



## **Level 1/2 Certificate**

### **Living Texts**

OCR Level 1/2 Certificate Living Texts **J945**

## **OCR Report to Centres June 2016**

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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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## **B931 Analysing Texts**

### **General Comments**

This June there were 15 centres that entered their candidates for the Analysing Texts unit. The entry was very encouraging as the quality of the responses adequately met the assessment criteria and the consistency of marking indicated that centres had been able to meet the requirements of this specification.

### **General Admin**

This was excellent overall. Folders were submitted on time and were all well presented with detailed annotated comments making the moderation process much easier. In most cases the annotated comments referred to the assessment criteria and this was very helpful in the final moderation process.

Marking was generally consistent and centres had been conscientious in their application of the assessment criteria.

### **Response to texts**

The diversity of texts that had been chosen on this entry was reflected in some of the original and interesting responses of the candidates. Interestingly this year some centres had chosen media texts ranging from the humour of Eddie Izzard to the war time speeches of Winston Churchill. In addition there were responses to texts such as "Of Mice and Men", Conan Doyle's Sherlock Holmes and Wilfred Owen's poetry.

It is very sad that OCR announced that next year will be the last year of this specification, as Centres are now selecting texts that clearly stimulate candidates and allow them to show originality in their analysis of the meaning and effect of a wide range of writers.

### **Summary**

Generally this was an impressive entry, and centres demonstrated a clear understanding of the specification and responded appropriately. Teachers are to be complimented for their hard work in delivering this component, and their conscientious approach and consistency of standards was reflected in the quality of work that was submitted for final moderation.

## **B932 Recreating Texts**

### **General Comments:**

There was a wide variety of Centres entered for this unit this summer, which ensured that there was a very wide range in the standard of the work and the achievement of the candidates. Such a breadth of interest reflects the opportunities offered by this specification and suggests that it can meet many different needs of teachers and candidates. Most Centres had exploited these opportunities to provide interesting and worthwhile texts and tasks.

### **Tasks**

Some impressive Centres encouraged a wide range of reading amongst their candidates who enjoyed a variety of short stories, plays and journalism. The use of the “Let’s Move To...” Guardian column was particularly successful. Bill Bryson and Charlie Brooker were popular with centres, although their humour was not always easy to recreate successfully.

Play texts and feature films were used to stimulate the production of additional scenes and there were some very convincing extra scenes for Macbeth. Less successful were the responses to TV programmes and films where the candidates did not have access to an exemplar script or screenplay.

There was, understandably, a tendency to use texts already possessed by Centres and it may be that some exploit the books already being studied for another specification; An Inspector Calls appeared as did the most commonly studied Shakespeare texts. This seems a pragmatic way for some Centres to operate.

Speeches drawn on included those by Martin Luther King, Barack Obama and Hilary Benn. There are opportunities to study both journalism and speeches by women as well as fiction and it is to be hoped that Centres will exploit these in future. YouTube can be a useful source of speeches by the likes of Emma Watson, Michelle Obama and Malala Yousafzai. There are also many internet blogs which can serve as useful models for teenagers to recreate.

Candidates who were given a wide variety of material to read and a range of possible responses to choose from were often better engaged and performed more successfully than those whose choices were more restricted. The specification offers great flexibility and it is pleasing when Centres exploit this. This unit does encourage Centres and candidates to exploit a wide range of texts and, in particular, the use of two stimulus pieces from the same genre is to be discouraged.

### **Assessment and Clerical errors**

Most Centres were helpful in the way they annotated work with reference to the assessment criteria and provided evidence that internal standardisation had taken place. Comments on the work and the cover sheet indicating how marks have been awarded are sometimes neglected and Centres should be mindful of how useful these are to the moderation process.

## B933 Comparing Texts

### General Comments:

In Unit B933 of Living Texts candidates study two texts, of any genre, and explore some of the connections and relationships between them. These texts must be of sufficient substance to support detailed study. In this context 'substance' refers to both the degree of challenge that the text offers, as well as the length of it. Centres are reminded that the study should be of two 'whole' texts, though it is of course fine for the focus in the B933 response to be on sections of each. It was again the case this year that some centres submit work for this unit where candidates had written about a single poem as a 'text'. If poetry is studied then responses should refer to a minimum of three poems, and this would constitute one of the texts being compared. As B933 is an 'extended study' and the written work is the outcome of approximately 35 hours of study it is of course appropriate that the work is more than just a comparison of two brief texts or extracts.

The second element of the unit is the presentation which should build on the themes and ideas explored in the writing. It is not appropriate for the presentation to merely replicate in spoken form that which has been submitted as the written work. The best presentations develop from, and extend the focus of, the ideas presented in writing. As the unit – and indeed the specification as a whole – is seeking to enable students to develop their own interests in reading and responding to texts it is particularly good to see evidence of students presenting on issues for which they have a particular commitment.

This year, as in previous sessions, many centres choose to organise the delivery of this unit by teaching a 'core' text and then encouraging their students to have some element of choice and autonomy in the selection of the other text to compare. Some centres manage to generate a wide range of second texts from a variety of different genres for students to explore. Students can be actively involved in the selection of texts and can introduce media or spoken language texts with which they are familiar and interested. If the core text is a canonical literary work then to pair it with a contemporary media text, or a script or piece of biography can make for really stimulating comparisons, particularly if the texts genuinely interest the candidates. As has been previously mentioned in these reports the process of supporting students with text selection, and the approach to the comparative study, enables meaningful differentiation in terms of ability can happen within the group. This in turn will tend to generate more enthusiasm and commitment in the production of the work. If there is a range of second texts being studied the choice of presentation topics across a group also becomes broader and more individualised.

Where the potential of the unit seems to be less realised is where each candidate is pursuing the same task on the same pair of texts, and then follow that with identical presentation focuses. Inevitably this creates sameness and uniformity in responses and writing that is largely indistinguishable from that which might be produced in an exam. In order to be awarded marks in the top band of the mark scheme candidates need to show 'sustained insight and perception' by 'exploring' the ways in which meanings are created and texts link to one another. Exploration is far more readily achieved when an individual viewpoint is being developed.

In this report for a previous session centres were reminded that the specification does have a very flexible attitude toward what kinds of text can be used in the three units. As long as the text does offer appropriate challenge, and is of interest to the students, then it really is the case that centres can broaden the offer of what kinds of text students study. This specification is not about the prescription of canonical texts. It would be perfectly acceptable, for example, to have candidates gather their own group of media texts on, say, representations and attitudes to war and conflict, and to use these comparatively with whole-class taught World War 1 poems. Or to study the poems alongside a contemporary film dealing with issues of war and conflict. Or, using

the same example, to study the poetry of World War 1 alongside the testimonies of those caught up in contemporary conflicts across the world, as one candidate did fascinatingly using an extended BBC News report entitled 'The Lost Boys' which explored the circumstances of two children who died in the conflict between Israel and Palestine.

In terms of the presentation the most interesting and successful approach is to take a theme or idea from the studied text and to explore that idea in other contexts. It seems to work best when the presentation moves beyond a merely informative purpose into something for which the student feels a particular conviction, and is seeking to persuade an audience to share this viewpoint. More examples of what form these presentations could take are made in this report for previous sessions. Centres are again reminded this year that the presentation is part of the holistic mark for B933 and that there should be evidence provided as to what constituted the presentation, the context in which it occurred and some sense of how it was assessed. Many centres produce their own proforma on which to record this information and that is extremely helpful at moderation in justifying the marks given.

Please can centres be reminded that annotation on scripts and summative comment are required. Please also ensure that all the details on the CCS are completed, including all candidate numbers and details of the written and presentation tasks.

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