

English Language & Literature

Advanced GCE A2 H473

Advanced Subsidiary GCE AS H073

OCR Report to Centres

June 2013

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This report on the examination provides information on the performance of candidates which it is hoped will be useful to teachers in their preparation of candidates for future examinations. It is intended to be constructive and informative and to promote better understanding of the specification content, of the operation of the scheme of assessment and of the application of assessment criteria.

Reports should be read in conjunction with the published question papers and mark schemes for the examination.

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F671 Speaking Voices [Closed Text]

General Comments

This was the fifth June session of F671, and the third outing for the second wave of texts. In Section A, candidates were selecting from *Oranges are Not the Only Fruit*, *The Remains of the Day* and *Paddy Clarke Ha Ha Ha*. In Section B the choice was *A Handful of Dust* or *The Child in Time* or *Persuasion*. Candidates' selection of texts was more evenly balanced in this session than for any previous paper: all texts attracted a substantial number of answers.

The comments below give some idea of successful and less successful approaches. As always, reference may be made to the published mark-scheme for further indications of potentially fruitful areas for discussion.

Question-specific comments

Section A

Question 1: *Oranges are Not the Only Fruit*

An interview with a young man about his experience of “coming out” was paired with an exchange between Jeanette and Miss Jewsbury, just after the narrator had been denounced in church for her “unnatural passions”.

Successful answers revealed:

- careful reading of how speech style is used to construct and reveal emotion and character
- accurate specific reference to features of language and interaction
- apt references to relevant moments elsewhere in the novel, mainly concerning the avoidance of the subject of “coming out”
- sensitive reading of the interaction between Marie and Edward as generally co-operative, with an appreciation of how features of spoken language such as non-fluency construct tone and meaning – hesitation, a concern not to offend, careful choice of words.

Less successful answers tended to

- cataloguing of features of spoken language, and an attempt to ‘prove’ that Passage A was spontaneous or semi-spontaneous
- over-emphasis of supposed power struggle between Marie and Edward and Jeanette and Miss Jewsbury
- ‘drift’ into general discussion of Mother’s influence and Winterson’s/Jeanette’s homosexuality
- repeated assertion that interaction or lexis was informal (or formal) without any textual support or exploration, with a corresponding tendency to contradictory comments
- imprecise use of terminology: syntax/lexis/register used interchangeably, with no clear reference to any relevant examples.

Question 2: *The Remains of the Day*

The common theme of the two passages was an overtly linguistic one: the use of address terms, and their effect in including/excluding and conferring/denying status.

Candidates wrote well about interaction between Stevens and Miss Kenton in Passage B and in the rest of the novel, but rather less insightfully about how the retired magistrate Barbara Holborow in Passage A described her style of conducting court-room proceedings.

Successful answers revealed:

- good knowledge of the social/historical context, and relevant reference to other episodes in the novel, such as when Miss Kenton catches Stevens reading a romantic novel
- careful reading and understanding of the dynamics of interaction between Stevens and Miss Kenton, analysing for example how conversational features in Miss Kenton's utterance such as tag questions (*The walls are even a little damp, are they not, Mr Stevens?*) invite agreement but are rebuffed
- an appreciation that she was in a sense invading his privacy, though with the best of intentions
- analysis of specific lexical items and sets – for example, the contrast between the *dark and cold* of Steven's room (*stark and bereft of colour*) and Miss Kenton's intention to *brighten* and *enliven* his surroundings
- well-developed discussion of how features of Barbara Holborow's speech style (e.g. her emphatic repetition of *hardly ever*) construct certainty and confidence
- detailed attention to variations in Robin Hughes's interrogatives, as he moves from offering 'closed' alternatives in the first few lines to asking an entirely 'open' question: *how did they take that*.

Less successful answers tended to

- ignore the details of Passage A in favour of making assertions about a supposed power struggle between the interlocutors
- interpret the (mostly co-operative) overlaps as hostile interruptions
- over-emphasise the significance of pronoun use – especially first-person pronoun use – in both passages,
- treat Passage A as if it were a fictional construct, or seek to 'prove' it was spontaneous speech
- make broad assertions about Mr Stevens and Miss Kenton and their relationship, but fail to tie these comments closely to details from passage B or to incidents elsewhere in the novel.

Question 3: Paddy Clarke Ha Ha Ha

Candidates this time were less often than in previous sessions diverted from the question by trying to pursue an agenda concerned with Paddy's supposed maturing over the course of the novel. They still seemed to experience difficulty in making accurate comments about Doyle's construction of Paddy's speaking and narrative voices, but found useful things to say about Da's taboo lexis and aggressive speech style.

Successful answers revealed:

- thoughtful understanding of the possible contexts of Passage A: it was more helpful to see Elizabeth and Betty as reminiscing humorously about their childhood dreams and ambitions than to argue that one was mocking and insulting the other
- careful reading of detail, such as Elizabeth's echoing of Betty's adjectival choices *vivacious and charming*
- flexible understanding of Paddy's exchanges with his Ma, and realisation that when he made his declaration *I have a vocation she was still cooking the dinner and stopping Catherine from climbing into the press under the sink with the polish and brushes in it*
- analysis of the exchanges between Da and Ma in usefully linguistic terms – making use, for example, of 'Face' theory
- detailed and accurate attention to specific elements of language use, such as the alternation of simple and complex sentences with which Doyle ends the episode in Passage B.

Less successful answers tended to

- generalised assertions of partly-understood ideas about the *bildungsroman* genre
- insistence on over-simplified readings of Passage B, arguing for example that Paddy's Ma doesn't care about what Paddy is saying, and that her questions (*What's that, Patrick? ... Has someone been talking to you?*) are 'random' and show that she's not listening
- exaggerated claims about Elizabeth and Betty interrupting each other all the time and using raised volume in an aggressive way
- assumptions about religious beliefs/attitudes/values in both passages which were at odds with the evidence
- limited understanding of what a vocation might entail either for Paddy or for the speakers in Passage A
- identify features of spoken language but not analyse construction of meaning, e.g. they noticed the micro-pauses in Elizabeth's opening (agenda-setting) utterance but dismissed them as non-fluency features rather than seeing them as deliberate (fluent) pauses allowing her to construct a complex question with the parenthetical clause *as a girl*
- make vague comments about Paddy's spoken and narrative voices, asserting that simple child-like lexis and/or syntax pre-dominated, but not finding examples or analysing them.

Section B

Question 4: *A Handful of Dust*

The task in this question was to *examine ways in which Waugh presents self-centred behaviour*. The cue-quotation offered the infamous description of Brenda receiving the news of John Andrew's death and thinking at first that it is John Beaver who has died. .

Passages A and B were short contemporary extracts on the theme of consideration for others.

Successful answers revealed:

- clear engagement with the question-focus of self-centred behaviour, and ready reference to instances in the novel of such behaviour
- careful reading of the cue-quotation, paying attention to how Waugh constructs meaning in direct speech by using a variety of utterance types, especially Brenda's use of interrogatives
- understanding of Waugh's satirical style, and how he allows characters to condemn themselves in the dialogue
- some relevant comparisons with Passages A and B: Brenda's relationship with Beaver and life in London as *being obsessed by an ideal and follow(ing) it ruthlessly without deeply considering its integral significance*; Brenda's neglect of Tony, and the brutal letter telling him she wanted a divorce, as examples of how self-centred people *ride roughshod over the feelings of others, getting our own way*
- thoughtful use of the between-the-wars Bright-Young-People context

Less successful answers tended to

- lengthy assertion of connections between Waugh's personal life and divorce and his presentation of Brenda
- inaccurate potted history of the 1930s – the First World War, the Lost Generation, the General Strike, the Suffragette Movement
- over-simplified reading of the cue-quotation, missing or mis-reading nuances of Waugh's style, such as his description of how Brenda *sat down ... perfectly still with her hands folded in her lap, like a small well-brought-up child introduced into a room full of grownups*
- total condemnation of Brenda as inadequate mother and ruthless adulteress, or of Tony as totally selfish in his wish to preserve Hetton

- isolation of individual details from the passages and contrived links to the novel, for example trying to connect the reference to *criticizing a child* to Tony's gentle rebuking of John Andrew for rudeness to Nanny
- imprecise reference to incidents in the novel and/or lengthy narrative re-telling only loosely connected to self-centred behaviour.

Question 5: *The Child in Time*

This question invited examination of ways in which McEwan presents intimate relationships.

The cue-quotation offered the description of Stephen looking at a sleeping Julie before waking her to tell her the awful news of Kate's disappearance: *She was a calm, watchful woman, she had a lovely smile, she loved him fiercely and liked to tell him. He had built his life round their intimacy and come to depend on it. ...*

Passage A was an extract from a 1986 article in a psychology journal, putting forward a triangular theory of love, which deals both with the nature of love and with loves in different kinds of relationships.

Successful answers revealed:

- clear engagement with the question-focus, and accurate reference to a range of intimate relationships in the novel – Stephen and Julie, Stephen and Kate, Stephen's parents' relationships with him (unborn, child and adult) and with each other, Charles and Thelma, Charles and the Prime Minister
- relevant examples from the novel of McEwan's narrative methods, appreciating that the novel is subtle and metaphorical/symbolic, while Passage A is explicit
- analysis of genuinely significant details from the cue-quotation, such as the use of the adverb *fiercely* to post-modify how Julie loves Stephen
- detailed attention to the lexis, register and syntax of Passage A, exploring for example how lexical items of a scientific nature (*components ... drives ...*) work together with more 'typical' vocabulary for talking about love: passion, intimacy, commitment, closeness
- awareness of ways in which McEwan explores the psychology of intimacy and relationship in the novel
- awareness of the prevailing political orthodoxies of the 1980s in the UK, taking care not to over-simplify or to assume that the political always invades the personal.
- One particularly successful candidate was able to refer to the Child Abduction Act (1984) and to 1980s psychological research/theories about attachment styles (Hazan & Shaver 1987).

Less successful answers tended to

- attempts to 're-package' a previous essay – most often, one about *time*
- exact equation of Margaret Thatcher's administrations of 1979-1989 with the PM and government depicted in the novel
- other poorly-understood generalisations about the 1980s
- contrived attempts to tie specific individual details from Passage A to specific relationships in the novel.

Some answers were constructed according to 'alternative triangles'. Where this was not insisted upon too rigidly, it could be made to work – e.g. take Kate away from Julie and Stephen, and the triangle collapses.

Question 6: *Persuasion*

This question invited *examination of the different ways in which characters respond to the social scene in Bath*, and the cue-quotation was the exchange between Anne and Admiral Croft.

Unfortunately, despite the fact that there is clearly only one speaker in the cue-quotation and that it is Admiral Croft directly addressing Anne – *How do you like Bath, Miss Elliot?* – a substantial number of candidates mis-attributed the following words to Anne and seriously mis-read both this utterance and Anne's attitudes in the rest of the novel.

Successful answers revealed:

- clear engagement with the question-focus: Austen's presentation of the social scene in Bath and how different characters respond to it in different ways
- well-chosen examples and quotations from elsewhere in the novel about Bath, and comparison to other locations
- judicious comment on Austen's narrative method, including how she uses Bath in the structure of the novel
- some detailed attention to the lexis of the cue-quotation, with an appreciation of what gives pleasure to the Admiral: *plenty of chat; and then we get away from them all ...*
- willingness to read Passage A carefully – the better answers went beyond simply noticing the positive evaluative adjectives (*brilliant ... enlivening and cheerful ...*) and explored whether the novel supports a view of Bath where *every one mixes in the Rooms upon an equality*

Less successful answers tended to

- misunderstanding of the cue-quotation
- attempts to equate Anne's views of Bath with Austen's, and assertions about Austen's life
- attempts to 're-package' a previous essay – most often, one on social status and the vanity of Sir Walter
- over-simplified ideas of the social structure and social scene
- misunderstanding of lexical details in Passage A.

F672 Changing Texts

In previous reports for this unit there has been praise for the high level of analytical skills and creativity demonstrated by many candidates. Again in this session the most effective work contained not only sophisticated debate about the relationships between written and multimodal texts but also close textual analysis utilising a range of literary and linguistic terminology. The best creative and re-creative work for Task 2 emanated directly from the text study for Task 1 but had an originality and life of its own. The best commentaries for Task 2 evaluated the effectiveness of the text created for the new audience, purpose and mode.

Task 1: Analytical Study.

Reports for all the previous sessions are available and raise points about the best approaches to this unit; it could be helpful for centres to read this report in conjunction with the previous ones. How to make the right choices of text for Task 1 – that is, to choose texts that are challenging, stimulating and enable candidates to explore the factors that have shaped the multimodal version - is very important to the success of Task 1. Almost without exception it is the case that successful centres approach this unit by enabling candidates to study a range of literary texts and related multimodal ones. There are a huge number of such pairings of texts available and a combination of teacher/centre suggestions alongside candidate choices can produce an excellent and varied range of material for study. In these centres the process of candidates choosing a specific text pairing for Task 1 does involve them engaging with lots of texts – whole texts and extracts from them. By the time they choose their own texts the candidates have widened their reading and have considered broader questions about multimodal transformation of literary texts. In the January 2011 report for this unit, various examples were included of challenging questions that candidates had asked of texts in their Task 1 work . These questions perhaps stand reiteration.

- What is it about this particular written text that lends itself to multimodal transformation?
- What has the new version retained from the original, and what has been left out in the transformation for a new audience purpose and mode?
- What different modes have been utilised and to what effect?
- What new light is thrown on the original written text by encountering the multimodal version? Is the relationship a *two way* one?
- Is there a 'right order' in which to encounter the two texts?
- How satisfying is the multimodal text as a stand-alone piece of work?
- Is it ever the case that the brilliance of the multimodal version renders the original obsolete?
- What is the place, in our digital world, of *non* multimodal texts?

If candidates were addressing these questions in relation to a number of texts it would be likely that their consideration of such issues in relation to the particular texts in Task 1 would be more considered and reflective, particularly if these texts were also ones for which the candidate had real enthusiasm. This approach broadens the range of texts studied in this A Level and is likely to help candidates in their preparation for the diversity of texts encountered in the AS examined unit F671. This approach also exploits the opportunities that coursework offers over an examined unit, with candidate autonomy usually being reflected in the quality of the work produced, which tends toward the original rather than the received and the learned rather than the taught.

As mentioned previously, it would be excellent to see the range of texts being studied overall for the unit develop year on year. New texts do appear in each session: this year there was interesting work on Alice Sebold's *The Lovely Bones*, E Annie Proulx's *Brokeback Mountain*, Ted Hughes' *The Rain Horse*, Christopher Hampton's *Les Liasons Dangereuses* and Audrey

Niffenegger's *the Time Traveler's Wife*, amongst others. Shakespeare continues to be popular for this unit. Candidates from one centre explored several plays and *Othello* alone was explored alongside five different multimodal versions - Andrew Davies' ITV Masterpiece Theatre version (2001), Kenneth Branagh's *Othello* (1995), Tim Blake Nelson's 'O' (2005), *Omkara* (2006) (dir. Vishal Bhardwaj) and the graphic novel *Othello* (2005 Oscar Zarate). These very different forms and treatments of the text generated some very original and insightful responses. Literary text and TV/film pairings continue to be the most popular option for Task 1 but centres are reminded that literary non-fiction is perfectly acceptable for this unit as are other types of multimodal text. Examples of texts and tasks are given in the Support Materials section of the OCR website.

For Task 1, centres are reminded that the Assessment Objectives AO1 and A02 require candidates to explore language in some detail and to apply critical terminology in their analysis. Such terminology needs to be applied to specific moments from each of the texts being compared. Without the use of this terminology it is not possible for candidates to be awarded marks in the top three Bands for this element. In this English Language and Literature course it is very important that the literary text is explored both in terms of its literary effects and its language choices and this means candidates utilising a range of linguistic terminology. This is the same kind of terminology which they will be developing in preparation for the examined units F671 and F673. Candidates often seem more confident when discussing the multimodal text and often bring to bear the perspectives and language of other disciplines, such as Film or Media Studies. This is to be encouraged and can enable effects to be analysed with precision.

Task 2 Multimodal text with commentary.

Some candidates produced excellent work for Task 2. Where this was the case it emerged directly from their Task 1 text study but had an originality and stand-alone quality to it. Problems arise when the creative/re-creative work for this element is not sufficiently connected to the studied texts and centres are reminded of the wording in the specification that Task 2 should be a *re-creation of the original text, or a part of it* rather than a new text in some way inspired by the source text(s). Task 2 should demonstrate in the creative work something of the knowledge and understanding gained about multimodal text transformation from Task 1. Sometimes the work submitted is not genuinely *multimodal*. A diary-like text with some pictures is not really a multimodal text. Similarly it is difficult to justify the script for a Dramatic Monologue as multimodal when the only real mode being used is speech. Film and TV scripts/storyboards work well and there were some good examples of these in this session. Some candidates created websites with links to speech elements, images, video and other materials. These were often very successful as not only are they multimodal but they are also a form with which most candidates are very familiar. Some types of text do not prove sufficiently challenging for AS Level study. For example, diary entries, Facebook pages and magazine profiles for characters rarely allow candidates to demonstrate the expertise, creativity and insight required of the higher bands in AO4.

Centres are reminded that maximum word count for Task 2 (1500 to 2000 words) can be divided between the creative writing and the commentary. Some of the forms produced will be shorter than others and this can be compensated for by a longer commentary. The 20 marks available for Task 2 can also be awarded holistically across the two parts of the submission. Commentaries do need to be substantial in their explanation and evaluation of the choices made and they should be analytical in approach. Commentaries should not be process diaries but rather detailed analyses and evaluation of the text produced. AO1 requires the application of concepts and terminology from integrated linguistic and literary study.

Script annotation

Many centres annotate their candidates work with detailed comments that very helpfully explain the assessment processes within the centre and justify the marks awarded. Summative comments to this effect, too, are very valuable to moderators. Where more than one teacher has

been responsible for delivering the course, it is important that internal standardisation is evidenced on scripts or coversheets. Some centres had devised their own internal sheets for comments and standardisation and the best of these were impressively thorough. Moderators value annotation very highly, as without it there is little clue as to the thinking behind the mark awarded. The best annotation draws from AO band descriptors and develops the comment to explain how the candidate has achieved this level. Annotation should be thought of as a dialogue with the moderator rather than with the candidate.

Administrative issues

- It is important that the published deadlines for submitting marks and sending the sample of work to the moderator are adhered to. Delays were again caused by moderators having to contact centres about the despatch of the sample.
- The required sample should be sent to moderators in candidate order, each folder secured with staples or treasury tags.
- Centres should doubly check that all the work requested is sent and that all details are completed on cover sheets (CCS/F672).
- Coursework cover sheets should be filled out in detail indicating the texts studied and including a clear explanation of the candidate's own multimodal text. Candidate numbers were missing from many cover sheets.
- Work needs to be clearly labelled Task 1, Task 2 and Commentary and presented by the candidate in that order.
- Please avoid sending bulky folders or plastic wallets. Work should be submitted on A4 paper (or A5 folded) and not in difficult to handle A2 form. Even if the work exists – as much of it does – in a digital form there needs to be a paper-based version sent for moderation and thus it is not necessary to send memory sticks or CDs.

F673 Dramatic Voices

General Comments

Centres are to be commended for their efforts in addressing the new text pairs in the teaching and learning of assimilated approaches to the specific requirements and challenges of this Paper. Many candidates have demonstrated an integrated approach to linguistic and literary study with some impressive textual knowledge in a 'closed book' examination. Many candidates chose to address the specific key words of the question when structuring their responses. The questions provided a consistently fair level of accessibility and provided clear opportunities for differentiation. Many candidates responded by offering a welcome range of relevant interpretations and approaches.

Points to consider

Overcoming 'limiting' factors

It is pleasing to see a gradually decreasing number of limited approaches. This year there were fewer instances of responses that demonstrated:

- limited relevance to the task
- limited coherence of argument and expression
- limited editorial and structural grasp of communicating ideas at this level of study.

Teachers and candidates are to be commended for the increased competence in the coherence and relevance of responses to the questions set in this year's examination.

Assessment Objective 1

It was pleasing to see more candidates attempting to work relevantly with linguistic concepts, research and theories to illuminate the dramatic voices in the texts. Language and gender theory, Grice, face needs, adjacency pair structures and discourse dominance strategies were all employed and assimilated with some confidence and success.

Assessment Objective 2

It remains the case that some candidates did not engage with opportunities for linguistic analysis provided by the passages in Section A or dramatic effects in Section B. In all cases, candidates who focused on the texts as *dramatic voices* - noting dramatic character interaction with each other and the audience, dramatic genre and sub-genres - produced more developed responses than candidates who failed to respond to the text as a performance/realisable medium.

Still, however, examiners saw a few disappointing assertions of *incorrect* or *correct English/language/words/sentences* when attempting to analyse regional, social and historical spoken language varieties, dialect, idiolect and archaic language.

Additionally, candidates are advised against applying the general and often inaccurate label of 'adjective' to every word with some descriptive potential, irrespective of its grammatical function in the dramatic discourse.

This year produced noticeably more uses of inaccurate sentence types. Many candidates misapplied the term 'declarative' – even to sentences with clear punctuation indicators such as an exclamation mark. Some candidates struggled to grasp command structures and intentions in dialogue. A basic grasp of parts of speech and sentence types, and of the relationship between form and function, would help to remove these anomalies from answers.

Assessment Objective 3

Evaluation of contextual influences on the text was handled with varying success.

Developed approaches selected the context that can be evidenced in the text, that best answers the themes in the question and that serves to illuminate the extracts. There was a pleasing grasp of relevant literary contexts across all the texts and an increased awareness of useful social and political contexts in many responses.

The least successful offered contextual knowledge as a bolted-on feature of the answer, either in the introduction or conclusion or in digressive paragraphs within the body of the essay. In these cases, it was substituted for textual analysis and contextual evaluation. In a few cases, in Section B it formed the basis of the answer. It was least successful where the described contexts would not, even if evaluated, illuminate the presentation of the particular theme in the question. This limited approach was pleasingly less prevalent in this series.

Comments on Individual Questions

Section A

Question 1

This was a popular question.

Successful answers

- addressed the keywords “dramatic presentation” and “begging and pleading” and linked the relationship between the two
- explored the ways in which Mamet and Jonson suggested the links between begging and pleading and the worlds from which they come
- used linguistic theory, for example Grice’s Maxims and theories of face needs and gender, to explore the presentation of dramatic voices in the passages
- selected for analysis the stylistic/linguistic devices that illuminated the dramatic voices in each passage
- integrated other readers’/audiences’ responses into their own reception of context
- explored/contrasted dramatic presentations: for example, a sound grasp of who performs the begging and how it functions within the discourse in both extracts
- had an integrated grasp of the literary contexts and structures operating within Jacobean comedy, satire and morality plays in A and 20th century tragedy, Absurdism and documentary, ‘speech act’ drama in B
- managed a comparative approach.

Less successful answers

- substituted “begging and pleading” with “greed” and wrote about that thematically across the play or twisted the extracts to fit that
- inaccurately identified linguistic features and parts of speech
- accurately listed linguistic features and parts of speech, but outside a coherent argument or answer framework
- paraphrased the extracts/whole play
- avoided Levene's begging and pleading in *Glengarry Glen Ross* to skew the focus to the question 4 theme of ‘putting on an act’
- demonstrated shaky textual knowledge: for example, a sustained misreading of the *Volpone* extract that mistook Extract A for the earlier episode in which Corvino accuses Celia of infidelity.

Question 2

This was a popular question.

Successful answers

- addressed the keywords “dramatic presentation and use” as well as “mistaken identity”
- explored the ways in which mistaken identity steers the discourse and interactions of characters in both extracts
- engaged with the concepts and contexts of mistaken identity, both dramatically and socially, to explore the dramatic effects of the extracts within the plays
- compared the dramatic and linguistic effects of the consequences of mistaken identities: of Rosalind/Ganymede and Phoebe or/and Orlando in Extract A and Bernard and Hannah or /and Valentine in Extract B.

Less successful answers

- asserted or described the actions of each character
- misunderstood examples and ideas about conversational dominance in extract B to assume Bernard had sole dominance
- produced a simplistic address to mistaken identity in Extract A and the wider play, focusing overly on the homoeroticism of dressing-up
- skewed the response to question 5/comic elements in *As You Like It*
- focused on the preceding narrative in each play or/and copied out chunks of dialogue from the extracts, avoiding analysis of the extracts themselves.

Question 3

This was a far less popular question.

Successful answers

- examined the “dramatic presentation” of “disguise” in both extracts
- evaluated and applied Jacobean and Irish political influences both contextually and critically
- engaged with the influence of social class or organisational hierarchies through relevant linguistic analysis
- effectively compared comic presentations of the cat and the Duke
- engaged with the archaic and stylised language in A and the Hiberno dialect in B
- engaged with the function of shared lines and punctuation in Extract A.

Less successful answers

- became distracted by Vindice's motivation at a plot-summary level in 'The Revenger's Tragedy'
- paraphrased the extracts/whole play.

Section B

Question 4

A popular question.

Successful answers

- engaged and maintained focus on the key ideas of “characters put(ting) on an act
- demonstrated a sound grasp of the meta-theatrical nature of putting on an act in either play
- explored the links between 'listening, saying, telling and selling' in *GGR* or the links between acting, motivation, greed and corruption in *Volpone*
- explored Jonson’s use of the dramatic voices of Mosca or/and Volpone and/or any of the legacy hunters or Mamet’s use of Roma or/and Moss to deceive through acting
- analysed the language/symbols/allegories/character types across the chosen play: for example, the successful salesman Roma or the birds of prey/predators and parasites in *Volpone*

- analysed the structural devices used to present putting on an act; for example Jonson's sub-plots or Mamet's off-stage actions such as the office robbery
- grasped the influence of literary contexts such as commedia dell'arte in *Volpone* or the socio-economic contexts of Reaganomics in *GGR*.

Less successful answers

- tried to cover every scene in either play with no discrimination or evaluation of the dramatic effects of characters putting on an act
- described/narrated/summarised the plot/characters/episodes of putting on an act
- regurgitated material from question 1.

Question 5

A popular question.

Successful answers

- confidently addressed the keywords "comic elements"
- focused on the techniques and dramatisation of episodes/characters/ examples that could illustrate their argument beyond the extracts in Section A
- engaged the comic elements of the stagecraft of their chosen play; for example, the physical and meta-theatrical boundaries/dimensions of the split structure and dual time periods in Stoppard's play or the anti-pastoral parodies in *AYLI*
- engaged the comic aspects of social gender contexts of boy players in *AYLI* or the debate on Romanticism v Enlightenment in *Arcadia*
- analysed the dramatic use of stock characters; for example Touchstone the clown, or the comic downfall of Bernard
- explored the comedy in the puns and innuendos on sex and sexuality in either play.

Less successful answers

- twisted the keywords "comic elements" to regurgitate question 2 beyond what could usefully answer the question
- could not engage key word "significance"
- simply asserted that sex and/or dressing-up is funny
- misunderstood the role of Jaques
- shifted from pastoralism to a narrative about gardens or forests
- shifted from comic conventions of romantic comedy to a general response about love in *AYLI*
- regurgitated material from question 2.

Question 6

This was a far less popular question.

Successful responses

- addressed "dramatic presentation" as well as "murder" in their chosen play
- opened up exploration of genre, for example the comic elements in either play
- showed sound grasp of macabre/comic relief/Jacobean dramatic conventions in *The Revenger's Tragedy* or the contextual influence of parody/Absurdism/ gangster film sub-genres in *Lol*.
- evaluated dramatic presentations of the gender and social class implications of Jacobean court life in *The Revenger's Tragedy*
- were alert and sensitive to constructs and contexts of character motivation driving the dramatic action
- focused on specific episodes/character interactions/language which supported the chosen line of argument
- analysed in context the attitudes to murder in either play.

Less successful responses offered

- a narrative-driven summary of the murders in *The Revenger's Tragedy*
- an over-simplistic and usually assertive grasp of Irish political contexts in *Lol*
- material regurgitated from question 3.

F674 Connections Across Texts

General Observations

The vast majority of centres are very comfortable with the requirements for this unit. However, there seems still to be some doubt about the issue of 'substantial' texts, with some centres treating each text as equally weighted. The specification is very clear that there should be a significant, substantial text as a central offering in the work, with other texts used to support or contrast with the points being made.

There are issues, too, regarding the suitability of texts, and this can best be addressed by centres ensuring that the texts chosen sit somewhat uncomfortably at the edge of the literary canon for reasons of taste, style, content, or have spawned a variety of other texts. It follows, therefore, that the examination of the central text needs to be framed in precisely these terms, and that discussion simply of an 'issue' - such as violence against women, for example - is unlikely to lead to the highest reaches of the mark scheme.

It is worth reminding centres, too, that there needs to be focus on spoken language somewhere in the folder. This is often best done in Task 1. It is not enough merely to choose a spoken language text: there must be analysis of it in terms of spoken language conventions. Even if the text chosen is scripted, there must be discussion of precisely how it chooses to embody aspects of spontaneous spoken language.

Task 1

For the most part, candidates engage comfortably with the content of texts and make useful comparisons. However, the need to sustain a discussion on a more technical level by using linguistic methods is not frequently enough addressed, and candidates often get more engaged with an issue than with techniques. As in past sessions, there was often a good deal of contextualisation that went on in order to demonstrate links between the pieces; this can lead to essays losing focus on linguistic or literary detail.

Candidates for this unit chose a wide variety of texts. Those who looked at literary texts that sit at the edge of literary acceptability tended to write with great conviction about why their texts have not been accepted. There were, for example a few very fine pieces on the language of *Trainspotting* which also looked at matters of the middle class sensibilities of the 'average' novel reader. Other texts chosen were there because they had inspired others, with Bridget Jones and David Peace featuring again. As in previous sessions, there were a number of literary texts presented that have been 'canonical' in A level terms for many years, and this choice did not allow candidates the opportunity, therefore, to make a case for their genre or content being controversial. Even Martin Luther King's 'I have a dream' speech can be seen as 'difficult' in this way, bearing in mind the context of its production, the status of its speaker and the place/time of its delivery; but many candidates never tussle with these complexities. As always, candidates were often not clear enough that the purpose of this task is to discuss how a text creates meanings, not the meaning itself.

As in previous sessions, it is again noted that in some centres candidates all do versions of the same course work, rather than staking out areas of interest to themselves. There is nothing wrong with candidates looking at the same texts, but each should write a different piece, and centres should be careful to let an individual's own perceptions shine through. In some cases, all candidates choose the same texts, and then the same examples too, often including lengthy contextualising discussions that are almost word for word identical. This seems to point to over-directed teaching – which should be avoided, as it takes away the sense of this work as being a personal discovery for the candidate.

Task 2

Work here varies enormously both in content and in style. There are stage pieces, reviews, reformulations, poems - to name but a few. Centres seem to be under the impression that a transcript of spontaneous spoken language is acceptable. This is not the case. If it is genuinely a transcript, then the candidate has had to do little more than transcribe using the correct legend. If it is a 'premeditated' piece of spoken language, then it shouldn't pretend to be spontaneous, as the discussion that follows should centre on the various ways in which this 'speech' has been shaped to give the impression of spontaneity. On the whole, this sort of task should be avoided.

The links between creative work and commentary were often very well done, with candidates attending closely to matters of genre, form and language.

Administration

Centres are now confident with the process of submitting marks and samples, and this meant that there were few delays with processing the work. A number of centres could offer fuller comments on the coversheets of the work. It is very helpful to a moderator (and indeed may steer them toward confirming a centre's assessment) if the process behind the marking has been clearly documented. Annotations simply noticing the presence of Assessment Objectives tend to be less helpful: qualitative analysis is more useful.

On the whole, the administration is done with great care, and the marking is often exemplary and a tribute to the commitment of the teachers.

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