartfelt essays. There was a small minority of candidates who wrote formless descriptions which soon strayed into narratives, but even those who did narrate a holiday to a special destination usually managed to rescue the account in the closing paragraphs. These less successful answers were also characterised by repetitive sentence structures which sometimes wandered out of control and which featured the most erratic punctuation.

The most successful answers, however, were well structured and paragraphed, with some element of descriptive writing as well as the explanation that was necessary to show why an object or place was special. If these responses involved narrative as well, it was in the form of relevant anecdotes which were an important part of the explanation.

Many wrote purposefully and thoughtfully to explain the significance of the chosen article. Indeed, a wide variety of objects and places was described and explained. Surprisingly, there were very few i-pods and other electrical devices. Many described their homes or bedrooms as special places and their feelings of privacy, peace and a sense of belonging were sensitively explained. They were places they could go to 'to escape from worries and troubles' or 'to be quiet and still'. In some centres, a large number of students chose their mosque as their special place, and beautifully explained how the building helped them feel calm and 'morally centred'. It seems that today's teenagers, for all their need to be part of the crowd, do have an inner life that is more individual; they also cherish peace and quiet even if they won't admit it, except on an examination paper which won't be read by peers or parents! Heirlooms, jewellery given by grandparents, childhood toys and photographs were common choices, and other interesting ones were a modified bicycle, an ice rink, an allotment or a country of origin such as Jamaica or Poland. Often expressed was a genuine love and affection for grandparents and their houses and a more traditional way of life, and also for the support given by these relatives which clearly meant a great deal.

In general, the explanation of the significance of the object or place was more successful than the description of it - unless it was a garden or park, which then often suffered from too much description of 'fluttering breezes' and 'melodious birdsong'. The accretion of emotional significance around objects such as necklaces and memories of whoever gave them often displaced the rather more pedestrian descriptions.

Reports on the Units taken in June 2010

What the essays as a whole exemplified was that students' expression is at its best when they are writing about real experience associated with personal emotion. Accuracy, control of structures and the range and precision of vocabulary all seem to improve in these circumstances. At the end of the examination, a good number of senior Examiners commented that, for once, candidates' achievements in writing surpassed those in reading.

UCLES

2431/02 Non-Fiction, Media and Information

General Comments

In total about 30,000 candidates sat this paper in this session. The performance of candidates covered the full range of achievement, with a pleasing number producing responses of a very high standard indeed. As has been the case in previous June series, it would seem that Centres entered their candidates appropriately for this Higher Tier paper as there was little evidence that those who took the paper found it to be inaccessible. Overall, candidates found the content of the reading passages to be both conducive and of interest and most were able to respond to all three tasks. Very few, if any, gave evidence of being pressured by time; although there were some who wrote only very limited and short responses to the writing task, this appeared to be more the result of a deliberate decision on their part than evidence of time pressure. There were also a few candidates who omitted to answer Task 2, despite producing good quality responses to the other two tasks on the paper. Again, Examiners had the impression that this omission came from a misunderstanding that they were expected to choose either one or the other of the two tasks in Section A rather than being required to answer both. Centres are reminded to emphasise to all those taking the examination that careful reading of the rubric instructions on the front and inside pages of the question paper is an important factor in taking the examination.

In general, there was evidence of excellent work on all three tasks. It is encouraging to note that what would appear to be a higher percentage of candidates than usual achieved high marks for Task 1, producing answers which were focused, concise and comprehensive, and Centres that have concentrated on emphasising to their candidates the importance of adopting a structured and planned approach to writing summaries can feel that their efforts have certainly not been in vain. Task 2 continues to be a high hurdle for a large number of candidates; nevertheless, there were this year pleasing numbers who produced responses that were both analytical and perceptive and, it would seem, fewer than in previous years who treated this task as a challenge to find as many real (or imagined) figures of speech in the passage as they could possibly hope for! As always, the writing task produced interesting and engaging responses and allowed Examiners a rewarding, informative and occasionally, educational insight into the cultural tastes of 21st Century teenagers: although television series such as 'Glee', 'Vampire Diaries' and 'Desperate Housewives' featured prominently in responses, there was also a very wide range of less popular sources of entertainment which proved once again to those reading them that individuality and independence of taste is healthily present among the younger generation and any attempt to stereotype them cannot be justified.

Comments on Individual Questions

Section A

Reading: Non-Fiction

Question 1

Read the article 'What is a soap opera' by Daniel Chandler.

*Outline **concisely** what the article tells you about the key features of soap operas and the ways in which they differ from other kinds of broadcast drama.*

***Use your own words** as far as possible.*

As stated above, many candidates responded well to this task. Most gave evidence of having a sound understanding of the main features of soap operas as described by the writer and showed a clear awareness that the question required them to deal with two particular aspects of this information: the key features of this television genre and how it specifically differed from others mentioned in the article. The most successful responses came from those who showed a secure

understanding of the distinction between a *serial* and a *series* as explained by the writer, as this provided the candidates concerned with a sound basis on which to structure their responses. Developing from this understanding, candidates were able to include in their answers a good range of points detailing the main features of soap operas and then to identify those specific features of this genre which caused them to differ from other types of television programmes. The most successful responses were distinguished by the ability to reassemble these points into a clearly organised response, expressed mainly in the candidates' own words and clearly and concisely focused on the specific requirements of the question. It is important to note that there were, in total, 26 points listed in the Mark Scheme which could have been made. Examiners did not expect that candidates would make all of these, but responses should have covered a good range in order to provide a convincing overview of the relevant parts of the original passage. In fact, a pleasing number of candidates successfully incorporated a good majority of the relevant points in their answers while still managing to be concise – it is also important to note that Examiners are fully aware that there is a difference between brevity and concision and the latter quality (indicated by a clear focus on relevant details and the exclusion of that which is not relevant) produced the best rewards for this task.

Less successful responses fell into two main categories. The first consisted either of very long unselective answers containing a (large) number of relevant points but also much unnecessary detail (such as lengthy introductions about how soap operas got their name) and either over-detailed commentary about the reasons for certain features of soap operas or only a partial understanding of key points. For example, many candidates mentioned that soaps featured gossip but not all appreciated that the reason for this element was to inform viewers of important details of plot development, rather than (as many candidates assumed) being evidence of the female-orientation of soap opera storylines. Responses at this level usually identified a large range of points, but these were frequently in text order with little real attempt at organisation or concision.

The second common type of response in the less successful category came from candidates who wrote answers which tried too hard to be concise and, as a result, either omitted several key points or gave only a generalised summary of them with points being blurred rather than clearly distinguished.

The least successful responses to this task were those which failed to convey a convincing understanding of either the passage or the task itself. Points were made at random without any clear organisational structure and were very often lifted verbatim from the passage and assembled in the same sequence as they appeared in the original; the distinction between series and serials was often confused and confusing and there was evidence in places of parts of the original passage having been misunderstood. Such answers conveyed at best only a partial overview of the required material and usually suggested that only perfunctory, if any, attention had been given to detailed reading of the passage and planning of the response. As mentioned earlier in this report, however, responses at this low level of achievement were very much a minority.

In preparing for similar tasks in the future, Centres might like to remind candidates of the following points:

- Task 1 is about **facts and opinions expressed by the writer of the source passage only**. There is no place for the candidate's opinions on the topic
- working through the passage in chronological order is not a rewarding method
- copying points in the words of the text can bring only limited rewards.

Reading: Media Text

Question 2

Now read the article 'Have TV soaps lost the plot?' by Ben Goldacre.

Explore some of the ways in which Ben Goldacre sets out to persuade his readers that TV soaps have 'lost the plot'.

You should consider:

- How he presents his ideas
- his language and tone of voice

In general, candidates responded well to the passage and to this task; most had a good understanding of Ben Goldacre's argument (even if assigning him the correct surname proved beyond a significant majority - *Goodacre, Goldaker, Goodrace and Goldberg* were only some of the variations that appeared) and of certainly the main features of his writing. There were, perhaps, fewer obvious linguistic features in this passage than in some of the others set in previous years, and this meant that candidates focused profitably on analysing the content and structure of the argument and on identifying and explaining the tone, rather than hunting for examples of alliteration and tricolons (apart from those candidates who were determined to find them whether they existed or not!). Most successfully identified that Goldacre was being sarcastic and many found not only appropriate supporting evidence ('Gasp!') but also attempted with varying degrees of success to explain why their examples were sarcastic and how the tone created by the writer helped to convey his attitude towards the television programmes about which he was writing.

The most successful responses clearly identified that Goldacre was adopting a humorous approach in order to make his readers aware of the far-fetched and exaggerated nature of soap opera storylines, in relation to medical matters in particular, by the mocking, melodramatic opening of his article, and then moved on to show how he used his own medical knowledge (reinforced by his convincingly informed use of technical terminology such as 'haemofilter' and 'immunosuppressant') and further examples of unconvincing and dangerous scenarios from a wide range of different soaps in order to ridicule their attempts at medical drama. The very best of these responses explained the effects he created by relating them to a clear understanding of his intentions and were fully aware of the consistently mocking tone he adopted. Many candidates also made convincing comments about how the writer's tone became more serious when he introduced concerns about real patients awaiting kidney transplants and how this seriousness was emphasised by comparison with the much more light-hearted tone of the rest of the article.

Less successful responses tended to fall in to two main categories. At one end were the candidates who clearly appreciated the writer's purpose and technique but wrote about it in a generalised way, making acceptable comments and referring to details of the passage but without giving specific quotations or examples. Although such responses were better than the unexplained and unsupported assertions that would have produced a mark in Bands 5 or 6, nevertheless they contained insufficient supporting references to be awarded marks higher than those of Band 3. Centres are advised to emphasise to their most able candidates the importance of providing supporting references for their comments, to ensure that they achieve the high marks of which they are clearly capable. Responses from some candidates at this level indicate that the idea of 'presentation' is not properly understood. A significant number appeared to think that it refers only to layout and wasted time describing font size, boldening and the like and, in some cases, attempting to explain what wasn't there, such as pictures and columns, to no good purpose. Although comments on the effects achieved by the use of graphic and other such features are appropriate when these are present in the text, it is important for candidates to

understand that in order to achieve the highest bands, they should also consider the ways in which writers present (that is, *structure*) their arguments when dealing with this aspect of the question.

The second type of response in this category came from candidates who understood the main points of what Goldacre thought about the ways soap operas deal with medical issues and had an appreciation of how his tone of voice conveyed his attitude to his readers. These responses also contained some appropriate quotations in support of the points being made. However, these quotations, although relevant, tended to be left to do the work on their own or were followed by explanations that either made a comment which had very little relevance to the quotation that was meant to illustrate it or went only halfway to making a valid analytical point – for example, the response quoted the rhetorical question followed by the answer. ‘Yes’, stated that this was an example of the writer being sarcastic, but then stopped short without fully explaining how this effect was achieved.

As in previous years, the least successful responses consisted of paraphrases or summaries of the article, very often with appropriate quotations from the passage included, but with no evidence of analytical or explanatory comment being made, other than the unconvincing and unhelpful statements that the examples cited ‘drew the reader in’ and ‘made the reader want to read on’ without any attempt being made to explain how these outcomes were achieved.

In preparing for similar tasks in the future, Centres might like to remind candidates of the following points:

- the memorising of complex acronyms to identify various figures of speech and literary devices is frequently a hindrance rather than a help
- to be fully aware that even correct assertions require supporting references to the text.
- to focus on the use of **contrasts and comparisons** with examples and **different methods of emphasis** such as repetition, listing, hyperbole and use of vocabulary for effect.
- going through the text paragraph-by-paragraph is a less successful approach than identifying specific methods and then providing examples from all parts of the text.

Section B

Writing to Inform, Explain, Describe

Question 3

Write the words of a talk to your age group introducing your favourite television or radio programme, or your favourite film, or your favourite music.

Describe details of your choice and **explain** what you like about it.

Nearly all candidates appeared to understand the requirements of this task and to respond to it with enthusiasm; as mentioned above, there was a wide and interesting choice of topics. There were three elements in the task which required attention. The most successful responses, not surprisingly, were written by candidates who paid careful attention to all three. First, it was necessary to describe the choice of programme, film or music. Usually this was done well, although some candidates perhaps assumed too great a knowledge on the part of their audience and failed to provide sufficiently detailed description for the reader to understand clearly what was involved. Second, candidates were required to explain what it was that they liked about it. Although many did this very convincingly, others conveyed their enthusiasm for the subject more by implication than explanation. Finally, candidates were required to adopt an appropriate oral register as they were instructed to write the words of a speech addressed to their own age group. Those who answered this task most successfully appreciated that it was necessary to

show an awareness of an oral register – for example, by opening the speech with a salutation and including appropriate asides throughout – but that ultimately, what they were writing was to be read by an external examiner; they consequently took care to show that they could use a wide range of sentence structures, varied and appropriate vocabulary and so on. Similarly, these responses were carefully structured and showed a clear development leading to an effective and focused conclusion. ‘I learned a lot about the contemporary music scene from many candidates with a very detailed knowledge of their favourite band or genre of music. I had no idea there were so many,’ commented one Examiner, with tongue perhaps only slightly in cheek.

Less successful responses tended to focus more on either the instruction to describe or the instruction to explain and to lack sophistication of structure and vocabulary which meant that they communicated meaning satisfactorily, but not particularly precisely. Their use of an oral register was either non-existent, with responses were written as if for a magazine article, or its use appeared to be by default with candidates writing as they spoke without consciously crafting their sentence structure and vocabulary.

Finally, the least successful responses were either very brief and unengaged or lengthy and rambling without clear structure and containing mainly subjective outpourings rather than the more carefully chosen objective approach which is required by this triplet. Such responses paid little attention to crafting an oral register or took the opportunity to do so to extremes; in at least one case, apart from the opening, ‘Yo brovvers...’ the remaining response was so densely written in street demotic that the Examiner lost sight of any intended meaning.

Overall, Examiners thought that technical proficiency was about the same as in previous series, except that at all levels very few candidates seemed to be aware that titles need to be indicated by inverted commas or that Standard English usage still requires that ‘programme’ be spelt in the English and not American way. Similarly, Examiners continue to express regret at what appears now to be the terminal decline of the apostrophe. Internal punctuation for stylistic effect was sometimes correct; however, the use of the semi-colon and colon is still not properly understood. There was over-use of the exclamation mark, thus reducing its effectiveness, and a common omission of the question mark from interrogative and rhetorical questions.

Conclusion

Responses to this paper reflected the whole range of ability expected from this Tier. As always, the best work was of a very high standard indeed and many Examiners commented on the pleasure and privilege they felt in reading the scripts of those candidates who had responded to the examination at the highest levels. Most of those who sat this paper treated it seriously and responded to the tasks conscientiously. The main message for teachers to convey to future candidates is the importance of reading instructions carefully and ensuring that they apply the key elements required by each question in their answers.

2432/01 Different Cultures, Analysis and Argument

General comments

The paper was well received by centres and candidates alike. Performance stretched right across and beyond the ability range this tier is designed for. Some candidates failed to achieve sufficient marks to reach even the lowest grade for this unit, but Examiners also reported work of well above C grade quality from others.

The least successful responses came from those who could not or would not attempt to answer three relevant questions. Such responses were characterised by multiple attempts at the questions in Section A, for example work on all three set passages, followed by a lively attempt at the writing questions, or something on the Short Stories or the Hemingway followed by only one of the writing tasks. Often a calmer approach to three questions might well have allowed such candidates to achieve more creditable marks.

Although there were a few good essays on *Things Fall Apart* there was little evidence that Centres had taught this text. Indeed, the *Opening Worlds* anthology was much the most popular text this series.

In Section B there was, for the first time for several sessions, a disparity between what was achieved on questions 7 & 8. The format of the confidential letter to the friend/family member proved yet again to be a popular and confidence-inducing format which led many candidates to show what they could do at their very best. The advice they were handing out was sane and sensible and would have pleased any popular newspaper editor. See more detail below. Question 7 was harder and many candidates wrote about their plans for the future rather than the nature of their relationship with the concept of ambition. These comprised the middle third or so of the candidature. The third above this were able to write in a more abstract sense about the topic and numbers of these were quite confident in dismissing ambition as something that was not important to them: “go with the flow” and “take life as it comes” was the message. The remaining third of candidates had some difficulty with the task simply because the whole concept was not one they had so far met in their lives and experience.

Although some examiners reported a pleasing increase in candidates’ mechanical accuracy there are still many whose work lacks conscious paragraphing or even simple, accurate sentence structures.

Comments on individual questions

Section A

- (1) *How do the writers here and in one other story from the list above show a character’s emotions in a difficult situation?*

This was the first time we have set a direct question on “The Young Couple” and this proved to be the less popular of the two questions on the short stories selection. Candidates who chose this question generally wrote with some conviction about the scene itself, with some showing the ability to recognise language choices and almost all writing about both Cathy’s and Naraian’s emotions. Sympathy for both characters was expressed. There was much less evidence, however, that the candidates could place the passage in context with any great degree of accuracy. It would appear that most candidates had

started the story (they could all quote the opening lines) but that many did not persevere to the conclusion. However, many wrote well on the father's anger in "The Red Ball" or on Ravi's plight in "Games at Twilight". As always many others tried to do something with "The Pieces of Silver" and "Leela's Friend" but with less success.

- (2) *How do the writers in any two of the stories from the list above show how an older character treats a younger character wrongly?*

This was a more popular choice and one which has a familiar line of precedents. It allowed candidates to write about "The Pieces of Silver" and "The Red Ball" and many did so at length. The better answers picked up the moral implications of "wrongly" both in their condemnation of Chase and, often, in the greater degree of sympathy afforded to Bolan's father. All are quite clear about the fact the Bolan *steals* his family's money for his own pleasure. Some candidates' work lost a clear focus on the task because they wanted to get down everything they knew about each story. "Leela's Friend" was a popular choice, yet once again it became clear that this text is a considerably tougher nut to crack than it may appear to be. Yes, Sidda is treated wrongly. But where and how exactly, and by whom? And what is Leela's role in all this? There was some more confident work on Anna and Savushkin in "The Winter Oak".

- (3) *How does the writer show Santiago's attitudes to the sea and its creatures here and at one or two other moments in the novel?*

Very few candidates got involved in the moral dimensions of "sin" or "pride" and took "loved" as "liked/ respected". He was a successful fisherman who respected his prey and wanted to get it back to port in one piece, was the perfectly acceptable party line. Pleasingly, there were very few candidates who were unable to go beyond this and write about other moments. Many chose to develop his battle with the sharks and drew comparisons with his view of the shark here and later. Others talked about the earlier sections of the story focusing on the initial tussle with the marlin. Either way, this was a successful question for all those who had some familiarity with the text.

- (4) *How does the writer show how the Old Man is either lucky or unlucky in two moments in the novel?*

The question gave candidates a wide range of episodes to choose from and a wide range of things to say about them. The numbers concentrating on one side or the other were about the same as those taking both sides of the argument. Few, again, got into anything approaching a metaphysical account of luck/fate/fortune; answers instead focused on success or lack of it in Santiago's voyage. It was familiar territory and most answers developed a confident response which, typically, said that catching the marlin was good and having it devoured by the sharks wasn't. Others talked about the presence and absence of Manolin and the relative outcomes of this.

These questions split candidates roughly equally and much good work was accomplished.

- (5) *How does the writer show Nwoye's rejection of Okonkwo's way of life here and at **one** other moment in the novel?*

- (6) *How does the writer show the importance of fighting to Okonkwo, at **two** or **three** moments in the novel?*

Once again here was very little work on "Things Fall Apart" and previous comments on the reasons for this still apply. What Examiners saw suggested that the candidates who had been prepared for this text had been prepared very thoroughly and were able to write relevantly on both tasks. Unusually for this text all those who chose the passage-based

question were able to extend beyond it to “one other moment in the novel”. Most wrote in some detail about the final, disastrous confrontation between father and son. As far as fighting was concerned there was much on the opening references to Okonkwo’s defeat of Amalinze the Cat, his treatment of his wives and the murder of the Court Messenger at the end.

Section B

The stimulus material was well received and formed the basis of some relevant, sensibly developed responses when it formed part of the candidate’s initial overall essay plan. It is much less successfully used as an add-on when inspiration starts to flag. As mentioned above, question 7 posed greater difficulties for the candidates at the lower end of the tier than for others.

(7) *Are ambitions important to you?*

Well, yes, for most of the candidates, who provided an account of their future plans. Some were able to talk about ambition as a more abstract concept but almost always in very glowing terms as something that was highly desirable. Many fewer saw it as Macbeth does. A striking feature of responses to this question was the way in which candidates’ personal circumstances were reflected in what they wrote. This certainly suggests that we should never underestimate the influence schools, colleges and the people who work in them have on those who attend them. Candidates who produced the least successful responses had little to say, mainly because this was a concept with which they were unfamiliar. All but these responses had a clearly shaped and developed structure.

(8) *A close friend or relative has plans for the future, which you feel are unsuitable, unrealistic or just won’t work. Write them a letter persuading them to change their mind about these plans.*

This proved a no less popular and accessible format than previously. Once candidates had got off to a start and had decided what it was they wanted to persuade against, much well developed work ensued. Amongst the many unsuitable and unrealistic projects they counselled against were precipitate moves abroad (America was a particularly reviled destination); plans for teenage marriage and pregnancy; not fulfilling academic and sporting potential; unsuitable relationships; and all sorts of over ambitious career plans, often involving professional football. A number wrote letters to their parents advising against a wide variety of potential foolishness.

Some Examiners felt that there was less mechanical weakness than before but there are certainly still large numbers of candidates who have a very hazy relationship with accurate spelling, punctuation and syntax.

2432/02 Different Cultures, Analysis and Argument

Examiners reported that the performance of candidates on this year's examination was good, and that candidates had been thoroughly prepared and coped very successfully with the demands of the paper. The entry clearly reflects the intentions of most centres to use 2432 for the terminal examinations, but we were pleased to note in the January session that an increasing number of centres are using the flexibility of entry, in terms of tier and time, to their advantage.

The time available to candidates in the examination did not appear to affect their ability to offer responses of sufficient length to reward positively and, in fact, most candidates made excellent use of their time in dealing with all three tasks.

The vast majority of centres had decided to use the *Opening Worlds* anthology to prepare candidates for this examination. Although this involved working on two stories, responses revealed a genuine grasp of how writers make central characters convincingly human and why the titles of stories are particularly appropriate (the latter task having proved very successful in previous sessions, in relation to *The Old Man and the Sea* and *Things Fall Apart*). Centres should note that Task 1 no longer requires candidates to explore both the passage and the rest of the story it is taken from. They must, however, continue to examine a second story from the list specified at the top of the page. Many candidates will feel that further exploration of the text from which the passage is taken is most useful in responding to the task, but the constraints of time make the study of all three elements (passage, rest of text and second story) very demanding. Consequently, there is no penalty for the candidate who selects references exclusively from the passage, or indeed from the rest of the story, before going on to deal with a second tale. Task 1 proved particularly popular, perhaps because the candidates were given the opportunity to explore a very powerful passage with considerable scope for analysis of the language used by the writer, as well as a story of their own choice. Similarly, Task 2 was well tackled with candidates able to select texts that they had personally enjoyed, revealing a genuine engagement with writers who had created poignant titles for their work. Indeed, all six tales were used in responses to this question on the appropriateness of titles with much perceptive analysis of language. Examiners were instructed to be understanding of the candidates' interpretation of what was deemed 'appropriate' in terms of the writer's choice of title. Equally, in Task 1, whilst most candidates chose human characters for study, Examiners were advised that the definition of 'central character' could be extremely broad; some candidates legitimately used a symbolic figure, such as the statues in 'The Red Ball' passage or, frequently, the majestic tree in 'The Winter Oak' to tackle the task with a convincing analysis of the personification the writers used to convince us that such symbols had significant human qualities.

Tasks 3 and 4 were tackled confidently by a smaller number of candidates, the short novel enabling centres to prepare individuals thoroughly for the demands of the questions. Certainly Task 3 proved by far the more popular, although the nature of these very open tasks encouraged the vast majority of candidates to respond with insight and understanding.

Examiners were pleased to see that *Things Fall Apart* had been chosen by a significant number of centres for study. Task 5 was the more popular, as it enabled candidates to focus on the positive qualities of the Ibo people so well defined in the passage and central to the success of the tribe in the rest of the novel. However, those who attempted Task 6 were rewarded with the opportunity to analyse closely the nature of this complex individual, selecting those events that they felt were most revealing of Okonkwo's human failings. The very precise nature of the tasks produced a wide variety of thoughtful responses.

The performance of candidates on Tasks 7 and 8 was very good. The opportunity to write a speech for a class in which they argued their point of view regarding the statement, 'We should give money to charities that help our own communities before we worry about the rest of the world', produced many excellent responses. There was clearly a divide between those who perceived the importance of local needs as paramount and others who took a more global view. However, robust arguments were promoted by both camps who frequently explored how our charitable giving could impact most effectively on those most in need, articulating their thoughts in well constructed responses. Consequently, arguments were frequently passionate and convincing. Equally, the opportunity to muse upon the challenges candidates had faced so far in their lives produced many engaging responses in which candidates drew upon a powerful, personal perspective with many moving on to examine how such challenges might compare to those faced by others across the world. Examiners felt that the stimulus material was particularly helpful this year.

There was very little evidence that candidates had been entered for the wrong tier of the examination for this session. Nevertheless, centres are advised once more that they should not risk entering their candidates if their performance is likely to fall below what is required for an award at this tier.

Comments on Specific Tasks

Section A

Task 1

*How do the writers make a central character convincingly human, here and in **one other story** from the list above?*

and

Task 2

*Why are the titles of any **two** of the stories from the list above particularly appropriate?*

The most successful candidates were able to relate their knowledge of the text to the main thrust of the questions and provide coherent, structured and sometimes incisive analysis, characterised by comments referring back to the ideas of how the writers make central characters convincingly human and their perceptions of why the titles are particularly appropriate, supported by brief, well selected references. Indeed, Examiners felt that the powerful human traits and emotions captured in the passage in Task 1 produced many excellent responses, with the candidate very clear as to the techniques used by the writer to present the plight of Bolan and his search for comfort and acceptance before moving on to their second choice. They certainly grasped the writer's excellent portrayal of the importance of the statues to Bolan at this point, with some candidates featuring them as central to any thoughts on human traits and emotions in their analysis. Task 2 enabled candidates to spend their time very profitably on responses that revealed genuine understanding of why the titles are particularly effective. Considerable thought was given to how the writers reveal the significance of the title in the development of the story and to what each reveals about the experiences and lives of characters. Certainly all six stories provided rich material upon which candidates might draw, with the very open nature of the task frequently encouraging a personal and original response.

In the middle range, some candidates, even when their knowledge of the texts was very sound, found it difficult to shape what they knew to the needs of the question. Often, what were appropriate and quite sharp insights lost their immediacy because their relevance to the question was left implicit rather than being explicitly stated. In dealing with the passage in Task 1,

candidates frequently made reference to the physical features of characters that convinced us that they were human, but did not move on to deal effectively with the emotional and behavioural characteristics so clearly exemplified by the writers.

Centres are advised to impress on their candidates that any comments must be directly related to the question if they are to make the most of their obvious understanding of texts. Similarly, an imbalance in the quality of analysis between the two stories was a feature of responses which showed promise; centres are advised to encourage candidates to spread their time evenly over the two stories.

At the lower end of the range was a minority of candidates who had clearly struggled to see beyond mere narrative, and indeed reproduced much of it in their attempts to formulate a relevant response to either task. Once again, Examiners were concerned that some candidates were struggling under a range of misconceptions, or merely selected a single concrete feature of the title that they considered appropriate to the story, without explaining its symbolic significance or its impact on events. Such responses were often quite repetitive with little to reward. Centres must ensure that the short stories are not seen as an easy alternative to the study of a full novel/novella. Candidates must experience an engaged study of all six stories if they are to be fully prepared for this examination.

A further limitation of scripts in the middle and lower ranges was over-long quotation. Candidates should be advised that Examiners are looking for succinct references and are not in the habit of awarding high marks to scripts which pad out an answer with quotations spanning six or seven lines. It is rare that such responses genuinely focus on the task.

A final cause of concern which arose from answers in the middle and lower ranges was specifically evident in responses to the writers' use of language in making central characters convincingly human in Task 1. There was a marked tendency towards technique spotting, with candidates confidently identifying similes, metaphors etc., but then being unable to explain how they created a specific effect.

Candidates must of course respond to questions using the stories specified for the paper. Examiners were pleased to note that candidates selecting stories for analysis outside the six identified at the top of the Task 1/Task 2 page was extremely rare. Centres are advised that such responses would be penalised.

Task 3

What is Santiago's attitude towards the killing of the creatures of the sea, here and elsewhere in the novel?

and

Task 4

How does Santiago rise to the challenges he faces during the course of the novel?

The most successful responses offered a genuine engagement with the text and a keen eye for short, pertinent references to back up comments which were entirely focused on the question. Answers to Task 4 were detailed and perceptive, particularly in dealing with the qualities we see in Santiago that enable him to rise to the myriad of challenges he faces, be they physical, practical, emotional or psychological. Task 3 proved more popular with candidates, perhaps because of the opportunity to focus on Santiago's tremendous respect for the sea's creatures in the passage and the rest of the novel, as set against his need to survive and to prove himself to those who doubted him. Those who attempted this task frequently responded particularly well to

the passage through tremendous empathy with the old man, then going on into the rest of the novel to reveal a genuine understanding of his relationship with these creatures.

Middle range candidates had a clear understanding of the general themes in *The Old Man and the Sea*, and were able to provide sufficient textual support for their answers, although much was implied rather than being made explicit. Equally, a large number of candidates failed to go very far beyond the passage which was evidently self penalising.

Less successful candidates frequently fell into a narrative which was seldom supported by explicit textual reference. Responses at this level were brief or extremely repetitive, failing to convince the Examiner that there was any genuine understanding of how the passage highlighted Santiago's attitude towards the killing of the creatures of the sea, or indeed how he rises to the challenges he faces.

Task 5

How does Achebe reveal the positive qualities of the Ibo culture, here and elsewhere in the novel?

and

Task 6

What human failings in Okonkwo does Achebe reveal in Part One of the novel?

There were many outstanding responses to these tasks. The best, before moving out into the rest of the novel to examine other positive qualities that maintain the Ibo culture, examined in considerable detail the positive qualities so clearly defined in the passage: the sense of community, their humility and sense of place in the great order of life, their morality, promotion of peace and civilised behaviour towards one another, the honouring of the dead and ability to celebrate good fortune together. Certainly this passage presented candidates with many useful qualities upon which to build a wholly relevant response. Equally, candidates drew upon the whole range of human failings that drove Okonkwo - a man so fearful of following his father's 'womanly' traits that he suppressed his love and allowed free rein to anger and pride that resulted in a sense of loss, disappointment and finally isolation from his people. In both cases, candidates revealed genuine engagement with the whole text through short, pertinent references which were invariably focused on the question.

Middle range responses showed some grasp of what failings Achebe reveals in Okonkwo in Part One of the novel, and, indeed, the positive qualities of the Ibo culture, but often failed to support their comments with pertinent reference and quotation. These very accessible tasks should have encouraged a very close study of the text where Okonkwo's failings and the Ibo strengths are so clearly captured for the reader.

Less successful candidates struggled to find useful references in the extract and text. Their scripts were almost invariably marked by very superficial analysis that lost focus on the tasks. Unsupported narrative was very much in evidence in responses that were frequently very short.

Section B

Task 7

Comment on some of the challenges you have faced so far in your life.

Examiners reported very good performances on this task with candidates constructing engaged, analytical responses. The confident use of connectives to structure thought and expression, referred to in previous reports to centres, benefited candidates considerably in rationalising their considerations.

The responses of the most successful candidates were tremendously wide ranging, analytical and thought provoking, balancing the personal perspective of challenges they had faced to date with powerful comparisons with the challenges faced by other young people in the world today. Many good responses went on to contextualise the challenges the writers have faced in the light of this world view. Certainly the expectations of school, family and peers, and simply of being a modern teenager, featured largely in such responses, one honest soul considering, "The challenge of a morning. Get up. Find the most fashionable outfit possible. Spend four hours doing hair extensions, perfectly. Make-up. Slap as much on as possible. All that preparation to walk to the corner shop just to look 'normal' and be 'accepted'." What it is to be the modern teenager! Responses were frequently presented in virtually flawless English, with a mature range of vocabulary and expression. At this level candidates invariably introduced a range of challenges which they interwove with the stimulus material in a logical structure with a clearly identifiable, effective opening and a strong personal summation.

Responses from the middle and lower ranges, on the other hand, tended to rely heavily on the importance of a few very obvious examples of challenges the writers had faced, or did little more than paraphrase the stimulus material provided, or were inclined to lose themselves in a lengthy account of a situation, with the outcome that they made little pertinent comment on it.

Task 8

'We should give money to charities that help our own communities before we worry about the rest of the world.'

*Write the words of a speech to your class arguing **your** point of view.*

High level candidates displayed a strong, persuasive tone, frequently marked by a confident use of rhetorical questions and a well judged application of exclamation marks to enliven their work. Here, responses were very convincing in their address to an audience, who were drawn into the debate through a careful comparison of the relative merits of giving to local or global charities. Such work was invariably marked by cogent argument, with as many arguing for as against the statement. Indeed three very discrete camps emerged, one populated by those who believed that it was time to concentrate our charitable giving on the local community, those who saw the greater need in the world at large and those who affirmed that it was important to at least attempt to meet the needs of everyone, one particular individual exclaiming passionately, "We, as young British citizens, should aim to uphold, cherish and exemplify the famous national values of tolerance, fairness and equality of opportunity!"

The majority found an appropriate tone of address and a rational development of ideas. Certainly the task encouraged many outstanding responses with much reflection on what might constitute the greatest of human needs. Clearly the topic had engaged candidates, many of whom were determined to encourage others to share their passionate views.

Reports on the Units taken in June 2010

Candidates at middle and lower levels were at ease with the subject matter of the task, but frequently failed to convince Examiners that their arguments had any persuasive merit. The instructions clearly asked for a targeted, personal response which should have opened up many opportunities for persuasion. However, responses at this level frequently concentrated on a restricted number of community or world needs with little reflection on how charities could best use our donations.

Centres are advised to ensure that candidates are aware that the appropriate tone and form are key indicators to Examiners with regard to the award of marks in such tasks.

This task enabled candidates to give a very clear indication of their abilities and Examiners noted that a significant majority of responses revealed genuine engagement with the issues surrounding charitable giving, considering the impact of giving on giver and receiver, cogently brought together with considerable maturity of thought and expression.

2433/01 Literary Heritage and Imaginative Writing

While acute pressure of time continues to make this a particularly challenging paper, the number of well-planned and controlled scripts was encouraging, as was the evidence that many candidates had no difficulty in continuing from the given sentences and enjoyed the writing task. However, enthusiasm or over-ambition did trap some candidates into spending too long on their story, leaving them seriously disadvantaged when trying to complete two Literature questions in under one hour. Although few rubric errors were evident in this session, there were still some candidates who answered two Shakespeare questions; others wrote on three poems instead of two, leaving themselves little time to show any depth of understanding or language appreciation. In every question it is important to take careful note of the key words, and to ensure the answer is focused, at however simple a level, throughout.

Question 1 Writing to EXPLORE, IMAGINE, ENTERTAIN.

Copy out the sentence below, and then continue the story. Show the thoughts and feelings of the narrator.

My phone rang again. Without hesitating, I ...

Those aiming for a top band mark need to demonstrate that they can develop a story, control the structure through the use of paragraphs and a logical ordering of material, and seek to influence the reader by a conscious choice of narrative devices, including a variety of vocabulary and sentence structures. Inevitably, in this tier, ambition results in some loss of control of technical accuracy, but it is more important for candidates to show potential and a wide vocabulary than to produce an accurate but very simple piece of writing. In addition, they should be aiming for quality, not quantity. It is not necessary, even desirable, to complete the whole story. All that is required is sufficient development to fulfil the band criteria – for most candidates this entails no more than two sides of average-sized handwriting and spacing. Significantly, the least successful answers were frequently the longest. The question specifically directed candidates to explore the thoughts and feelings of the narrator. Although clearly these and all relevant narrative skills could only be demonstrated within a framework involving situation, atmosphere, and to some extent plot, many responses leapt rapidly from the opening sentence to an action-packed storyline involving well-worn favourites such as haunted houses, vampires, drug barons, all-seeing stalkers and football matches; these were rarely convincing continuations. Nevertheless, examiners enjoyed the variety of fresh responses seen this year, ranging from important news from hospital, the results of job interviews, demands from kidnappers, and the breaking up of a relationship.

The main reasons for responses slipping into Band 6 and below were threefold: a failure to establish what was happening and/or where the story was going, resulting in rambling sentences, little or no paragraphing, and confusion; launching into headlong action, ignoring the narrator's feelings and the need to ensure that development stemmed from the opening lines; being over-reliant on telephone dialogue, which allowed little scope to show thoughts, or a wider vocabulary, and often caused further confusion by a failure to paragraph and punctuate each change of speaker helpfully. The most serious technical weakness was the failure to recognise sentence endings, let alone punctuate them correctly. Candidates who were uncomfortable using the tense construction given in the opening sentences incurred little penalty, provided that they quickly settled into a tense sequence they could use with consistency. However, in trying to explore thoughts, some candidates kept switching from present to past and from indirect to direct speech in an effort to produce 'stream of consciousness' writing. While some candidates could adopt this style most effectively, for others it led to the choice of basic, rather repetitive vocabulary and sentence structures, and a neglect of the narrative detail that would have created some helpful atmosphere for the reader. Other limitations included too little development

(well under 200 words) to demonstrate the ability to sustain an appropriate mood, no sense of direction so that the ending appeared too abrupt or contradictory to what had gone before or, conversely, going on to such a length that the quality of the writing showed a marked deterioration. Those who produced four to five sides, ignoring the recommendation to work on only a section or mini chapter of a story (two to three sides maximum), succeeded only in weakening the good impression created by their best sections of writing.

TEXTS FROM THE ENGLISH LITERARY HERITAGE

SHAKESPEARE

Candidates aiming for a C grade for this Unit need to ensure that they respond directly to the question, take full advantage of the bullet points, and demonstrate as clear and detailed an understanding of the relevant sections of the play as possible. This means avoiding the temptation to lapse into narrative, or rectifying this by regularly adding a comment that clarifies relevance and restores focus. All points made need supporting evidence from the text; the best are in the form of short snippets of quotation interwoven into the fabric of the answer, rather than several lines of text at a time which leave the examiner to identify the significant elements.

Responses that slipped into Band 6 or below usually showed very little understanding of the play, at best an implied relevance to the question, almost a complete absence of textual support for points made, or a serious lack of development.

2 *Much Ado About Nothing*

2a *Choose **one** or **two** moments in the play Much Ado About Nothing which clearly show Don John's character.*

Write about how his character is shown by:

- *what he does and why*
- *the words he uses.*

The key word here is 'character': candidates who chose Act I Scene 3 had scope to find examples of words Don John uses that reveal his hatred and jealousy of Claudio, his refusal to hide his melancholy and displeasure and his desire to 'build mischief'. For actions, they could choose his attempts to make Claudio suspicious of Don Pedro, or Act II Scene 2 where he accepts Borachio's idea of how to make Claudio think Hero is unfaithful, or the scene where he arouses Claudio's suspicions; all of these include words that emphasise his evil nature, his total lack of compassion for Hero and his enjoyment of pretending to have Claudio's best interests at heart. Most responses showed engagement with the question, and a good grasp of Don John's character; the most successful usually indicated how the results of his plotting (Hero being publicly shamed and collapsing) confirmed how evil he was, in that he at no point showed remorse.

2b *Write about **one** or **two** moments which show how important love is to some of the characters in the play Much Ado About Nothing.*

Write about :

- *the way the characters behave*
- *the words they use.*

The key words here were 'important' and 'some characters', although, as the candidates had to confine their answers to one or two moments, it was unlikely that more than two characters

would be featured. Those who chose Beatrice and Benedick could identify when and how their feelings appeared to change from warfare to love, but found it difficult to highlight the importance beyond Benedick's acceptance of the challenge to 'kill Claudio'. Those who chose Claudio argued that his treatment of Hero demonstrated how important unsullied love was to him, as was agreed by Don Pedro and her father, Leonato. Similarly, it could be argued that Hero's willingness to marry Claudio after his cruel shaming of her showed how important love was to her. Those who chose only one character, or merely narrated the plot, rarely scored above a Band 6 mark.

3 *Romeo and Juliet*

3a *Write about **one** or **two** moments when you feel sorry for Juliet in the play Romeo and Juliet.*

In your answer you should write about:

- *the situation Juliet is in*
- *the words the characters use.*

The choice of moment(s) was often the key to success. The bitter conflict with Capulet over Juliet's refusal to marry Paris gave full scope to sympathise with Juliet's impossible situation - in love with the killer of her cousin, the main focus of her family's hatred, already married in secret, so in danger of committing bigamy, and too in love to compromise. Lord and Lady Capulet's cruel words, and the summary dismissal of the Nurse's attempt to protect Juliet, all aroused increasing sympathy for Juliet. Other significant moments included the news of Tybalt's death and Romeo's banishment, or waking up in the tomb to find Romeo dead, her ordeal with taking the potion all for nothing, and the Friar anxious to leave. Weaker answers quoted lines 161-7, merely as factual evidence that she wished to die, and relied on events alone as the way in which sympathy is created. Those who chose Act 1 Scene 3 were often self-penalising. Whereas the early stages of an arranged marriage may evoke sympathy from modern teenagers in terms of Juliet's situation, at that stage Lord Capulet is more inclined to go ahead only if, or when, she is agreeable, and the only other aspects that might arguably arouse sympathy are her embarrassment caused by the Nurse's sexual innuendoes and the rather distant relationship seen between Juliet and her mother. In terms of levels of suffering, later scenes are far richer in the opportunities they present for discussion and evidence.

3b *Write about **one** or **two** moments which show how important love is to some of the characters in the play Romeo and Juliet.*

In your answer you should write about: -

- *the way the characters behave*
- *the words they use.*

The key words here were 'important' and 'some characters', although, as the candidates had to confine their answers to one or two moments, it was unlikely that more than two characters would be featured. Those who chose only one character, or merely narrated the plot, rarely scored above a Band 6.

It was important to choose moments that allowed scope to develop a full answer on the importance of love. Although taking one's life may be seen as the ultimate sacrifice in the name of love, responses which focused on the lovers' suicides tended to repeat the same one point, as there was little else to explore unless they examined the resulting irony that this demonstration of love healed the feud between the two families. The textual support provided tended to be largely factual, 'Thus with a kiss I die', 'Then I'll be brief....let me die', apart from perhaps identifying 'happy dagger' as Shakespeare's way of showing

Juliet's willingness to die for love. The most successful responses tended to choose one character at a time in a situation where the importance of love was reinforced by both words and actions. For example, Juliet's reaction to the Nurse's 'news', when she thought Romeo was dead, then coming to terms with the fact that he had killed her beloved cousin, and rebuking the Nurse for speaking ill of him, all show how important he was to her; similarly Romeo's desperate attempts to avoid fighting his wife's cousin, and his conflict of loyalty between his wife and his friend, Mercutio, or Romeo's desperation as he threatens suicide while sheltering with Friar Lawrence, all offer far more scope to build a full answer with a convincing line of argument and a wealth of significant dialogue. Some chose the first encounter between the lovers to show the importance of love at first sight, but this was effective only if some of the dialogue was understood and/or the strength of this love was shown in the contrast between Romeo's former infatuation with Rosaline, and in the need to renounce family loyalties and marry secretly once they almost immediately discovered that they were from opposing sides in the feud. The essential differentiation came from whether a largely narrative account was produced, showing little real understanding of the characters' feelings or whether real engagement took place in explaining consistently, even if in a very straightforward way, how the importance of love was shown.

POETRY

With some very honourable exceptions, this was usually the least successful section of the paper. There seem to be three main reasons to account for this: first, lack of time management resulting in missing or very rushed, thin, or unbalanced responses; second, inadequate revision for the examination, resulting in basic misinterpretations of the poems, or a transparently generalised approach showing just general knowledge of the main themes in the section (for example, in Question 7 on *The Send-Off*, writing about the contrast between the realities of war and the picture painted by the propagandists, with no attempt to look closely at this text); third, adopting an approach that turned the question into a formulaic exercise in spotting similes and identify rhyme schemes, without any evidence that their effects had been understood or of how they related to the question. All too often comments were so vague they could apply to almost any poem or question; for example, 'it makes it more emphatic' (of what?), 'it draws the reader's attention' (to what?), 'it makes it more interesting'. In this tier, full credit is given to any attempt to explain the effects of language, even without the use of technical terms. Awareness of the use of language is credited where the candidate consistently chooses short, apt quotations in support of points made. Essentially we are looking for straightforward understanding and relevance to the question. Hence candidates are advised to choose the two poems out of the three that they feel most confident in using in response to the question (which may not necessarily mean the two they know most about). Where a short poem has been selected, for example, *Things*, understanding of all the text will be relevant and expected. Conversely, a long, dense poem such as Keats's *To Autumn* allows the candidate to select and comment on only those details with which they are most confident. The least successful answers still tend to explain or translate the text, using lengthy quotation as padding and showing very little real understanding.

4 SECTION C: WAR

*How do the poets use words and images to show their feelings about soldiers killed in battle, in **two** of the following poems?*

(Page 40)	Dobell	<i>Tommy's Dead</i>
(Page 41)	Kipling	<i>The Hyaenas</i>
(Page 42)	Collins	<i>Ode, Written in the Beginning of the Year 1746</i>

Few candidates chose this question and the response was often disappointing, revealing considerable misunderstanding of the poems, particularly of *The Hyaenas*. The few responses that could identify the feelings of the futility of war evoked by the fate of the dead soldiers and the attitude of the hyaenas gained full credit. Similarly, many candidates were misled by the use of pathetic fallacy in *Tommy's Dead* into thinking that the poem was describing the actual battlefield, and few could make good use of the second stanza of Collins' *Ode*. When choosing such a relatively short poem, candidates must know it well enough to be able to comment on most of it, whereas *Tommy's Dead* (for example) offers some choice. Most commented on the use of repetition, and recognised that the family could no longer run the farm without Tommy, and that the father was anticipating his own death, but few explored the effects of the use of pathetic fallacy and the reminders of the dead soldiers seen in the descriptions of the countryside.

5 SECTION D: TOWN AND COUNTRY

How do the poets use words and images to show their feelings about the natural world, in two of the following poems?

(Page 47)	Keats	<i>To Autumn</i>
(Page 49)	Housman	<i>On Wenlock Edge...</i>
(Page 51)	Yeats	<i>The Lake Isle of Innisfree</i>

Answers needed to identify the feelings about the natural world conveyed in each poem: the pleasures of rich plenty, warm, sleepy days, everything happening according to its season in Keats; the sympathy for the woods in Housman, but the sense that the place has lived on and that troubles, as in life, are survived; the yearning for peace and simplicity in Yeats. Many answers strayed from feelings to a journey through three different seasons, one per stanza, in the Keats, listing the details from nature that could be seen, and possibly recognising examples of personification and alliteration, ('winnowing wind' was a favourite) but not their effects. The most successful selected the most accessible examples from the text to identify the rich harvest implied in 'swell the gourd', 'fill all fruit with ripeness to the core', the slow, almost drugged impression given by 'drowsed with the fume', and 'last ooziings', and the thriving 'full-grown lambs'. Those who tried to include the personification of Autumn, and the 'close bosom-friend of the maturing sun' often exposed limitations in their understanding. Similarly, responses to the Housman frequently showed little understanding, but some credit could be given for recognising the strength of the wind, evidenced in 'heaves, plies the saplings double, old anger, threshed and riot'. The best responses to Yeats's poem developed his love of peace, the emphasis on gentle harmonious sounds of nature in 'bee-loud glade' and 'water lapping' and light and colours, in 'purple glow'. However, the contrast with the 'pavements grey' of the town caused much confusion.

6 SECTION G: HOW IT LOOKS FROM HERE

How do the poets use words and images to show upsetting or unpleasant feelings, in two of the following poems?

(Page 95)	Adcock	<i>Things</i>
(Page 96)	Hill	<i>The Hare</i>
(Page 96)	Paterson	<i>Bedfellows</i>

Very few candidates attempted this question; examiners wondered if some had chosen it as an unseen because the poems were short. Each poem caused much confusion, but the idea of worries becoming really disturbing in the early hours of the morning proved accessible in *Things*,

as did the unpleasantness of sleeping in a dead man's bed in *Bedfellows*; at best, only the idea of nightmare and the hare in the woman's bed were referred to in *The Hare*.

7 **SECTION H: Poetry of the 1914-1918 War (ii)**

How do the poets use words and images to show the effects of war on those left behind, in two of the following poems?

(Page 104) Owen *The Send-Off*

(Page 108) Cole *The Falling Leaves*

(Page 109) Herbertson *The Seed-Merchant's Son*

By far the majority of candidates answered this question, some with real engagement, especially with *The Seed-Merchant's Son*. This, clearly, offered the most material in answer to the question, 'the effects on those left behind', and the best responses developed in full the enormity of the father's loss, so quickly after his only son had gone to war, and at such a young age. Most saw how it had aged and taken life away from the father, but there was some confusion over who was 'careless and tranquil', a few thought the books had been thrust in the cupboard to avoid reminders of his son, and, as expected, the symbolism of the last four lines was not appreciated by candidates at this tier. The extended metaphor in *The Falling Leaves* was largely understood, but few examined the significance of details such as 'thickly, silently', or related the process to the question in that the woman is reminded, like so many left at home, of the enormity and needless nature of this loss of life. She clearly admires the 'gallant multitude' but shows feelings of regret and wastage in 'beauty strewn'. Answers that immediately referred to technical devices, such as the alliterative 'wind whirled them whistling' often lost sight of the question, or became confused as to what was actually happening. Owen's poem caused considerable confusion as to who was going, who was observing and why there would be no joyful return for any survivors. The most successful responses understood that the soldiers and the public were now well aware that 'A few, a few, too few...' would return, and that the soldiers were singing to put on a brave face. A few picked up the idea of secrecy and the change in those who would 'creep back'. As always there were a number of valiant but misplaced attempts to analyse rhyme schemes and structure without any real understanding of their effects, including comparing the layout of 'Falling Leaves' with one of the other two poems.

2433/02 Literary Heritage and Imaginative Writing

General Comments

Once again, examiners were impressed by the quality and depth of the most successful answers produced under such rigorous time constraints, and the freshness of response evidenced at all levels. While it was heartening to see real engagement with some questions, there was a marked imbalance observed in the narrative skills required for the imaginative writing question and the recall and analytical skills required for the Literature tasks. This was particularly pronounced in middle band responses, where many scripts exhibited very competent writing despite limited reading skills, and in higher band responses where, conversely, good reading skills added significantly to sustained but not entirely convincing writing skills.

Although candidates from some centres had clearly mastered the technique, a major concern across both tiers was the allocation of time to each question. It cannot be emphasised too strongly that in this examination, within the limitations of first draft writing, we are looking across all the questions for samples of the quality expected in coursework, but not the length. In whichever order candidates choose to tackle the questions, it is essential that they allow sufficient time to plan and develop each answer and that their aims are realistic given the time allowance clearly indicated at each stage of the paper. This also means that introductions and conclusions to the literary tasks should be brief and strictly functional. Too many candidates were forced to leave out a question, or were too rushed to do justice to their final response.

Section A: Writing to Explore, Imagine, Entertain

- 1 *Copy out the sentence below, and then continue the story. Focus on **the thoughts and feelings of the narrator.***

'My phone rang again. Without hesitating I'

The generic mark scheme for imaginative writing clearly places great emphasis on structure, coherence and paragraphing – hence the wisdom of careful planning before writing. Rambling at will, however fluent in expression, rarely holds the interest of the reader for long. Similarly, going off at a tangent, or losing control of narrative standpoint, weakens focus and the intensity of atmosphere. Similar emphasis needs to be given to establishing the genre, and engaging the reader through choice of vocabulary and other appropriate narrative devices in developing the situation and exploring the thoughts and feelings of the narrator. Although the opening sentence is given as stimulus material, rather than a hurdle, the development should be constructed as a convincing extension, and not give the impression of a previously written story very loosely attached. Many candidates excelled, producing imaginative scenarios ranging from kidnappers' demands, hostage negotiations, stalkers, pranksters, the results of job applications, and dreaded hospital bulletins. Inevitably, many candidates seized on the opportunity to describe a World Cup football match they had been invited to play in; although the most successful of these were skilfully crafted, focused throughout on the thoughts and feelings of the new recruit, the least successful instantly launched into an action-packed account of the match, often little more than a basic football commentary. Another, less common limitation was to launch into long sections of telephone dialogue, using a very basic vocabulary, even text-speak, from which the thoughts and feelings were at best implied; in addition, the effect on the reader was often weakened by a failure to use paragraphing, or even sometimes speech marks, to denote a change in speaker. In contrast, some responses made skilful use of dialogue to denote the character and background of the caller, any deliberate

simplicity of spoken vocabulary high-lighted by the fluent sustained development of the narrator's reactions and the use of descriptive detail for effect.

Happily, many candidates are now familiar with the concept of producing a workshop exercise: a section or chapter rather than a whole convoluted story. While exceptional responses can contain more than three sides of skilfully crafted writing, even within the tight time allowance, they still cannot score more than full marks: normally two sides of average-sized handwriting and spacing are ample to demonstrate the quality of coherence, organisation, and sustained development required to achieve a Band 1. Sadly, less successful responses tend to perform in inverse proportion to the quantity they contain: vocabulary tends to become ever more bland and repetitive, sentence structures more rambling and confused or, conversely, increasingly simple or even in note form, the longer the response goes on. Although Examiners bear in mind that this is first draft writing, a number of marks are needlessly lost for failure to control tense sequences and sentence structures, in particular sentence endings, failure to punctuate or even paragraph dialogue, and for an abundance of spelling errors. Candidates are advised to allow time to check their work for accuracy. Although Examiners no longer expect paragraph openings to be indicated by indentation, candidates would be well-advised to leave a space between each paragraph. Practices such as giving a full stop a tail, or following a comma by a capital letter, only confirm the Examiner's impression of an insecure grasp of basic punctuation. However, in assessing the seriousness of errors, Examiners bear in mind the ambition of the vocabulary and sentence structures attempted; simple writing, however accurate, receives limited reward. Some responses were impressive in their level of ambition in terms of structure, breadth of vocabulary and range of sentence types, all used to good effect.

SECTION B: READING TEXTS FROM THE LITERARY HERITAGE

SHAKESPEARE

In this section, questions 2 and 3, we are looking for an analytical rather than narrative approach, some evidence of a sound understanding of the whole text including plot, themes, structure and characterisation, and sufficient familiarity with the text to be able to produce apt and pithy quotation and/or textual reference in support of points made. As there are barely 30 minutes allocated to this question, and hence at best 25 minutes' writing time, we would expect only three or four points to be made fully in any answer or a wider range at a slightly more superficial level, but all directly focused on the question. We have accordingly tried to set questions that will enable candidates to concentrate on one character, in the context of the whole play, on one theme, or on one or two scenes/moments that offer opportunity within a limited section for close textual analysis together with a recognition of how these contribute to the play as a whole. The most successful responses avoid repetition and develop points by as wide a range of illustration as possible, and by establishing links to thematic issues where relevant, to demonstrate perceptive understanding. Candidates need to avoid choosing quotations that merely confirm narrative events, and to select a few very short snippets that show motivation, characterisation, or hold thematic significance; it is good practice always to provide a short comment that explains how the language conveys this. Despite the standard reminder following each question, "Support your answer by referring to and quoting from the play", some candidates still lose marks for a failure to produce textual evidence or illustration. Most candidates are to be congratulated on knowing their play thoroughly, and largely understanding the issues involved. Some still evidence confusion between the text and film productions they have studied.

2 Much Ado About Nothing

- 2 (a) *How does Shakespeare present the character of Don John in Much Ado About Nothing?*

Although few centres offered *Much Ado* for this examination, the answers to this question were largely well done, most recognising that the question wording 'How' expects more than just a character study of Don John; it invites an exploration of the different ways through which his character is revealed - his thoughts, his statements about himself, his actions, his effect on others, and what others say about him. The most successful responses used the opportunity to show a perceptive understanding of his role in the play, exposing weaknesses in the society of Messina and in the relationship between Claudio and Hero in that his deception was so readily believed and acted upon, with seemingly tragic consequences. Some focused on how stereotypical he is as a villain, relying on Borachio for his inspiration on how to convince Claudio that Hero has been unfaithful to him, having failed in his first attempt to make Claudio suspicious of Don Pedro. Others explored how Shakespeare presents him as the antithesis of Don Pedro and the others. Most produced a wealth of apt quotation, drawing on his self-confessed villainy. The least successful responses produced a narrative account of his actions, with few, if any, supportive quotations and no exploration of why he is embittered or of his effect on the audience.

- 2 (b) *In what ways does Shakespeare show you how important love is to some of the characters in Much Ado About Nothing? You may choose to focus your answer on **one** or **two** moments in the play.*

With the invitation to limit the focus to one or two moments, 'some of the characters' clearly could mean just two, and most responses chose an obvious pairing: Beatrice and Benedick, Claudio and Hero, Claudio and Benedick, or Beatrice and Hero. Even when concentrating on one moment in detail, candidates should still be showing their understanding of the whole play through commenting on the significance of what is said and done. For example, Benedick's reaction to overhearing that Beatrice loves him needs reference back to his former 'merry war' and cynical protestations of bachelorhood, in order to convince us, through contrast, of the strength of his new feeling, and his fear of being rejected. A sentence contrasting the foundations for Claudio's love of Hero would not only show a wider knowledge of the play but also be relevant to 'one of the ways' Shakespeare shows the importance to Benedick of a love based on firm foundations. There is also scope to demonstrate a perceptive understanding of relevant underlying themes: it is ironic that it takes a deception to make Benedick see the reality of his love for Beatrice, hitherto disguised by their 'merry war'; love based on a similarity of mind may be stronger than love based on appearance and family connections, pursued under the conventional restrictions on courtship. Those candidates who chose a range of characters clearly demonstrated whole play understanding, but they had to be careful to avoid a superficial generalisation, by rooting every point made in the text and maintaining a focus on *how* the importance is shown, whether love of family, love of a close friend, or love of honour.

3 Romeo and Juliet

- 3 (a) *In what ways does Shakespeare make you feel sympathy for Juliet in Romeo and Juliet?*

*You may choose to focus your answer on **one** or **two** moments in the play.*

There were some very impressive answers that established thematic reasons for sympathy from the beginning i.e. that the 'star-crossed lovers' were doomed to be the sacrificial lambs to effect a reconciliation between the warring families, so that the audience responds to every hint or textual nuance reminding them of Juliet's tragic end. There was considerable engagement with how her moments of happiness are so brief; light contrasted with darkness; plans all doomed by circumstances beyond her control, including the timing of her waking in the tomb. Those who confined their answers to one or two moments were successful if they chose wisely. The bitter conflict with Capulet over Juliet's refusal to marry Paris gave scope to analyse a number of 'ways': Shakespeare's use of language to express Capulet's anger; the dramatic irony of the parents' ignorance of the marriage that had taken place; the dilemma faced by Juliet, and the ambiguity in her declarations regarding Romeo to her mother (e.g. 'I never shall be satisfied With Romeo, till I behold him-dead'); the failure of the Nurse to pacify Capulet, followed by her advice to Juliet to forget Romeo, leaving Juliet feeling isolated and betrayed. Act IV Scene 3, where Juliet contemplates taking the potion, again gives scope for analysing the use of language to evoke sympathy, the thematic links, and to show engagement with her situation. More popular was the moment leading to her suicide, the more successful responses exploring the timing significance in Romeo's lips being still 'warm', the horror of waking to find Romeo dead, Friar Lawrence arriving too late and then leaving her, and the irony that their deaths bring the peace that should have enabled the lovers to live together. Less successful answers quoted lines 161-7, merely as factual evidence that she wished to die, and relied on events alone as the way sympathy is created. Those who chose Act 1 Scene 3 were largely self-penalising. Whereas the early stages of an arranged marriage may evoke sympathy from modern teenagers in terms of Juliet's situation, it is hard to find evidence of many 'ways' used by Shakespeare to arouse sympathy here, unless it be the slight embarrassment caused by the Nurse's sexual innuendoes and the rather distant relationship seen between Juliet and her mother. In terms of levels of suffering, later scenes are far richer in the opportunities they present for analysis, and links with themes.

- 3 (b) *In what ways does Shakespeare show you how important love is to some of the characters in Romeo and Juliet?*

*You may choose to focus your answer on **one** or **two** moments in the play.*

Some responses chose a range of characters and a range of kinds of love from family, honour, and paternal to romantic, courtly and friendship. The most sophisticated explored the thematic link of Love versus Hate in establishing the importance to each character and how dramatic devices revealed this. Equally impressive were those who, focusing on one or two moments, and therefore two, possibly three characters, chose wisely to ensure there was scope to show perceptive understanding of 'importance' and 'ways'. For example, those who focused on Romeo's killing of Tybalt could still establish the thematic link with Love versus Hate and include three different characters and types of love: they could discuss how Tybalt's love of family/fighting led to provoking a fight with Romeo, perceived as in revenge for the insult to the Capulet family in Romeo's gatecrashing the ball; Romeo's love of Juliet made him risk ridicule in an attempt to avoid conflict

('O sweet Juliet, Thy beauty hath made me effeminate'); Mercutio's outrage at the insults to his friend/love of fighting led to challenging Tybalt and dying; Romeo's love of his friend and honour outweigh his judgement as he pursues and kills Tybalt in revenge ('O I am fortune's fool!'). The use of dramatic irony, the poignant voicing of Romeo's thoughts, the implications of Mercutio's dying words, 'A plague a both your houses!' are just some of the 'ways' that could be identified. In contrast, many of the least successful responses focused on the lovers' suicides, made one strong point that love was so important to them that they sacrificed their lives to be together, which was supported with largely factual quotations 'Thus with a kiss I die', 'Then I'll be brief....let me die', and then, apart from perhaps identifying 'happy dagger' as Shakespeare's way of showing Juliet's willingness to die for love, they could find nothing else to explore. Successful Band 3/4 responses tended to choose one character at a time and produce evidence from different sections of the play, for example Juliet's willingness to give up family/name to marry Romeo, her defence of Romeo to the Nurse once she had adjusted to the news that he had killed her cousin, her defiance of Capulet, and her suicide; Romeo's risking of his life to return to Juliet after the ball, his offer of 'love' to Tybalt, his desperation at his sentence of banishment, and his planned suicide. The essential differentiation came from whether a largely narrative account was produced or whether real engagement took place in explaining consistently, even if in a very straightforward way, how the importance of love was shown. Others chose their moments wisely, or, where relevant material proved limited, established links between what had happened earlier, or The Prologue, or what would happen later, to show importance.

POETRY pre-1914 or post-1914: OPENING LINES (OCR)

This was the section that provided the greatest variation in standards, as here it was essential to be able to understand how some of the language works, if not the form and structure of the poems, to be able to answer the question at the highest levels. The wording of all the questions invites an analysis of how elements are portrayed or presented: it is not asking for a narrative account of what is actually happening in the chosen poems or a translation of what the poet is saying. The best responses have to be sharply focused and concisely worded; there is no time to give a biography of the poet or a synopsis of the society of his/her time.

Clearly, in each question, the poems vary in the richness of opportunity offered to explore the use of language and form, but within the time allowance responses can aim to make only four to six fully developed points across the two poems of their choice. Candidates needed, first and foremost, to show they fully understood the tone and authorial purpose of each poem, as related to the question, and how this was conveyed, always looking closely at the text to identify clear examples of precise use of language and other techniques employed by the poet. There is neither the need nor the time to refer to every possible example, and candidates are well-advised to choose the ones they are most interested in, or familiar with. Examiners were pleased that only a few candidates adopted a formulaic approach, naming techniques employed (or even not employed) without providing examples and explaining their effect, and sometimes without even identifying the main purpose of the poem. However, there were still a number of candidates who gave just a very generalised response without ever selecting examples from the text. This was particularly apparent in Qu.7 where many talked in general terms about the horrors of war, and about propaganda.

Although many candidates may find it easier to sustain an analytical approach by structuring their answer as a comparison, there is no requirement in this unit to compare the two poems, and some may well prefer to tackle each entirely separately, even though thematically the poems will share some similarities or contrasts. Nor do we expect each poem to be given equal treatment: often candidates will best be able to demonstrate their true potential by devoting more time to the poem that inspires them the more, but they must give the second sufficient attention

to show some understanding of the themes and techniques used as relevant to the question. Conversely, there is no advantage in referring to all three poems, as this tends to dilute the effectiveness of the analysis: we include three solely to provide some element of choice.

4 SECTION C: WAR

Explore some of the ways in which the poets respond to the death of soldiers in battle, in **two** of the following poems:

(Page 40) Dobell *Tommy's Dead*

(Page 41) Kipling *The Hyaenas*

(Page 42) Collins *Ode, Written in the Beginning of the Year 1746.*

The response to this question was often disappointing as many candidates revealed considerable misunderstanding of the poems, particularly of *The Hyaenas*. The few responses that could identify the futility of war, not only through the fate of the dead soldiers and the attitude of the hyaenas but also through the significant comment in Kipling's last two lines on those who start the wars, gained full credit. Similarly, many candidates were misled by the use of pathetic fallacy in *Tommy's Dead* into thinking that the poem was describing the actual battlefield, and few could make good use of the second stanza of Collins' *Ode*. When choosing such a relatively short poem, candidates must know it well enough to be able to comment on most of it, whereas they could choose what they related to best from *Tommy's Dead*. Most commented on the use of repetition, and recognised that the family could no longer run the farm without Tommy, and that the father was anticipating his own death, but few explored the effects of the use of pathetic fallacy and the reminders of the dead soldiers seen in the descriptions of the countryside.

5 SECTION D: TOWN AND COUNTRY

Explore some of the ways in which the poets respond to the natural world, in **two** of the following poems:

(Page 47) Keats *To Autumn*

(Page 49) Housman *On Wenlock Edge...*

(Page 51) Yeats *The Lake Isle of Innisfree*

Few candidates produced top band responses in this section. Yeats's proved the most accessible poem and most candidates were able to identify the sense of peace in a simple, natural environment. However, few analysed the language in any detail to show understanding of how Yeats emphasises gentle sounds (including 'bee-loud glade' and 'water lapping'), self-sufficiency, and the contrast between the light and colour of Innisfree ('all a glimmer' and 'purple glow') and the 'pavements grey' where he stands yearning for his ideal. Few who tackled the Keats poem identified the general impression of a pleasant, warm autumn, a season of plenty, before selecting a few random examples from nature that interested them, the most common being the 'full-grown lambs' and the 'winnowing wind'. The most successful were able to identify if not to explore the effects of the personification of Autumn, and the use of rhetorical questions. Again, having established the underlying response to the natural world, there was an abundance of examples of rich use of language, from which candidates needed to analyse only three or four to convince the Examiner of their powers of analysis, but few availed themselves of these. Less successful responses tried valiantly to 'translate' line after line, at best demonstrating application and a lower level of engagement. Housman was rarely understood, certainly not his musings on life, inspired by observing the actions of the gale. Nevertheless, some credit could be given for evidence of the appreciation of use of language, for example

'Forest fleece', although the analogy of snow to thickness of leaves misled many into thinking it was mid winter.

6 SECTION G: HOW IT LOOKS FROM HERE

Explore some of the ways in which the poets present disturbing experiences in **two** of the following poems:

(Page 95)	Adcock	Things
(Page 96)	Hill	The Hare
(Page 96)	Paterson	Bedfellows.

Some candidates are to be congratulated on how well they understood these poems, but very few had studied this section and responses were often disappointing. Again, those who chose the very short poem *Things* needed to be able to recognise how disturbing the ending was and to find at least three ways this is conveyed. There is some choice of 'ways': repetition of 'worse'; the deliberate vagueness of 'things' and 'suspected'; the significance of 'stalking' and 'icily'. Most responses understood why Hill's poem was disturbing, and how frightened the woman was, but few could comment on any detail, or the use of similes and contrasts to enhance the fairytale quality of the nightmare. Most understood that the previous occupant of the bed in *Bedfellows* was now dead, but some thought it was a former lover. Most thought the signs of a 'greasy head' and the 'heart tick in my wrist' disturbing, but few looked at the sinister nature of some of the vocabulary – 'blindspot', 'incumbent', 'dead halo', 'suffocated', 'dreary innuendo' - and of the thoughts hinted at in the last two lines.

7 SECTION H: POETRY OF THE 1914-1918 WAR (ii)

Explore some of the ways in which the poets present the effects of war on those left behind, in **two** of the following poems:

(Page 104)	Owen	The Send-Off
(Page 108)	Cole	The Falling Leaves
(Page 109)	Herbertson	The Seed-Merchant's Son.

This section proved the most popular choice and produced some strongly engaged responses. The key words were 'on those left behind', and, sadly, too many responses launched into an analysis of two poems without any reference to the question. However, any analysis of the Herbertson had to be relevant. Many empathised with the seed-merchant, and successfully identified several ways in which Herbertson conveyed his sorrow after the death of the merchant's son: the emphasis on his youth and innocence; the idealised memories of his childhood; the ageing effect on the father and the fact that he has no other children. The best explored his loneliness, 'What could one say to him in his need?' and emptiness 'As if naught human were standing there', and the ambiguity of the last two lines. A few thought he, and not the birds, was 'careless and tranquil'. Although Cole's poem is less directly focused on those left behind, the extended metaphor of brown leaves and the analogy of snow falling 'thickly, silently' suggest constant feelings of loss, and the needless wastage of young life in such vast and ominous quantities. Although a relatively short poem, it offers considerable scope for language analysis: the contrasts between 'gallant' and 'withering', 'beauty' and 'strewed', 'snowflakes' and 'Flemish clay'; the effect of the alliterative 'When no wind whirled them whistling to the sky'. Owen's poem caused some confusion as to who was going, who was observing and why there would be no joyful return for any survivors. The most successful responses explored the idea of the poet voicing the disquiet of the public now suspicious of propaganda, well-aware of the

price to be paid: 'A few, a few, too few...' There was scope to discuss the irony in the title; the darkness and sense of secrecy, suggesting guilt at sending the 'grimly gay' men to their fate; the anonymity, 'they were not ours'; or 'creep back' implying shame at what they have become. Those who had ignored the question focused almost exclusively on the soldiers, their awareness of their fate, and how different they would be on their return. As always there were a number of valiant but misplaced attempts to analyse rhyme schemes and structure without any real understanding of their effects, including comparing the layout of 'Falling Leaves' with one of the other two poems.

UCCLES

2434 Literary Heritage and Imaginative Writing

General Comments

Again it was generally pleasing to see the diligent and conscientious approach of centres in applying the assessment criteria. Teachers seemed confident in the application of assessment criteria, and the detailed annotated comments on course work showed the hard work of the majority of teachers in delivering the course work component.

In terms of general administration, centres had tried hard to meet deadlines, although, again, some struggled to get folders promptly to Moderators for the deadline.

In the majority of cases the course work assessment forms were filled in accurately, and detailed teacher comments were helpful to Moderators in establishing what mark had been awarded. Most centres did show the breakdown of marks for the writing piece, and this made the moderation process much easier.

This year, Moderators reported that there seemed to be many minor errors in centres' general administration. These ranged from marks being transferred incorrectly from the folder to the final mark sheet; incorrect totalling of marks for AO3 (i) AO3 (ii) & AO3 (iii); illegible MS1s, and, more commonly this year, work missing from the sample folders that had not been recognised by the teacher.

Centres are clearly under considerable strain with the development of new schemes of work for the new specifications in English, and this may well have resulted in their having less time for the general administration of existing course work. However, some points that centres might like to address in the future are as follow:

- **MS1s.** Many centres are still sending to Moderators carbon copies of marks that are illegible. These have to be returned to schools for marks to be indicated clearly, before the moderation process can begin. It would be helpful if centres checked the legibility of mark sheets before despatching them to Moderators.
- **Application of assessment criteria.** Most teachers are now very skilled at applying the assessment criteria accurately, but where centres' marks are "out" there is often evidence that teachers have made little effort to annotate students' work and there is little or no evidence of marking in bands, with just an overall grade or mark given at the end of the work that bears no relationship to the assessment criteria. Some Moderators reported that they sometimes had to make an intelligent guess as to how the final mark had been awarded.

AO 3.2 READING

AO 3.2 (iv) and (v) again proved to be the biggest differentiators. 3.2 (iv) *selecting material and making cross references*, was something only the most successful candidates could do.

Response to Shakespeare

The majority of centres again chose *Romeo and Juliet* or *Macbeth*, but there were also some interesting responses to *The Merchant of Venice*, *Twelfth Night* and some excellent responses to *Othello*.

Reports on the Units taken in June 2010

Candidates seemed generally confident in understanding plot, themes and character, and the more successful candidates were able to comment on language and its effect.

Centres demonstrated a varied approach to the interpretation of “Shakespeare’s stagecraft”. Some centres still interpret this incorrectly as presenting detailed notes on costume and make up in a certain scene. Centres are reminded that “theatricality” is an awareness of the whole play, and candidates who submit detailed responses to specific scenes are often disadvantaged when judged against the assessment criteria for higher Bands, if they have not shown an awareness of the significance of this particular scene in the context of the play as a whole.

Evaluating film versions or producing actor’s notes were very successful approaches when students rooted their responses in an understanding of text and dramatic effect, but more, commonly, such answers focused mainly on lighting and costumes and showed only the most generalised knowledge of the text.

Generally, an increased number of candidates demonstrated an understanding of language and form and the range of more challenging tasks which had been set by Centres helped to encourage candidates to move away from more narrative responses.

There was less evidence this year of empathic responses, and most centres had encouraged candidates to attempt a detailed critical response to character, plot and language.

It was encouraging to see many examples of challenging and exciting tasks, and teachers are to be congratulated for the wide range of stimuli that they have clearly developed to make the course work unit on Shakespeare as interesting and demanding as they have.

Response to poetry

Again, as in previous examination series, 3.2 (v) was the greatest differentiator. Many candidates continue to show their expertise in identifying structural and presentational devices but not all can then go on to show the effects of these devices upon the reader.

Most centres are now comparing only two poems. The most popular poems were again “The Charge of the Light Brigade” and “Dulce et Decorum est”, love poetry or Blake’s “London” and Wordsworth’s “Westminster Bridge”.

Generally centres are to be congratulated for the stimulating and challenging tasks that have enabled candidates to achieve to their full potential. Some of the best responses were from candidates who had clearly been able to comment critically on both structure and effect and showed appreciation of the function of form and language in a way that was personal and enriching for the reader.

A03.3. WRITING

Again it was encouraging to see a diversity of responses with some candidates clearly taking the opportunity to display their creative talents.

Moderators reported a generally higher standard overall, with an interesting range of narrative allowing candidates to write creatively and engagingly. This time there were fewer autobiographical pieces and also fewer empathic responses to texts. This led to more candidates attempting tasks where they could demonstrate a response which could meet the whole range of assessment criteria. For this examination series at least, “The Assassin” also seems (fortunately) to have died a death!

Reports on the Units taken in June 2010

Overall, centres are to be congratulated for their generally consistent application of the assessment criteria in relation to a range of interesting and demanding tasks. It would seem that more and more centres have embedded effective means of teaching course work into their long term planning at Key Stage 4, and there is extensive evidence of effective implementation of assessment criteria and internal standardisation. Teachers are to be complimented for their hard work in providing practical and supportive feedback in their detailed annotation of students' work and for their dedication in making the course work component an interesting and challenging element of the GCSE course.

UCLES

2435 Speaking and Listening

General comment

This unit continues to be successful, with Team Leaders/Moderators reporting no real difficulties or problems for this series. Centres are maintaining or adopting good practice: producing clear reports and judgements firmly rooted in the assessment criteria, setting appropriate tasks, ensuring secure internal moderation procedures are in place and on-going records are kept. Repeatedly candidates have achieved their potential. Visits to Centres have been profitable, with Centres responding to the requirement in a positive and professional manner, working happily with the criteria and acting upon the advice given.

Task setting

Centres have continued to set tasks suitable for their candidates, but it is worth emphasising that for the higher bands, candidates must be set challenging tasks and be moved out of the familiar towards more stimulating and original materials, situations and audiences. The converse is also true, with less capable candidates sometimes being set tasks which could be self-penalising. Candidates with little empathy for Literature may well achieve greater success with non-literature based tasks.

This is often the case with the drama-focussed context. There is no requirement for the stimulus material to be 'drama' based or even literature based; indeed, more scope may be granted if candidates are freed from such constraints and are given the opportunity to create independent roles. Some Centres still have real problems with the drama-focussed context, with Moderators reporting candidates reading scripts or simply discussing a play. Neither activity is valid. Attention is, as always, drawn to the Inter-Board Training and Guidance videos/DVDs for help with task setting. Good tasks are always rooted firmly in the assessment criteria and enable candidates to meet these.

As we are well into the life of this specification, it is easy to become complacent and not revisit or question the practice of previous years. This seems to have become a feature of task setting. The specification allows for the selection of the final activities for assessment from a number of tasks, given the fulfilment of the basic requirements. However, some Centres seem to be treating this unit in a similar way to the coursework for Reading and Writing. Good practice is rather to build up a profile of a candidate over the whole course and then select the final three for assessment on a more individual basis. In adopting a "one choice fits all" approach, Centres may be disadvantaging their candidates.

The advice to Centres is to teach the skills needed for this component and to give candidates multiple opportunities to develop and hone their skills. Many Centres recognise that Speaking and Listening is an integral part of Key Stage 3 work, feeding into Key Stage 4.

Record keeping

The majority of Centres maintain careful, thorough and clearly presented records; many now are word processed. A standard format for record keeping places the process within a systematic framework and ensures that all the required information is supplied to the Moderator. The majority of Centres used the OCR form designed to cover all the necessary elements. It is a Centre's responsibility to ensure that Moderators are supplied with a comprehensive set of records, with all sections complete. Unfortunately, some Centres/teachers within Centres did not fulfil this requirement, and much time was wasted by Moderators in checking less than exact

information - for example the precise nature of an activity not having been specified, or a task being identified as "Talk" or "Group Discussion" without any elaboration on the subject matter. Among other shortcomings noted, were the failure to award marks and comments for the separate activities. These are needed to support final marks and summative comments.

Many Centres now maintain an on-going, centrally held data base of marks for candidates, with written comments. These procedures help to prevent problems arising from staff absences, changes of staff and the like.

Application of the criteria

Centres continue to display confidence and competence in assessing their candidates. Here, good practice in awarding the final mark balances strengths and weaknesses - not just recording strengths with an explanation given as to why candidates failed to achieve the next band. This aspect of the application of the criteria is particularly important to distinguish performance especially where there is bunching of marks.

Internal standardisation procedures

Procedures continue to be secure and in many instances rigorous and thorough: using cross moderation of groups, joint marking, reorganising of groups for assessment and department Inset using filmed evidence. Attention, therefore, is drawn to the Inter-Board Training and Guidance DVD/videos, which should be used by Centres to confirm their own internally-set standards. This material provides vital support for small Centres and for teachers working in isolation. Centres should now have a bank of support and guidance material to draw on. Many Centres, this series, reported on procedures to train and integrate new members of staff.

Administration

As regards the administration of this unit, the majority of Centres were problem free; certainly Moderators reported fewer niggling problems for this series. However, there was still a sizeable minority where all the relevant paperwork was not in place by the published deadline; these deadlines have now been unaltered for a number of years. As Centres move to systems where Examination Officers rather than subject specialists are increasingly the point of reference and dispatchers of coursework material to Moderators, it is vital for the smooth running of the process, that instructions regarding procedures are read, understood and carried out by all relevant parties. Some Centres seem to expect that Moderators will select the sample; however, for this unit the sample is *Centre* selected. Attention therefore is strongly drawn to the "Instructions to Centres" document. Nevertheless, fewer errors in the transcription of marks were made than in previous series. So, grateful acknowledgement is made to those Centres where co-operation in assembling and checking the documentation enabled Moderators to meet their deadlines.

Advisory and moderation visits to Centres

Moderators witnessed much good work being done at all levels. The visits, as always, provided an opportunity for much fruitful discussion with teachers regarding task setting, the application of criteria and the management of this unit. It was, as always, pleasing to see how students rose to the occasion; in some instances pleasingly surprising their teachers with their confidence and maturity.

Reports on the Units taken in June 2010

The majority of visits made were advisory in nature, with few moderation visits being necessary. Where Centres received moderation visits, these were invariably because of weak application of the criteria. Again attention is drawn to the material designed to set the standards and the objective nature of assessment.

Conclusion

Finally, this unit continues to be a success and is often a real strength for candidates; an opportunity to succeed. All this is a testimony to the hard work and dedication of the teachers involved in preparing their students. Many thanks for the continuing commitment, in preparing and assessing candidates for this unit.

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