

**GCE**

**English Language and Literature (EMC)**

Advanced Subsidiary GCE **AS H074**

**OCR Report to Centres June 2017**

## About this Examiner Report to Centres

This report on the 2017 Summer assessments aims to highlight:

- areas where students were more successful
- main areas where students may need additional support and some reflection
- points of advice 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.

The report also includes:

- An invitation to get involved in Cambridge Assessment's research into **how current reforms are affecting schools and colleges**
- Links to important documents such as **grade boundaries**
- A reminder of our **post-results services** including Enquiries About Results
- A link to our handy Teacher Guide on **Supporting the move to linear assessment** to support you with the ongoing transition
- **Further support that you can expect from OCR**, such as our Active Results service and CPD programme.

## Understanding how current reforms are affecting schools and colleges

Researchers at Cambridge Assessment<sup>1</sup> are undertaking a research study to better understand how the current reforms to AS and A levels are affecting schools and colleges.

If you are a Head of Department (including deputy and acting Heads), then we would be very grateful if you would take part in this research by completing their survey. If you have already completed the survey this spring/summer then you do not need to complete it again.

The questionnaire will take approximately 15 minutes and all responses will be anonymous.

To take part, please click on this link: <https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/KP96LWB>

## Grade boundaries

Grade boundaries for this, and all other assessments, can be found on [Interchange](#). For more information on the publication of grade boundaries please see the [OCR website](#).

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<sup>1</sup> Cambridge Assessment is a not-for-profit non-teaching department of the University of Cambridge, and is the parent organisation of OCR, Cambridge International Examinations and Cambridge English Language Assessment

## Enquiries About Results

If any of your students' results are not as expected, you may wish to consider one of our Enquiry About Results services. For full information about the options available visit the [OCR website](#). If university places are reliant on the results you are making an enquiry about you may wish to consider the priority 2 service which has an earlier deadline to ensure your enquires are processed in time for university applications.

## Supporting the move to linear assessment

This was the first year that students were assessed in a linear structure. To help you navigate the changes and to support you with areas of difficulty, download our helpful Teacher guide:

<http://www.ocr.org.uk/Images/341817-moving-from-modular-to-linear-qualifications-teachers-guide.pdf>

## Further support from OCR

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- **Compare your centre** with OCR national averages or similar OCR centres.
- Identify areas of the curriculum where students excel or struggle and help **pinpoint strengths and weaknesses** of students and teaching departments.

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## H074/01 Non-fiction written and spoken texts

### General Comments

As in the first year of assessment in 2016, all levels of the mark scheme were represented in responses to both Section A and Section B. Almost every candidate attempted both sections. Some candidates who produced a lower-level response to Section A also produced a higher-level response for Section B, and vice versa. A very small number of candidates completed Section B before Section A. Where the Section B response came second and was weaker, timing may have been a factor for some candidates. However, judging solely by the length of responses, there was little evidence that timing was an issue for many candidates.

### Comments on Individual Questions

#### Section A – Question 1

- Knowledge and understanding of the texts; understanding of significance of contexts (AO3)

Most candidates seemed well prepared for both Anthology texts, with many responses deploying relevant contextual knowledge and an informed understanding of writers' purposes for both *A Modest Proposal* and the NSPCC leaflet. A small number of candidates were heavily disadvantaged by a lack of familiarity with the texts, and wrote as if encountering one or both of the texts for the first time.

Understandably, few candidates seemed to fully grasp the original context of reception for *A Modest Proposal*. A small number of responses mentioned its anonymous publication and the ways it would have at first seemed to readers indistinguishable from those pamphlets it parodied. A greater number made broad inferences from the question's reference to a 'satirical essay', for example: 'as it's a satire, the purpose is to entertain ... the audience may be fans of his previous work'; or, 'its audience is adults who find satirical writing humorous'. The word 'satire' proved problematic in some responses; it tended to be used to cover over uncertainty about how exactly Swift's invective worked, or how best to explore its features.

In general, the most perceptive understanding of the significance of context (AO3) was apparent when candidates relied less on the words 'audience' and 'purpose', and thought in more sensitive, nuanced and specific ways about how aspects of each text would work for readers. More candidates thought with this kind of sensitivity about Text B than Text A. Credit was given to responses which imagined readers receiving the leaflet in the mail or picking it up in a public place, and explored related features. Some candidates successfully considered how the leaflet might work for a secondary audience of children, as well as seeking donations from adults.

- Approaches to the task

As in the first year of assessment, some responses focused heavily on identifying aspects of context, audience and purpose in ways that were descriptive rather than analytical. Candidates gain little or no credit for merely *identifying* purpose, audience, context, genre or mode, and are advised against writing sequences of sentences that do so.

As last year, few responses managed to address the four Assessment Objectives evenly. There was sometimes little exploration of meanings (AO2) even in responses which used a wide range of linguistic terms accurately; some responses that did develop analysis of the ways meanings were shaped tended to do so at the expense of comparative thinking (AO4).

- Connections and comparison (AO4)

Some candidates struggled in the time available to make any meaningful connections across the texts, as if unsure how to go about comparison of these two texts. Many responses made an obvious thematic connection – the presentation of the suffering of children – with varying degrees of success. Less successful candidates invoked the similarity before analysing each text much as they would if the other had not been present. For more successful responses, the connecting theme genuinely prompted the selection of quotation and features explored; as such, each text made for a strong reading of the other.

Candidates' linguistic knowledge generated several other opportunities for comparison. Many candidates compared register, contrasting the complexity of Swift's lexis and syntax with the childlike simplicity of Molly's voice. Some candidates compared the writers' uses of features to create a more authentic spoken voice, finding enough features in Text A to develop the connection sufficiently.

A number of responses successfully explored connections which suggested a high level of knowledge and insight. For example, some analysed each text's construction of a persona; others identified and explored the problem–solution discourse structure of each text. It seemed that the highest-achieving candidates were able to conceptualise and flexibly redeploy their knowledge about language and experience of texts to make fresh connections, rather than being prepared in advance for this pairing of texts.

- Concepts, methods and terminology (AO1); analysis of ways meanings are shaped (AO2)

Selection and exploration of quotation is essential in relation to AO2. Some lower-level responses struggled to produce any detailed analysis, instead offering several paragraphs on points to consider about each whole text, in some cases with very little detailed reference to either.

There was a wide range of levels of knowledge about language represented in responses. A small number used very few or no linguistic terms at all. More responses accurately identified features with terminology, but some had little sense of purpose or selectivity in the use of terms. Among these were some responses which used terms so profusely as to obscure rather than make meanings, particularly in relation to word class. It is the quality of the application of the concepts, rather than the quantity of terms used, which is described in the higher levels of the mark scheme. The most successful candidates were discriminating in their use of terms. A few candidates produced detailed critical analysis, selecting from a sophisticated armoury of concepts and terms, such that achievement in relation to AO1 and AO2 felt fully integrated.

Text A allowed many candidates to explore lexical choice effectively. Some candidates seemed well prepared to discuss the different semantic fields Swift brought together (farming, finance, cookery); many successfully explored the connotations of individual word choices, such as 'breeders' and 'dropt from the dam'. Less successful responses seemed to latch on to features with less sense of the whole text or context, attempting to make a lot of the spelling of 'publick' or the modern usage of 'bastard'. A few candidates were able to explore a wider range of features creating the proposer's character and tone, such as syntax and comment clauses.

Text B allowed some candidates to deploy sophisticated frameworks. Graphology was used effectively to support analysis of the childlike voice and direct appeal to the reader, though it rarely facilitated strong comparative analysis. The concept of synthetic personalisation was also used very effectively by a number of candidates, in ways that helped them to achieve in relation to AO1, AO2 and AO3 simultaneously.

As last year, one or two misused terms did not prevent candidates from reaching the highest levels on the mark scheme. Again, the term 'rhetorical question' was used very loosely; it was

applied by many candidates to ‘Can you help me?’ in Text B and ‘How this number shall be reared?’ in Text A, usually in ways that closed down rather than facilitated analysis of meanings shaped by these questions.

## Section B

The three questions in Section B gave candidates a clear choice, and led to very different kinds of response to each task. In general, more candidates this year than last struggled to maintain an appropriate tone in their writing.

### Question 2

Of the three options, Question 2 seemed to offer the most straightforward way for candidates both to be sensitive to the given context and to use language creatively. A number of candidates did not grasp the sales-pitch style implications of the task, connecting the word ‘sponsor’ in the question to informal, personal requests for sponsorship, rather than a formal presentation. More successful candidates balanced the appropriate level of formality with a strong sense of shared physical context and interactive features. Some candidates were rather heavy-handed in their attempts to persuade, preferring emotional blackmail over more subtle means of appeal; others might have benefited from being more emotive, and seemed to focus on the business’s bottom line at the expense of the charity itself. In all cases the specific detail which the candidate imagined, was essential in providing the necessary depth and detail of content. Weaker responses failed to identify the charity and spoke in only the most general terms about the event itself. The strongest responses felt very local and particular. Some candidates seemed to be involved in a charity in their own lives, and able to imagine a particular business they might approach, and wrote very effective, creative, sensitive presentations as a result.

As last year, a small number of responses consisted not of a text prepared in the written mode to be delivered in speech, but of the transcription of a series of imagined exchanges. Candidates need to understand the text type of a prepared speech, written to be delivered, and they need to be able to recognise a Section B question asking for such a text.

### Question 3

The magazine article proved a popular choice of question. The question asked candidates to: take the view that young people did *not* spend too much time on their phones and social media; ridicule the idea that they *did* spend too much time on their phones and social media; and use irony and exaggeration to do so. Very few candidates managed to do all three of these things; fewer still wrote in a way that demonstrated knowledge of genre. Lower-level answers tended to take the form of largely shapeless rants against adults in general. In many, there was a lack of consistent positioning of the audience: in a single response, the mode of address veered from an adolescent making a rallying call to peers, to an unrestrained attack on a readership of misguided oldies. Higher-level responses took a more considered approach, building an argument with some use of irony and/or exaggeration. A small number of responses were very impressive: for example, using the influence of *A Modest Proposal* to create the satirical proposition that all technology be eradicated; or a young writer documenting their attempt to spend a day without using their phone, only to find adults all around them relying on social media in one way or another. In practice, it was possible to access the higher levels of the mark scheme without the agility that these exceptional candidates showed. However, it seems fair to say that the task was more challenging than many candidates appreciated, and that this may have led to some underachievement.

#### Question 4

This also was a popular choice of question, but produced a very different set of responses from Question 3. Many candidates seemed comfortable with this more functional task, as if practised in such formal, transactional writing from their learning at GCSE. It was difficult for many, however, to balance the need for simplicity and formality demanded by the given context with the kind of creativity described by the higher levels of the mark scheme. Some responses were short, functional and fit for purpose, in a way that was easy to recognise as mid-to-high level achievement in relation to AO3; however, there was little in them beyond 'competent' in terms of AO5, and so it was difficult to place them above the bottom of Level 5 overall. Other responses tried more explicitly to be creative, but in ways that made it difficult to maintain the appropriate level of formality. A small number of candidates did manage to balance these requirements, and achieved very high marks. For the most part, however, this answer seemed to be a safe choice, which helped candidates to produce mid-level responses.

## H074/02 The language of literary texts

### General Comments

This paper provides the opportunity for candidates to integrate their study of both literary and linguistic methods whilst engaging with two different genres: prose and poetry.

The two sections required candidates to closely analyse a given extract from a studied novel, or to undertake a comparative exploration of two previously studied poems. Candidates had an opportunity to select aspects of particular interest and then methodically explain and interpret specific features which illuminated meaning. Secure responses to prose extracts and poetry paid close attention to specific sentence structures, lexical choices and the use of figurative language. The writer's craft was generally recognised as being paramount and successful candidates attempted to decipher potential meaning, whilst providing a reasoned argument as to why particular language choices and structures might have been used. Well thought out responses also attempted to comprehend exactly why a writer had chosen a particular word, phrase or sentence and posit the various different understandings that could be drawn from this within a language, or poetic, framework. Stronger candidates also developed their ideas by considering how the different narrative strands in use had impacted on the text, and the understanding of readers. The majority of candidates demonstrated a reasonably secure knowledge of the texts studied, although there were occasional misunderstandings. High level responses made a judicious selection of quotations to support original, and perceptive, lines of investigation supported by the integrated language frameworks.

More successful candidates included one or more of the features outlined in last year's 'Report to Centres' and these are reiterated below:

- Written responses which demonstrated an integrated understanding of literary and linguistic elements of the texts.
- A sharp focus on the question and texts printed on the paper drawing in relevant further detail from the novel or other poems in a collection to support the analysis of the material provided.
- Demonstration of the skills described in the Assessment Objectives.
- Blended understanding of the significance and influence of context.
- Detailed close analytical readings of the extract in Section A and poems in Section B.
- An ability to use a wide range of linguistic/literary terminology accurately.
- Selected and focused contextual comments.
- An understanding of the features of a particular genre.
- Clarity of written expression and an academic approach to written analysis.
- A logically structured response.

Less successful responses included one or more of the following:

- Similes and metaphors were often confused. Sentences that included the words 'like' or 'as' were identified as a simile when this was not necessarily true. Candidates need to ensure that there is an aspect of comparison in place.
- There was a good use of rhetorical terms seen but some of these were not fully understood and used to label expressions incorrectly, for example – hendiadys, synecdoche, hypophora, collocation. Candidates generally recognised anaphora but were often unaware of the term 'epistrophe' so described reversed anaphora instead.
- Verbs were frequently misidentified as adverbs or adjectives. Candidates might find it more useful to think of sentences in terms of passive or active voice.

- Adjectives were generally correctly identified but candidates did not explain what qualities these suggested about the noun they were modifying.
- Weaker analysis tended to focus on the lexical level and did not explore the syntactical level.
- There were too many comments made about declarative sentences which were not particularly illuminating as these form the majority of written language.
- Quotations were not always integrated and it could be difficult to decipher their purpose in the line of argument.
- Contextual influences were bolted on as a separate paragraph instead of being integrated.

### Section A – The language of prose

This section is about 'how the story is told'. Candidates demonstrated a far greater awareness this year of narrative techniques and used these to structure their response effectively. Responses were also more confident on the use of language features, although a little feature-spotting did still occur in less confident answers. There was generally a secure handling of how the chosen extract related to the wider novel with some well-chosen quotations to support ideas. Weaker responses discussed the novel in general terms and only explored the extract briefly. Narrative voice was discussed in most responses but some of the points made on perspective or point of view were undeveloped. Some responses were confused about who the narrator was, for example, in *The Great Gatsby* weaker candidates did not recognise the fact that the story was being told by Nick. Successful responses recognised the importance of genre and literary contexts, only incorporating socio-historic contextual aspects where these amplified meaning.

### Section B – The language of poetry

This section requires candidates to draw out similarities and differences between the two poems printed on the paper. Successful responses explored the poems at a lexical and syntactical level and were aware of the importance of voice. Candidates that found the analysis of the prose extract difficult often demonstrated a greater confidence when discussing the poems. The majority of candidates gave an equal treatment to both of the poems making some excellent links between them. There was a good awareness of relevant contextual influences as well as similarities found in other poems studied during the course. A few basic errors appeared in weaker responses such as referring to stanzas as paragraphs, or the misidentification of the use of alliteration, assonance, etc. Less successful responses also spent too much time making very general comments about structure and sound effects without relating these to meaning.

### Comments on Individual Questions

#### Question 1

Charlotte Brontë - *Jane Eyre*

There were a good number of responses to this question. Successful responses explored the significance of the 'wreck of the chestnut tree' recognising that this was the place where Rochester and Jane had declared their love but the following day the tree had been split in half by a bolt of lightning. They considered how the tree symbolised the trials that Jane and Rochester's love would undergo and how this would be temporarily shattered but the 'firm base and strong roots' would provide them with the strength they needed. Candidates also made good points about the personification of the moon's 'bewildered, dreary glance' linking its 'blood-red' colour to the earlier incident in the red room and features of the gothic genre. As well as an exploration of gothic aspects, responses also considered how this extract related to the wider novel as a bildungsroman and Jane's direct address to the reader linking to other similar intrusive narrative comments. Good responses also made links between the wailing sounds from the attic at Thornfield and the 'wild, melancholy wail' in the distant wood at the end of the extract. This was discussed as foreshadowing the impending disaster of Jane and Rochester's

wedding. Weaker responses were unable to place the extract securely in the narrative of the novel as a whole which detracted from some aspects of their analysis.

Question 2

F Scott Fitzgerald - *The Great Gatsby*

This remains the most popular choice of novel. Secure responses considered the importance of Nick's retrospective narrative making his selective memories unreliable and the presentation of the Valley of Ashes representing his biased point of view. The majority of candidates made a link between Nick's earlier comment of "I'm inclined to reserve all judgement" and his judgmental comments in this extract relating to Myrtle as he "had no desire to meet her". Responses made pertinent links to Tom's commanding behaviour which "bordered on violence" with Nick's report in Chapter 1 of Daisy referring to her husband as "a brute of a man" and Tom's breaking of Myrtle's nose later in the chapter. Weaker responses did not fully understand the suggestions behind the imagery of the 'fantastic farm' and 'grotesque gardens' and focused too much on the alliterative qualities instead. Better responses explored the contrasts set up in these noun phrases and also discussed the significance of cars, the imagery of death and the use of the colour grey. There were generally excellent discussions on "the eyes of Doctor T.J. Eckleburg" which explored the use of the colours blue and yellow across the novel, and made perceptive links to the eyes representing an omniscient God and George Wilson's belief in Chapter 8 that "God knows what you've been doing". Contextualising the extract as part of the whole was particularly well done with many candidates recognising the structural importance of this moment as a turning point in the novel as a whole. Many were also confident to align the extract to the Romance genre or as a Romantic Tragedy and the best answers recognised that there were other genres profiled in other potential moments. A few candidates talked about fragmentation, camera eye and Modernism which was a sophisticated comment, not always backed up by evidence from the extract, however. Weaker responses had little awareness of the American context of the extract and wider novel.

Question 3

Chinua Achebe - *Things Fall Apart*

There were a reasonable number of responses to this question. Candidates generally recognised that this extract from the opening of Chapter 3 provided the backstory to Okonkwo's determination to be strong and successful and recognised the use of this as a literary device to provide a narrative history. There were comments that demonstrated real engagement with the text and the issues surrounding colonialism, recognising Achebe's objective in responding to white writers' implicitly racist portrayals of indigenous African characters. Most responses linked this to Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* although weaker candidates did not integrate these ideas within their analytical points. Successful responses demonstrated a secure awareness of narrative perspective and the function of the omniscient narrator discussing the ways in which this passage mirrored the oral storytelling tradition of African culture. Responses also recognised the importance of the portrayal of the Igbo culture and superstitious beliefs. They also considered the power and importance of Agbala to the villagers as the 'Oracle'.

Question 4

Arundhati Roy - *The God of Small Things*

There were no responses to this text.

Question 5

Ian McEwan - *Atonement*

There were fewer responses to this question but they were generally secure and recognised the importance of narrative ending and narrative voice. The responses were strong on demonstrating that the adult Briony was recalling the events, finding the clues in the extract to

prove this which led into language analysis quite helpfully. There was a little confusion amongst weaker candidates when exploring ideas about postmodernism or metafiction. The simile 'like a bride of Christ' was well explored with links being made to the simile used earlier in the novel of the 'bride-to-be'. Most responses considered the context of marriage being used as an effective means of silencing Lola so that she could no longer accuse Paul Marshall of rape, however, few considered the extent to which Lola might have considered this to have been a consensual act and that she had remained silent in order to protect her lover. Weaker responses did not recognise the traditional lines from a marriage ceremony and tried to analyse their significance, instead of viewing them as a framing device for the adult Briony to come to terms with her own guilt.

#### Question 6

Jhumpa Lahiri - *The Namesake*

There were fewer responses to this question but most seemed effective and well considered. This extract was taken from the final chapter of the novel and as such successful candidates explored the implications of this as a narrative ending. Responses recognised how the opening sentence of the extract summed up Gogol's life and his relative powerlessness to alter the course of events. Candidates drew together the references to the different story strands in the novel, discussing the train wreck and his father's near death experience and how this led to the name he struggled to identify with. Most responses considered the ideas of accidents and losses prevalent throughout the novel making links to Ashoke's unforeseen death and Gogol's former relationships with Maxine and Moushumi. Perceptive answers explored this extract as demonstrating aspects of bildungsroman with Gogol seen as having reached the end of a spiritual journey at this point in the novel. Although weaker candidates did not identify all the strands of the storyline being woven together in this extract they nevertheless made good points about Ashoke's gift of Nikolai Gogol's short stories and the blending together of two cultures.

#### Question 7

William Blake - *Introduction* (Innocence) and *London* (Experience)

This remains the most popular question choice for Section B. Whilst Blake presents opportunities for candidates across the ability range to write well, nevertheless the deceptive simplicity of the poems is not always fully understood. Responses were generally strong on making links between the poems as well as recognising the significance of them being taken from opposing 'song' books. Whilst patterning, rhythm and rhyme were generally well identified these were not always linked to meaning and weaker candidates often wrote large sections describing these but failing to recognise their significance. The majority of candidates made useful comments relating to Blake's views on childhood, religion and government, etc. but some historical context was a little patchy – including anything from the Renaissance through to the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century. Successful candidates recognised the importance of *Introduction* being described by Blake as divinely inspired and setting the tone for the sequence of poems. They also explored Blake's dreams and the pastoral imagery representing an idyllic world. Many responses made links to the story of the Pied Piper but few considered that the piper might represent the god, Pan. Similarly, the 'Lamb' was seen to represent innocence or biblical sacrifice but not all candidates recognised the capitalisation as pointing to Jesus as the sacrificial lamb. Most candidates recognised the different interpretations of the word 'charter'd and linked these to Blake's social message. There was some confusion over 'blood down Palace walls' – the majority of candidates explored this as a corrupt monarchy or government with some discussing the French Revolution, however, some candidates thought this was a comment on the two world wars in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Only a few candidates recognised the 'plagues' as sexually transmitted diseases being transferred from prostitutes to wives.

Question 8

Emily Dickinson - *He fumbles at your Soul* and *I felt a Funeral, in my Brain*

There were a reasonable number of responses to this question. The poems attracted some colourful contextual comments, sometimes a little exaggerated, which were nevertheless generally well woven into the line of argument. Candidates dealt maturely with some complex ideas making good attempts at comparing structure, as well as language and imagery. In *He fumbles at your Soul* candidates generally explored the idea of 'He' as God, a preacher or more specifically, Rev. Charles Wadsworth who made a great impression on Dickinson. A few responses considered the idea of 'He' in more abstract sexual terms as a potential seducer. Explorations of language included the musical and metallic imagery, as well as a consideration of Native Americans taking scalps as trophies of war. Links were made to *I felt a Funeral* with the rhythmic beating of a musical pulse and the metallic 'Boots of Lead'. Candidates also discussed the funereal imagery of a tolling bell, the 'Plank' and 'Box' suggesting a coffin and the 'seated' mourners at 'A Service'. Most responses made contextual links to Dickinson's mental frailty and the idea that this was all taking place inside her mind.

Question 9

Seamus Heaney - *Fodder* and *Churning Day*

There were a good number of responses to this question. The majority of candidates recognised the personal autobiographical nature of these poems and the way in which they represented Heaney's family roots and Irish heritage. There was some confusion amongst weaker responses as to the representation of Irish history or The Troubles and these points were over laboured. More successful candidates considered the ways in which the poems demonstrated change over time and the use of memories. There were good points made about the biblical allusion in *Fodder* to the miracle of the loaves and fishes as well as the passing reference to the changes made to the Irish language by the English. Similarly the idea of 'gold flecks' suggesting the value of butter as a commercial commodity, as well as a means of bringing a family together through the shared hard labour of churning to produce the gold nuggets suggested by 'gilded gravel' were explored well.

Question 10

Eavan Boland - *The Oral Tradition* and *White Hawthorn in the West of Ireland*

There were a good number of responses to this question. Successful candidates recognised how Boland's poems represented both a feminine voice and a link to tradition. Responses explored the way in which the 'White Hawthorn' is used as a metaphor for Ireland and its superstitious beliefs. The mysteries that surround nature were explored but although students considered the myth of a child dying if the hawthorn was cut, only a few responses were aware of the link to the story of Thomas the Rhymer meeting the fairy queen beside the hawthorn bush. Good responses considered *The Oral Tradition* as a narrative and the way in which the story represents the oral tradition of passing stories down the generations. A few responses were able to look at the contrasts being explored between everyday language and pastoral imagery. Weaker candidates struggled to explain the rich imagery of the poem or its representation of 'small talk'.

Question 11

Carol Ann Duffy - *Betrothal* and *The Love Poem*

Duffy remains one of the most popular choices. Whilst some pertinent aspects of context were included such as the identity of the unknown lover, there was too much emphasis on the position of the two poems in the anthology without really explaining why this was significant or how these formed part of a sequence of events. Successful responses were enthused by the gender issues that arose from the poems as well as making excellent points on imagery arising from language and poetry itself. Better candidates discussed the use of borrowings in *The Love*

Poem from Shakespeare, Barrett Browning, Marlowe, Campion, Shelley, Donne, etc. recognising the way in which these well-known lines have become clichés, but have been blended together by Duffy to form new meanings. Most candidates also recognised the allusions in *Betrothal* to the Moors murderers and the idea that Myra Hindley would do anything for love. Weaker candidates struggled to effectively explain the use of repetition or the lexical choices relating to marriage.

Question 12

Jacob Sam-La Rose - *After Lazerdrome*, *McDonalds*, *Peckham Rye* and *Speechless II*

This was a much more popular choice this year. Candidates recognised the importance of the poems exploring a sense of identity, particularly relating to different generations, stereotypical views and aspects of culture. The majority of responses understood Sam-La Rose's context and the significance of music and family relationships within his writing, although not all candidates appreciated the way in which music permeates through the poems in the collection. Some responses were able to see how personal and social histories were interwoven within the poems and made pertinent comments relating to this. Few candidates explored the form and structure in enough detail but the themes of music and growing up were followed through, providing plenty of opportunities to link the pair of poems. Successful candidates explored the use of first person and the significance of the Sidran epigram (*After Lazerdrome*) and sports commentary (*Speechless II*). Overarching ideas of power, reality, freedom and restriction were also considered.

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