

English Language and Literature

Advanced GCE A2 H473

Advanced Subsidiary GCE AS H073

Examiners' Reports

June 2011

HX73/R/11

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

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F671 Speaking Voices (Written Examination)

General Comments

Unit F671 has now had six 'outings' since its inception in January 2009, giving it plenty of time to settle down as a test of combined literary-linguistic approaches – and giving Centres and candidates time to become familiar with the paper's structure and demands.

It was once again encouraging to see that candidates were engaged with the texts they had studied, and that they had generally been well-prepared in textual knowledge and literary/linguistic approaches. Advice to candidates as to how to harness this knowledge with these approaches in such a way as to perform to the best of their ability will be the focus of this year's Report.

Examiners commented that many candidates seemed to have under-achieved. It may seem strange that examiners can feel qualified to make such a judgement, not knowing anything about the candidates beyond what they wrote in the examination. Nonetheless, examiners noticed frequent signs of under-performance in the scripts.

Candidates often gave a general impression that they knew their chosen text and had learned enough of linguistic and literary concepts and approaches to be able to answer the question at least adequately. However, many failed to do so. These failures – these instances of under-performance – seem to stem from one or more of the following:

- 1 Lack of planning – and hence difficulty in constructing a coherent and relevant response.
- 2 Insufficiently careful reading (and, probably, annotation) of the material on the question paper.
- 3 Uncertain judgement as to which of the combined linguistic/literary approaches at their disposal will be the most useful.

All of the above are clearly interconnected, and can be remedied in the first twenty minutes of the examination. Candidates need the confidence and self-discipline *not* to launch into a rehearsal of prepared material but to read carefully and respond to what's actually on the question paper. (And such an approach needs to be practised, especially by candidates whose impulse is to start disorganising everything they have been taught.)

Planning is most usefully done on the question paper, reading the questions and the material with pen in hand and underlining/highlighting key aspects. If candidates focus on what's there, they will not be distracted into writing about what is not.

Essentially, this is a simple paper. Although it is a 'closed-text' examination, the question paper provides candidates with most of the material they will need; and the organisation of the paper into bullet-prompted tasks deals with the Assessment Objectives. The old-fashioned advice to *just answer the question* should be enough.

Reports from previous sessions have commented on how candidates make things difficult for themselves. Two particular ways of doing this were again evident in this session. In Section A, it is not necessary to 'prove' that Passage A is (semi-)spontaneous speech, nor to find a certain number of 'similarities' between the two Passages. (Both of these aspects are a 'given' of the paper's structure.) In Section B, it is not helpful to read Passage A as a direct commentary on the set text with a large number of certain parallels.

As Centres will be aware, January 2012 will be the last session in which the original set texts will appear. June 2012 sees a change to a new list, which appears below as a reminder.

The rest of this Report might therefore best be read with a view to the transferable skills, concepts and approaches in Section A and Section B rather than with an emphasis on details of individual texts.

New Texts from June 2012

Section A

Jeanette Winterson: *Oranges are Not the Only Fruit*

OR

Kazuo Ishiguro: *The Remains of the Day*

OR

Roddy Doyle: *Paddy Clarke Ha Ha Ha*

Section B

Evelyn Waugh: *A Handful of Dust*

OR

Ian McEwan: *The Child in Time*

OR

Jane Austen: *Persuasion*

Comments on Sections

Section A

The question-wording, which should by now be very familiar, contains several key words. Candidates are invited to **compare the construction and effects** of the speaking voices in a piece (Passage A) of transcribed spoken English and an extract (Passage B) from their chosen novel.

In previous sessions, **effects** have been relatively neglected as candidates concentrated on the first stage of the **construction** prompt – identifying significant features of spoken language and syntax/lexis/register.

In this session, examiners noticed a different tendency. Many candidates produced a more thoughtful account of effects, successfully tracing the dynamics of interaction. However, their analysis (AO2) of how these dynamics were constructed by choices of language was often inaccurate.

Section B

AO3 is dominant in Section B. This Assessment Objective is not just about “context”, and it is worth quoting its wording in full:

*Use integrated approaches to **explore relationships between texts**, analysing and evaluating the significance of contextual factors in their production and reception.*

The question paper provides material for the **relationships between texts** focus in the supporting passage(s), which should also nudge candidates in helpful directions by offering cues to aspects of narrative as well as theme.

However, the supporting passage(s) should not be regarded as a direct piece of commentary or criticism on the prose text studied for this Section. Passage A (and Passage B, if set) should be seen as (a) text(s) which share(s) the social, cultural and historical context of the set text. It is not necessarily or directly helpful to 'apply' specific ideas or images from the supporting passage(s) to the fictional text.

In Question 4, for example, Passage A makes a metaphorical/rhetorical reference:
In the soil poisoned by speculation grew those ugly weeds of waste, exploitation, and abuse of financial power.

Some candidates asserted a damagingly over-literal equation of characters in *The Great Gatsby* with *those ugly weeds of waste*, arguing that Daisy and/or Tom and/or Jordan and/or Myrtle were weeds, sharing various plant-like characteristics. No doubt there is also *abuse of financial power* in the novel; but not every sign of wealth is financial power, and not every example of financial power is an abuse.

Comments on Individual Questions

Question 1: *Surfacing*

There were very few answers to this question. Candidates who did answer on Atwood seemed to have only a very slender grasp of the novel, and coped better with the (unseen) transcribed passage.

Question 2: *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time*

The vast majority of candidates answered this question, in which Christopher's account of being told by his father that his mother was in hospital (*a problem with her heart*) was paired with a transcription of a training session for medical staff on how to deal with a patient having a heart attack.

Many candidates led themselves up a blind alley by deciding that there must be a power struggle going on in the transcription (Passage A) because there were two male speakers. Such a view ran counter to the evidence: the transcription was not a '*conversation*' in the normal sense but a *demonstration*, so that overlaps and interruptions were not signs of a struggle for dominance but rather evidence of *co-operation* between Andrew (the doctor in charge) and Mark (the trainee who had volunteered to demonstrate) as they worked together to teach their audience (more trainees) what to do in an emergency.

The fact that Christopher begins Passage B with the blunt declarative *Mother died 2 years ago* meant that candidates were given a choice of two easy ways in which to begin their analysis: the *construction* approach or the *effects* approach. The initial *effect* on the reader is probably shock; but soon we realise that we're not being told about her death in this extract, only the news of her (supposed) hospitalisation; and later we realise that she didn't die anyway! As to *construction*, Christopher's tendency to unusually simple and unadorned utterance is immediately clear.

Candidates have generally been taught (or have worked out for themselves) various aspects of Christopher's narrative and speaking styles – his 'voice'. Some describe it as 'child-like' or robotic; and these descriptions work well enough as far as they go, as long as they are then supported by examples from the rest of the novel and the passage.

Answers which were thorough enough to look carefully at the evidence of the passage were less likely to make sweeping generalisations about Christopher's lexis, syntax and register. For example, it is common for candidates to assert that Christopher always 'speaks' in simple sentences, never complex ones, and to offer examples of his compound-string style.

There are indeed examples of compound-string sentences in the passage, such as the following sequence:

He knocked on the door of my room and opened it and asked whether I had seen Mother.

I said that I hadn't seen her and he went downstairs and started making some phone calls. I did not hear what he said.

Then he came up to my room and said he had to go out for a while and he wasn't sure how long he would be.

It is worth quoting these and analysing how they work to construct meaning. Commenting that Christopher usually limits himself to the co-ordinating conjunction *and* is only the start of a useful evaluation. Candidates need to be able explain what's going on when he uses a different (in this case sub-ordinating) conjunction:

*I came home from school one day and no one answered the door, **so** I went and found the secret key that we keep under a flowerpot behind the kitchen door.*

Clearly Christopher is capable of making a causal connection between clauses here – *so I went* is a 'result' clause – so there is no use in candidates asserting that he never does or that he is unable to. He makes the same kind of connection when recounting the example of *David from school* at the end of the passage:

*And he hated the food, **so** his mother used to take meals in every day.*

From here it would be reasonable to infer that Christopher's declaration *We will need to take food to her* is an indication that he does care about his mother. Candidates who were reading carefully and paying attention to linguistic detail noticed the force and certainty (stemming from the high modality *will need*) of this declarative, and commented that a 'normal' person might have couched this as a suggestion or a question.

Such a line of argument would enable the candidate to make helpful use of concepts of *politeness strategies* and 'Face', possibly following on from an application of Grice's Maxims to the exchange between Christopher and his father.

Grice's Maxims remain the favourite 'framework' for analysing conversational exchange, and can be useful when applied judiciously. However, like any theory, the concepts of politeness and co-operation are only illuminating if applied to a situation where these features are relevant and significant. So candidates who painstakingly criticised Andrew and/or Mark in Passage A for their 'failures' to respect each other's 'face' needs had missed the basic point that this was a demonstration for the benefit of the other trainees, and that Mark and Andrew are not talking to each other.

Concentration on 'typical' non-fluency features of spoken language was equally unhelpful in terms of the broad dynamics of exchange in Passage A. However, it was helpful to analyse Andrew's *hesitations/false starts/reformulations* in the following:
attempt to put the patient back into a (.) a (.) normal rhythm (2) now the patient's in VF (.) ventricular fibrillation (1) this means that the heart's contracting in a a (.) very (.) un (.) uncoordinating way

Candidates reached some useful inferences from the data here. They suggested that Andrew is uncertain as to how much explanation his audience needs, so he expands the initialism *VF* to its full standard version *ventricular fibrillation*, and then offers a simplified explanation which leads him into another hesitation – will his audience understand *uncoordinating*?

Close analysis here allowed candidates to use their knowledge of jargon and/or field-specific lexis, and the likely effects of such occupational (medical) lexis and/or register.

Only extensive practice and exposure to a wide range of transcriptions of spoken language can develop candidates' discrimination as to which concepts and approaches (AO1) are likely to be the most helpful and productive.

Question 3: *Hawksmoor*

There were comparatively few answers on *Hawksmoor* this session. Those who did this question found it interesting to compare Nick Dyer's selection of Ned as a suitable (even willing) sacrificial victim with a conversation in which Mia is telling Ellie about her foreign travels.

Question 4: *The Great Gatsby*

The question invited candidates to examine Fitzgerald's presentation of optimism in *The Great Gatsby*. As 'cue-quotation', they were given Nick's reflection on Gatsby at the start of the novel: "If personality is an unbroken series of successful gestures, then there was something gorgeous about him ... an extraordinary gift for hope, a romantic readiness such as I have never found in any other person and which it is not likely I shall ever find again."

Candidates treated the question-focus with a certain degree of freedom, conflating *optimism* with just about every kind of other *-ism*, but particularly *individualism* and *materialism*. This worked well enough if it was supported by textual evidence – for example, Myrtle's 'optimism' about being in a relationship with Tom, shown obviously by her love of dresses and dogs and furniture, and less obviously by her foolishly optimistic belief (relayed second-hand to Nick and thus third-hand to the reader) that Tom would marry her were it not for the 'fact' that Daisy was a Catholic

...

However, such sound textual support was often lacking, while sweeping generalisations about the time in which the book was set were confidently asserted: 'It's the Jazz Age so everyone is optimistic!' As previous Reports have suggested, the best way to approach 'context' is from the angle of the bullet-prompt: *consider the influence on the novel of the context in which it was produced*. In other words, the method should be to *start* from the novel and move outwards to what can surely be said about the context.

There was much confusion in reading Passage A and exploring how it might relate to *The Great Gatsby*. Some of the confusion was understandable and excusable: candidates saw Hoover's reference to *the Civil War* and conflated that struggle with the First World War. Further confusion about the relative chronology of Hoover's speech and the novel's publication date led some candidates to think that Fitzgerald was writing *after* the Wall Street Crash.

Even so, candidates were able to pick up Hoover's line of argument, suggesting through a series of lexical items (mostly abstract nouns) a not-wholly-healthy progression:

Before the storm broke we were steadily gaining in prosperity. Our wounds from the war were rapidly healing. Advances in science and invention had opened vast vistas of new progress. Being prosperous, we became optimistic – all of us. From optimism some of us went to over-expansion in anticipation of the future, and from over-expansion to reckless speculation ...

There are obvious parallels with *The Great Gatsby*, and candidates were on secure ground as long as they kept the connections simple and then developed their exploration in terms of what actually happens in the novel. For example, many saw Gatsby's central optimistic belief – "Can't repeat the past?" he cried incredulously. "Why of course you can!" – as *reckless speculation*.

There was also some useful discussion of the *green light at the end of Daisy's dock* as a symbol of Gatsby's *extraordinary gift for hope*. Perhaps it's a tribute to the power of Fitzgerald's imagination – or perhaps it's simply shaky knowledge of the text – but many candidates seem to think that the green light is presented (and present) much more often and much more definitely in the novel than it actually is. They miss the diffidence and under-statement in Nick's narration and description:

*... he stretched out his arms toward the dark water in a curious way, and, far as I was from him, I **could have sworn** he was trembling. Involuntarily I glanced seaward – and distinguished **nothing except** a single green light, minute and far away, that **might have been** the end of a dock.*

Since the inception of the Specification, candidates have tended to over-state and to over-simplify in their evaluations of characters and situations in the novel. It is understandable that, especially in a closed-text examination, Centres and candidates will want to feel as certain as they can about the text. However, a prominent feature of Fitzgerald's style in the novel is Nick's avoidance of the categorical, the certain. For example, he describes his relationship with Jordan in the following terms:

I wasn't actually in love, but I felt a sort of tender curiosity.

Tentative exploration is not a weakness but a strength, and a clear feature of the better answers. So it's fine to argue for the green light as a symbol of optimism, but candidates should know that it only appears on three occasions in the whole of the novel.

Precise attention to detail is difficult without access to the whole text, which is why candidates need to be extra careful in their reading of the cue-quotation and Passage A. Careful reading of Nick's opening reflection on Gatsby – which of course is also an epitaph-in-retrospect – would yield the insight that the utterance is a conditional: *If personality is an unbroken series of successful gestures, then there was something gorgeous about him ...* Good knowledge of the text would also allow the realisation that *gorgeous* is always used ironically, notably of Gatsby's car and his *pink rag of a suit*. (E-texts are very useful for researching the incidence of particular lexical items!)

Question 5: *Wide Sargasso Sea*

A small number of candidates did this question about men's and women's attitudes to love in the novel. There was some useful discussion of what Christophine says in the cue-quotation:

"When man don't love you, more you try, more he hate you, man like that. If you love them they treat you bad, if you don't love them they after you night and day bothering your soul case out. I hear about you and your husband."

There were also some detailed discussions of the central relationship in the novel from the point of view of both Antoinette and Rochester, considering their attitudes and insecurities in turn – including, as one candidate expressed it, his *re-branding her Bertha*.

The mark-scheme contains suggestions as to other fruitful areas for discussion.

Question 6: *A Room with a View*

The cue-quotation came from the tennis party in Chapter XV of the novel, where Lucy is irritated by Cecil and finds herself looking at George:

"... she gazed at the black head again. She did not want to stroke it, but she saw herself wanting to stroke it; the sensation was curious."

The task was to consider acting on impulse (or resisting it). Most answers involved tracing instances of Lucy's impulses throughout the novel, often beginning with her decision to go out alone in Florence. In terms of impulse, Lucy was often contrasted with Charlotte; and George's impulsive kissing of Lucy (twice!) was usefully contrasted with Cecil's much-more-planned and much-less-successful attempt.

Although Passage A offered plenty of cues towards impulse and some very obvious irony, candidates seemed to miss these entirely. As with Fitzgerald, there seems to be a reluctance to risk thinking that Forster is ever being less than serious. There were, however, several good answers which made something of Anne leaning out of the window as a 'transgressive' act, and compared this to Lucy's small rebellions. (Lucy, too, leans out of a window in Florence; and the older Mr Emerson in particular seems disturbingly unworried about acting on kind impulses.)

The “Sacred Lake” episode was often useful in illustrating a range of attitudes towards impulsive behaviour. Unfortunately, the appearance of a naked clergyman was also one of many aspects of the novel which candidates saw as legitimately prompting unhelpful discussion of Forster’s homosexuality, and ways in which it might be manifest. While attitudes to sex and sexuality are clearly a relevant (AO3) consideration, speculative comment on the author’s life is often a distraction in Section B.

F672 Changing Texts

This is the fifth report for this unit and it is pleasing to note that the level of understanding from centres of how best to approach the two tasks has developed consistently, with candidates showing an increasing confidence with the analytical work for Task 1 and demonstrating a good range of creative responses for Task 2. The choices of text, and text combinations, studied by candidates has also developed, with a growing number of centres impressively managing an entry where each candidate responds to a different text combination. It has also been pleasing to see in this session candidates writing about texts that have not appeared before, including recently published novels, suggesting centres and candidates are engaging with new writing and the ways multimodal transformation of texts is an integral part of the creative process.

This report can be read in conjunction with the ones written for those previous sessions as many of the themes remain relevant from session to session. This report will seek to draw out issues in the unit that are pertinent to a majority of centres and information that is not included in the individual feedback to schools and colleges which is sent in the form of Moderator Reports. If further support on how to get the best out of the unit is available at the Autumn Training sessions where delegates will have the opportunity to discuss approaches and get feedback from senior examiners, as well as looking at examples of candidates work with commentaries on them written by the Principal Moderator.

Many centres are preparing their students very effectively to carry out a detailed comparison of a written text and multimodal version of it for Task 1 and in this session candidates have shown themselves capable of producing creative and imaginative reworkings of these texts for Task 2. At their best these submissions are extremely sophisticated responses across the two disciplines of the analytical work in Task 1 and Task 2 commentary, and the creative work for Task 2.

Task 1, the Analytical Study, requires candidates to explore the relationship between two versions of a text: a 'substantial' written text from any literary genre and a related multimodal version of that text. The weighted assessment objective for this task is AO3 which requires candidates to *use integrated approaches to explore relationships between texts, analysing and evaluating the significance of contextual factors in their production and reception.*

We want the unit to be as accessible as it can be to candidates of a wide range of abilities and in the case of Task 1 it is perfectly legitimate to approach the Analytical Study in quite a straightforward way by pointing out what has changed in the journey from written to multimodal text; to illustrate this with some examples and to begin to explore some reasons as to why these changes have happened. This kind of approach can produce some interesting discussion and candidates often demonstrate great enthusiasm for the texts they have studied. These responses are likely to be assessed by centres as meeting the criteria for marks in Bands 1 to 3 of the mark scheme. Candidates meeting the criteria for marks in Bands 4 and 5 will also be exploring the relationship between the two texts but in addition will be looking more closely at the language of the two texts and utilising a range of linguistic terminology in order to do this. They will also be entering more fully into the debate as to why texts are transformed as they are, and the factors that govern this. Many candidates did achieve this expected level of achievement for Bands 4 and 5 and in some cases created a superbly sophisticated and well illustrated debate which easily justified the marks high in Band 5 that they were given. In this session there seemed to be more evidence in Task 1 of candidates engaging in detail with the theoretical aspects of multimodal text transformation than in previous sessions. Below are a series of questions posed, and responded to, by candidates in Task 1 which reflect some of the extremely thought-provoking approaches taken.

- What is it about this particular written text that lends itself to multimodal transformation, and are there texts which would *not* be susceptible to such a treatment?
- What has the new version done with the original in order for it to meet the needs of its new audience purpose and mode? Have important things had to be sacrificed?
- 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 would the multimodal version be as a stand-alone piece of work?
- Are *radical* reworkings of texts in multimodal form more effective than *faithful* reproductions?
- Is it ever the case that the brilliance of the multimodal version renders the original obsolete?
- What is the point, in our digital world, of *non* multimodal texts?

In Task 2 candidates produce their own piece of work in multimodal form with a supporting commentary. As is the case for Task 1, 20 marks are available for this element. Many centres view the mark for the creative writing and the commentary holistically and balance the 20 marks available across the two elements. The 1500 to 2000 word limit for this task can also be balanced between the two elements. If the text produced foregrounds modes that are not language based then, within reason, this can be compensated for in terms of the word limit by a longer commentary. Commentaries need to be substantial in their explanation and evaluation of the choices made and should be analytical in approach. Some candidates are submitting commentaries that are mere logs of the process of text production, rather than detailed analyses. A01 requires the application of concepts and terminology from integrated linguistic and literary study.

The specification states that the multimodal text produced by candidates *should make use of at least two different modes (writing, spoken language, image, sound)*. Some of the forms that have been popular with candidates, particularly playscripts, dramatic monologues and novel extracts, struggle to be genuinely multimodal and centres would be advised to stress this requirement when advising on appropriate texts to produce. A script for a television dramatisation including storyboard elements is clearly more multimodal than a script for a stage play. Similarly a graphic novel re-creation of the original text would have no difficulty fulfilling the specification requirement where a more traditional form of narrative fiction might.

Just as many centres are becoming more ambitious in their choices of text studied for Task 1, so there is also a wider variety of text types being produced for Task 2. It is really pleasing to see from a single centre multiple different kinds of text produced. The creation of online texts including websites, blogs, and social networking pages are becoming increasingly popular with candidates. This again is a very welcome development as not only are these forms with which candidates of this age genuinely engage, but also most of these texts are seamlessly multimodal. Many candidates actually produce and post online their own version of these texts and submit for moderation a screenshot and link. An illustration of the variety of online texts produced in this session is reflected in this list of some of the more ambitious creations: travel websites; travel blogs; song performance and interview posted on YouTube; slide show with accompanying transcript of audio element; music video and transcript; pages on *Psychoanalysis Today* website; filmed interviews; pages for BBC website; an interactive museum guide.

Of course it can also be very rewarding to create texts that utilise traditional media. In this category we saw examples of self-help books, children's story books, graphic novels, art exhibition catalogues, stories told in the form of email/tweets on twitter/facebook postings, screenplays, audio visual guides and scripts of various kinds. Again this variety demonstrates the creativity with which many candidates and centres are approaching this unit.

Marking

Most of the marking in this session was a fair and accurate reflection of the merits of the candidates work and this demonstrates that centres are able to interpret the assessment criteria accurately. As would be expected from a coursework unit there are very few marks awarded in Band 1, and only a small number in Band 2 for either of the tasks. This reflects the positive achievements of the vast majority of candidates entered for the unit. Centres are reminded that it is expected that the sample of work will be annotated in detail by teachers in order to explain how and why the mark awarded has been arrived at. The most helpful annotation is a combination of AO related comments and the teacher's own qualitative judgements. Where candidates from the centre have been taught by more than one teacher it is important that evidence of internal standardisation is evident somewhere in the submission.

Some administrative issues

It would be very helpful if centres could bear in mind the following administrative issues.

- Work needs to be submitted for moderation as a paper based outcome. Please do not include disks, pen drives or other storage devices, which should instead be retained in the centre.
- Completed coversheets including all candidate numbers, full details of the texts studied and the tasks undertaken should be securely attached to the candidates' work. Please do not secure work using paper clips but use staples or treasury tags instead.
- Bulky folders should not be sent to moderators nor is there any requirement to include source material or rough drafts.
- Work should be clearly labelled Task 1, Task 2 and Commentary.
- Work should be sent to the moderator as soon as the request for the sample is received from OCR. Delays were again caused by moderators having to chase-up work that had not been received by the deadline.

F673 Dramatic Voices

General Comments

Centres are to be commended for their extensive efforts in the teaching of 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 successfully addressed 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

Limiting factors

Less successful approaches were often characterised by three highly prevalent features:

- limited relevance to the task
- limited coherence of argument and expression
- limited editorial and structural skills.

Each of these features limited candidates' answers. "Limited" is the defining criterion of Band 2 in the mark-scheme and typifies the qualities of work that is below the required standard for this level of study. Answers which appeared in this band were working below the required standard for achievement at A2.

Whilst it is tempting for candidates to attempt to show all that they know, the most important lesson is to read and stick to each keyword of the question in each section, **for** that section. Repetition of points, addressing Section B in Section A, going only to the Section A passages for evidence in Section B, describing (or even analysing) the unconnected history of the text severed from the dramatic language used within it, and so on – all these led to limited focus on the question and, therefore, to limited demonstration of the skills which the question assessed.

- Limited relevance to the task.

Section A

It was a pity to observe how candidates' knowledge and understanding of the texts and their contexts – which could be detected in work at every level – often resulted in only a Band 3 assessment (defining criterion "some" application/use/attempt). For example, Section A questions begin: "**By closely referring to the following two passages**". Candidates who began their answer with "In the play", "At the end of the play", "In the sixteenth century", and so on, were often distracted beyond their introduction into a general essay on the question theme. Candidates who began or soon continued with "In the passages", "Passage A shows", "The language of Passage B", "The opening line of this passage suggests", "Webster's use of", and so on, were more likely to incorporate their wider textual references and ideas or/and contextual evaluation into (or after) an analysis of the text. This approach facilitated relevance to the set question, worked to support the candidates' analysis of the passages and ensured that the keywords of the question were the driving force behind the answer.

Section B

Such general approaches to Section A often impacted on Section B answers. Candidates offering a general thematic approach in 'A', when none was required, often then repeated this in 'B', copying verbatim whole sections of the first answer into the second. In 'B', where a specific thematic approach was required and the material was more relevant – and then appropriately rewarded, even if generalised – it often was undermined by the fact that it had previously been stated as part of the first answer. This represented a 'catch-all' approach not only to particular questions but to the whole Paper, in which it appeared that the same undifferentiated essay would be offered, twice, irrespective of the question or the section requirements. Candidates are strongly advised to avoid this approach.

Assessment Objective Two

Some candidates did not engage with opportunities for linguistic analysis provided by the passages in Section A, or for analysis of dramatic effects in Section B. In all cases, candidates who focused on the texts as *dramatic voices* – noting dramatic character interaction, dramatic genre and sub-genres – achieved more successfully than candidates who demonstrated a limited grasp of the texts as a performance/realisable medium.

- Limited coherence

Examiners reported a high incidence of answers with uncontrolled expression which hindered lines of argument, and a prevalence of answers with little attempt at a line of argument.

- Limited editorial and structural skills

Examiners reported a high incidence of answers which were over-long, repeated points/paragraphs/ideas and seemed to have little overall structure or design. There were essays which could have been half the length for the same mark, or which appeared to conclude several times (indicating a lack of direction to the response), or which ended with a lower mark than might have been indicated earlier in the essay as a lack of progression demonstrated a haphazard approach to the question.

Additionally, candidates are advised to consider the definition of these basic terms: *semantic fields, lexis, syntax, adjacency pairs, utterance, sentence, verse* and *dramatic* to ensure the relevance of their use. Candidates are advised against a general assertion that there is *a lot of* these features in the passages. Candidates are advised to work within linguistic frameworks to define a character's speech and to avoid descriptions of *incorrect* or *correct English/language/words/sentences* when attempting to analyse regional, social and historical spoken language varieties, dialect and archaic language.

Evaluation of contextual influences on the text was handled with varying success. The least successful but most prevalent approach is still, typically, to offer contextual knowledge as a bolted-on feature of the answer, either in the introduction or the conclusion or in digressive paragraphs within the body of the essay. In such cases, it was substituted for textual analysis and contextual evaluation. In some 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.

Comments on Individual Questions

Section A

Question 1

This was by far the most popular question.

Successful answers

- addressed the keywords “relationships between” as well as “knowledge and power”
- explored the ways in which Faustus and Miller offered the links between knowledge and power to the audience: definitions and symbols, examples and manifestations, ideas and concepts
- used linguistic theory, for example Grice’s Maxims, to support analysis of 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
- explored/contrasted dramatic presentations: in passage B, of Hale and his books, Rebecca and her paralanguage/exit, Giles and his intervention, Parris and his awe/ego; in passage A, of Faustus and his books, Wagner and his status, the Good and Evil Angels and their dramatic and linguistic functions
- had an integrated grasp of the literary contexts and structures operating within morality plays and literary subgenre
- managed a comparative approach.

Less successful answers

- misread the chronological placing of both plays and their settings – in particular, stating that *The Crucible* was written in the C17th and treating it as such
- separated “knowledge” and “power” and wrote about them thematically across the play
- inaccurately identified linguistic features and parts of speech
- accurately listed linguistic features and parts of speech but did not relate these to any coherent argument or answer framework
- paraphrased the extracts/whole play.

Question 2

Examiners reported that many answers to this question were typified by confident and, in some cases, independent responses. Conversely, some answers to this question produced the most incoherent responses of this series suggesting that if the language, linguistic concepts and characterisations in the plays and passages, especially *Hamlet*, had been misunderstood.

Successful answers

- addressed the keywords “ways” and “dramatists present” as well as “thinking and reasoning”
- demonstrated a clear grasp of the inter-text
- engaged the concepts of Existentialism and the conventions of meta-theatre to consider the dramatic effects of the extracts
- analysed comparatively the dramatic presentations of Rosencrantz and Guildenstern across the extracts.

Less successful answers

- misread “present” as *current* and tried to construct an argument about contemporary “thinking and reasoning”
- addressed the *theme* of thinking and reasoning in the play
- focused on *thoughts* and which characters thought what – effectively a plot summary/interpretation.

Question 3

This question was the least popular and, on the whole, competently addressed.

Successful answers

- examined the many “ways” that “disloyalty in relationships is presented”
- evaluated and applied Feminist readings contextually and critically
- engaged with social class and gender issues through relevant linguistic analysis
- effectively compared presentations/responses of Julia with Win and the Cardinal with Nell
- sharply observed the question’s links to Joyce and Angie across the play.

Less successful answers

- digressed into general definitions of disloyalty and stretched the definition of relationships into prepared answers on other ideas
- simplified/substituted the definition of disloyalty for definitions of *dishonest* or *disempowered/disenfranchised*.

Section B

Candidates who engaged with Assessment Objective Two – sometimes, given the closed book situation, more through analysis of dramatic form and structure and application of linguistic theory over a sustained detailed language analysis – produced essays which demonstrated an integrated approach to linguistic and literary study. Less successful candidates engaged with only limited linguistic and technical aspects of the drama and tended to produce either literature essays, historical summaries or a combination of the two.

Question 4

The most popular question.

Successful answers

- engaged and maintained focus on the key idea of “sinfulness”
- identified core episodes or characters for an analysis of sinfulness and systematically addressed their dramatic presentation
- explored Marlowe’s use of the dramatic voices of the Good and Evil Angels and the Old Man in the presentation of sinfulness
- analysed the language/symbols/allegories of sinfulness across the chosen play; for example the dramatic effects of personifying The Seven Deadly Sins, the socio-gender implications in the presentation of Helen of Troy as the embodiment of sinfulness, the socio-sexual implications of Proctor ploughing fields close to the forest
- analysed the ambiguities presented through the dramatic voices of Faustus, Hale, John Proctor
- analysed the dramatic tensions of scenes presenting the reckoning, redemption and condemnation of characters in either play
- analysed the structural devices used to present sinfulness; for example Marlowe’s comic sub-plots, the contrast and comparisons of Abigail/Tituba with Danforth/Hawthorne
- evaluated context at a sophisticated level; for example the Marxist interpretation of Faustus’ sinfulness as a challenge to religious orthodoxy, the relationship between blame and status or/and social status and gender in the presentations of Abigail, Tituba, Mary Warren and Elizabeth Proctor.

Less successful answers

- wrote essays – poorly or well executed – which were entirely literary in character
- tried to cover every sin by everyone in *The Crucible* or could not differentiate the sins committed by Faustus
- described/narrated/summarised the plot/characters/sinful acts
- misread the text and who had done what with/to/for whom
- asserted that one particular sin was the worst and forced the text to meet that personal view.

Question 5

Some original and highly engaged conceptual work was seen in response to this question.

Successful answers

- confidently defined the keywords “freedom and constraint” and constructed a response to their own identified terms
- focused on the dramatisation of episodes/characters/examples that could illustrate their argument
- engaged the stagecraft of their chosen play; for example its physical boundaries/dimensions in Stoppard’s play, the self-consciousness of restrained or free staging/acting in *Hamlet*
- analysed the dramatic use of structural devices; for example the functions of the Player or The Mousetrap
- analysed the language/dramatic representation/symbolism of spies/prisons/madness-as-release in *Hamlet*
- integrated the contexts of Renaissance religious orthodoxies, gender issues and Jacobean/Classical theatrical conventions into a response to *Hamlet* or Existential philosophical questions and conventions of the Theatre of the Absurd and meta-theatre into a response to Stoppard’s play.

Less successful answers

- wrote on a topic unrelated to the task
- twisted the keywords “freedom and constraint” beyond what could usefully answer the question
- asserted that in *Hamlet* everyone was constrained by everything
- extended constraint to Claudius’ kingship and pursued tangential lines of argument
- based their response to Stoppard’s play on the general premise that characters are constrained by the writer (implying that there was a possibility that it could be otherwise), which seemed to disable any further response beyond this caveat.

Question 6

This was the least popular question this series.

Successful responses

- addressed “attitudes to” as well as “social status” in their chosen play
- evaluated dramatic presentations of the gender and social class implications of Jacobean regal and religious orthodoxies in Webster’s play
- analysed the capitalist and Thatcherite principles being dramatised by Churchill
- were alert and sensitive to constructs of character motivation driving the dramatic action
- focused on specific episodes/character interactions/language which supported the chosen line of argument
- analysed in context Churchill’s use of dramatic cross-currents in Act 1.

Less successful responses

- wrote essays – poorly or well executed – which were entirely literary in character
- took a moralistic approach to characters from either play, particularly Marlene in *Top Girls*, which limited response to the dramatic voices, both contextually and linguistically.

F674 Connections Between Texts

General Comments

Many of the points made about this unit are the same as they were for the June 2010 session, and centres might like to take another look at that lengthy report. The main difficulty seems to lie in the notion of what constitutes the 'substantial text' in Task 1 against which the supporting texts are to be compared. The implication of having a substantial text is that the analysis of this text will be foregrounded in Task 1 and the supporting texts (which will be much shorter) will be looked at by way of comparison with this central focus. Mostly candidates did not do this and instead compared the three texts as if they were equivalent. This in turn meant that there was very little discussion about the 'non-canonical' status of the substantial text. In some cases, the substantial text was anything but substantial – one poem, for example, or a song lyric will not do.

Some centres need to look again at the specification requirement that there should be discussion of spoken language. Most deal with it by including a spoken text in Task 1. If not there, it must be in Task 2. However, the issue is that simply having a spoken text (either scripted or spontaneous) is not enough if the candidate then simply uses it to discuss an issue of content. There has to be significant discussion of the conventions of spoken language itself – hedges, fillers, backtracking etc. If the speech is scripted, then it is up to the candidate to draw attention to ways in which a speaker may try to trick an audience into believing that it has natural speech flow, or to discuss the distinctive ways in which it can be seen not to be spontaneous. The representation of speech in fiction can be dealt with in the same way.

On the whole, centres are gradually learning their way round the tricky corners of this unit. Few, however, are really taking hold of the opportunities for really exploring the status and reception of texts.

Task 1

We have seen a range of texts. Sometimes they are chosen entirely by the centre and all candidates do the same thing. Other centres allow free choice.

With the first option, the danger can be that the work does not come across as a personal investigation, and often the same context material and the same examples are used by all candidates. When this approach is taken, centres might be well advised to suggest to each candidate a specific, individual focus for his or her work in order to avoid uniformity and to ensure that candidates are not simply synthesizing what they have been told.

Free choice presents slightly different issues, in particular because the works chosen are often non-controversially canonical – *1984* or *The Color Purple*, for example. The issue here is that candidate should be willing to engage with why their works do not fit easily into categories. For example, with David Peace's novel *The Damned United* or Truman Capote's *In Cold Blood*, the 'factional' nature of each novel plays with genre and expectation, and both have spawned either imitators or have inspired others to make similar experiments.

Centres are reminded that the texts chosen should (with the exception of the Bible) have originally been written in English, unless the work is owes its status to the translation (FizGerald's *Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam*, for example). If centres are in any doubt about this, they should consult OCR and ask advice.

A further issue is around the use of linguistic terminology in the analysis of texts for Task 1. AO1 and AO3 talk of 'approaches from integrated linguistic and literary study' and 'integrated approaches,' which implies that candidates will use linguistic terminology with both knowledge,

and, at the top end, sophistication. Not enough of this is yet evident in the majority of folders. Some candidates approach Task 1 in too descriptive a fashion with virtually no detailed analysis or application of critical terminology. In choosing an 'issue' to discuss there is also a danger that candidates will focus narrowly on the content of the texts rather than the language in which they are encoded. Centres need to ensure that candidates are explicitly taught how to explore texts using a variety of linguistic frameworks. As yet, task setting (giving candidates a very clear literary/linguistic focus) is not sufficiently foregrounded as a distinct and important stage of the process. It is clear from the folders presented this year that those candidates do best who have worked with a very clear sense of direction, and much of this is tied up with the business of centres approving very specific, close focused questions before candidates get too deeply involved in their research.

Centres would be well advised to warn their candidates against the unloading of contextual information early on in an essay. Dates of production and statements of intent are usually only a way of a candidate moving in on the material, and they tend to waste words that could be used more fruitfully for analysis. A working rule might be that candidates should get into detail in the first paragraph, via analysis of a particular moment and then working outwards from there towards more general statement. Candidates who work outwards from detail throughout, generally score more highly on AO1.

Task 2

Candidates are more secure in their work for Task 2. However this piece of work doesn't for all candidates seem to be convincingly 'an outcome of the study for Task 1' – for many, the work seemed entirely disconnected to the texts and analysis in Task 1. Some of the Task 2 creative work seemed rather too straightforward for A2 level: a simple magazine interview, for example – however convincingly presented – doesn't necessarily offer the challenge expected at this level.

Centres are reminded that the work presented here does not have to be multi-modal, as it does in F672.

Many centres are following the advice, given in training sessions for the unit, that the creative writing and commentary Task 2 can be marked holistically. Some of the commentaries were very detailed and, in some cases, superbly analytical pieces of work which complemented the shorter creative pieces.

Administration

As last year, the moderators would simply plead that centres should make it as easy as possible for them to do the work. Pages should be instantly turnable (stapling it all together will do); loose pages beg for disaster; each folder should be clearly named with both the candidate's name and number. Beyond that, it is significant that centres that evaluate work on the cover sheet tend to make more accurate overall judgements. If a candidate has used unfamiliar texts, it is useful to a moderator to be sent at least an extract of the texts used. Centre dealings with the board's computerized systems seemed to run more smoothly too. The majority of folders turned up on time and included all the necessary paperwork. Moderators do not underestimate the amount of time that teachers spend on this, and we are very grateful for the conscientiousness with which both the assessment of the folders and the time consuming evil of paperwork are carried out.

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