

GCSE 2004

June Series



Report on the Examination

English, English Mature and English Literature

Specification B

English/English Mature (*including External*)

- 3701/3703 Oral Coursework
- 3701/3703 Written Coursework
- 3701 Foundation and Higher Tiers
- 3703 Foundation and Higher Tiers

English Literature (*including External*)

- 3711 Written Coursework
- 3711 Foundation and Higher Tiers

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English (3701)/English Mature (3703)

Oral Coursework – En1 (3701/3703/CS)

As part of the new specifications, Speaking and Listening saw two significant changes from previous practice. The first of these was the requirement that candidates produce work within three specified contexts: *individual extended*, *group interaction* and *drama-focused*. The second significant change involved aspects of the monitoring of centres' assessment for En1: a three year rolling programme of centre advisory visits was introduced, with a more rigorous agenda for such visits. In both cases these changes have been quickly integrated into English coursework, and although there are still some areas for further development, it is pleasing to note how well this component has operated in 2004.

The Three Contexts

The requirement for candidates to perform within three contexts is designed to introduce variety into the curriculum and to stress the fact that effective Speaking and Listening has a number of different features. Where the best practice was observed, En1 was integrated into full schemes of work, and was taught in much the same way as reading and writing skills were taught. Where practice was less effective, advisers reported that candidates were expected to perform complex spoken tasks without any apparent preparation.

Advisers saw some very impressive work within the *individual extended* component. Although there is considerable flexibility around what constitutes an extended performance, and what the content/context for such a performance can be, many centres (echoing the exemplar material shown on recent tapes) chose to show advisers candidates who were giving fully-fledged talks to the whole group. Some of these were outstanding, with just the right balance between preparation and spontaneity; even weaker candidates managed to sustain a reasonable level of performance over a couple of minutes. Many candidates were helped by being asked questions which encouraged them to develop their ideas and to extend the range of their vocabulary.

Group interaction is the context with which teachers are most familiar, and group work is at the centre of much English teaching. It is worth stressing that this context requires *interaction*, a combination of both speaking and listening, where candidates genuinely engage in explorative talk. There are times, though, when work within this context is in danger of becoming more performance-based than explorative. This is understandable; candidates who are being assessed by an outsider, whether via a tape or via a visit, are in one sense performing for outsiders. In everyday classroom situations, though, it is worth teaching students how collaborative talk really works, and how the different functions of group members are best delivered.

Drama-focused activities were, for some centres, a new concept, and so the cause for some concern. As it turned out, most centres coped well and candidates clearly enjoyed the opportunities to perform in role. Being in role, and then being assessed against English criteria, is not easy, though, and certainly needs preparation. Many centres chose to use literature as a stimulus for these activities, with candidates being asked to assume the role of a character from a novel, play etc. This can work well, although a performance in role of a minor character might not be the best way to allow an able candidate to show all the requisite skills. It is also worth stressing that students need help with performing in role – just because they have studied the text does not necessarily mean they can 'become' the character. Some of the best performances in role involved candidates creating their own personas, based upon their observations of social situations that they are familiar with. It is hoped that

future teachers' coursework standardising meetings will discuss successful activities and share good practices.

Advisory Visits

Advisory visits are usually made as part of a three yearly cycle but they can also be triggered by concerns over the implementation of En1 in a centre. Advisory visits serve two main functions – to advise centres on all aspects of En1 and to report to AQA on assessment and standardisation.

Most of the visits completed this year were positive in atmosphere and showed practice in centres which ranged from the acceptable to the excellent. In the latter category were centres who have placed speaking and listening at the heart of their schemes of work, so that candidates are confident in being assessed and subtle in their skills. Advisers were aware that in a number of centres staffing turnover made the management of En1 quite difficult – but again centres were generally able to maintain acceptable procedures.

Many good examples of record keeping were seen across a range of centres. The best ongoing records showed precise assessment of each task (including the award of a mark out of 27) and some brief description of the performance that would eventually be used to help formulate the final summative commentary. Fortunately very few centres are still commenting on social behaviour rather than En1 skills. In many centres the candidates themselves were given access to the ongoing assessment, which makes sense if they are going to develop the quality of their work.

Summative comments for each candidate form part of the final coursework submission for En1, En2, En3. These summative comments should show how a final mark is arrived at by relating the general criteria to the specific tasks that form the final submission – merely copying out the criteria is not very helpful.

Standardisation

The standardisation of En1 across teaching groups in centres clearly requires different procedures from those which operate with the written coursework elements. Ideally there will be some opportunities for teachers to visit each other in classrooms – and where this facility is limited; priority can often be given to teachers who are new to the centre.

There are though other methods of internal standardisation. These include:

- team meetings which consider aspects of En1 by using training tapes;
- the regular swapping of written records;
- teachers working in pairs with some common activities;
- special attention given to NQTs;
- use of out of class speaking opportunities, such as assemblies, for standardising;
- regular slots for En1 at department meetings;
- production by centres of their own videotapes;
- informal links with other centres.

One final piece of standardisation is, somewhat surprisingly, overlooked in some centres. This involves ensuring that all folders sent to the moderator as a coursework sample have En1 records which are completed with the same degree of accuracy and detail. One teacher taking overall responsibility for checking these records is an obvious way to ensure that there is reasonable uniformity across the centre.

Conclusion

The general impression from the visits made to centres was that En1 is taken seriously in most centres and that its marking and moderation is seen as an important part of the GCSE process. Many candidates seemed to enjoy the opportunities offered by speaking and listening, and there were examples of interesting work spread across all ability levels. This general level of success does not come easily in terms of time, though, so the Principal Moderator and the rest of the team are very grateful to teachers for all their hard work in this area.

English (Mature) External (3703X)

External Oral Coursework – En1 (3703/XCS)

The external oral allows for candidates who are not being taught in conventional circumstances to follow an English GCSE and to be assessed for En1. It is vital, though, that the centres through which such candidates are entered make sure that the candidates are given, well in advance, details of what the external oral examination will entail.

The three parts of the examination seemed to work well and most candidates were well prepared for their individual extended contribution. The other two components, variations on formal and informal discussion, allowed many candidates to perform well and to present interesting ideas and arguments.

Candidates enjoyed the informal group interaction which calmed nerves. Many candidates still came with two prepared talks and so they chose the topic for the talk themselves. Many candidates had prepared talks and most were of a very high standard, certainly substantial enough for the final discussion.

It is also important that full details are sent to AQA where special arrangements may be required – such as a chaperone where candidates are under 16 etc.

Centres entering external candidates in 2004/5 must note the following points.

Some candidates assumed various items of equipment would be readily available. There will not be an overhead projector, television or furniture etc provided in the room in which the assessment will be carried out. If candidates wish to bring with them certain visual aids it may be possible to accommodate such a request, if AQA is notified in writing in sufficient time to organise this with the venue.

Some candidates did not possess the Pre-Release Booklet. Most had seen the *Entry Information for Private Candidates (Series K)* and the *GCSE English Specification B (Mature) External (3703X) Support Booklet for Private Candidates* documents provided by AQA which clearly state that a Pre-Release Booklet is required by external candidates for the written examination. Centres must note that external candidates will take the English **Mature** examination and therefore need the **3703/PM** Pre-Release Booklet which centres can obtain from AQA's Centre Services Department.

English (3701)/English Mature (3703)

Written Coursework – En2-3 (3701/3703/CR)

It is pleasing to report that most centres had adapted well to the new specification in English. Most centres had administered the course efficiently, assessed their folders according to the assessment criteria and annotated the assignments in a manner both useful to candidates and supportive of the marks awarded.

Administration

Sample Selection

Centres generally met the changes in administrative procedures in a positive way. The process for the selection of the sample was successful so long as centres met the deadline in informing their moderator of their centre's marks. Centres are reminded that the second **and** third copies of the Centre Mark Sheet (CMS) should be sent to the moderator so the yellow copy can be returned to the centre with the candidates marked whose folders are required. It is helpful for moderators if centres send the sample **by return**. Some centres delayed sending their sample for several days and this obviously delayed the whole process of moderation.

Some centres, however, need to note that as well as the highest scoring folder the lowest folder with any mark above zero should be included in the sample and failure to include it will delay the moderation process.

Incomplete Folders

Centres are further reminded that they should indicate on the Centre Mark Sheet with an asterisk which folders are incomplete and the appropriate form showing the reduction of marks should be completed and enclosed with the sample.

Checklist

It is important for centres to ensure that the marks on folders are the same as the Centre Mark Sheet. The 'Check Sheet' sent by moderators to their centres was designed to address the various errors that might occur when administering large numbers of candidates.

The **Centre Declaration Form** is still a requirement and should be enclosed with the sample.

Numerous centres now submit helpful cover sheets, rank order lists and sometimes stimulus material and notes on the assignments and these are to be welcomed.

Speaking and Listening

Centres are to be congratulated for the careful and helpful way the information regarding Speaking and Listening was completed on the Candidate Record Form. Almost all centres filled the box with summative comments justifying the candidate's mark; comments, it should be said, from the assessment criteria. Centres appeared to have warmed to the drama focused possibilities. Centres are

reminded that completion of this part of the form is an essential part of the standardisation of En1 marks (see the comments on page 6).

Content of Folders

It would be surprising if the contents of folders changed radically just because the specification is slightly different. Moderators found that the contents of folders were much the same as in previous years and the tried and tested texts and tasks were present. Precise details of the various sections of the folder appear later. It was noticeable, however, that some new texts for this course had been adopted. Centres are reminded that one assignment needs to be handwritten, and for the purposes of assessing AO3(iii) it is more appropriate that the handwritten assignment is one of the Personal Writing pieces. Moderators would also prefer that word processed assignments do not use a font which is capital letters only for Personal Writing assignments. A few centres still insist in submitting folders of some seven assignments, in fact two entire folders of English and English Literature but called 'a folder'. This, and the length of some assignments, often several thousand words long would appear to be excessive given that coursework for written English is 20% and 30% for English Literature.

Personal Writing

The two assignments of Personal Writing varied greatly from centre to centre. Writing based on the first triplet *Explore, Imagine, Entertain* was often the best piece in the folder. There was evidence this year of narratives some which demonstrated carefully crafted and stylistic skills far in excess of the candidate's chronological age. Often sophisticated techniques were used to explore the thoughts and feelings of characters in an entertaining way. The move away from 'Fiction' to the triplet appeared to act as a stimulus for some engaging assignments and topics such as Macbeth's Missing Soliloquy, poems and play scripts led to high achievement. Narrative techniques such as flash-back, reflection and engaging dialogue were all employed to good effect, and tension and atmosphere were well managed. Some excellent fiction also was employed when candidates wrote narratives based on 'sequels' to literary texts. These included *Samphire, Lamb to the Slaughter* and *The Landlady*. There is a continued interest in the horror and supernatural genre. There were fewer tendencies for these to be derivative and writing was less rambling and often more experimental than in previous years. Centres are reminded that creative work based on texts is more appropriately submitted as Fiction, rather than as a Prose assignment and that length is not always an indicator of quality.

Personal Writing for the triplet *Inform, Explain, Describe* showed signs of greater diversity and there were fewer examples of "My Best Holiday" and "Work Experience Week". Even these, however, tended to be more thoughtful and reflective than the mere accounts they once were. Indeed, mature candidates wrote about loss, betrayal and deceit often in a moving and sincere manner. Discursive essays, campaign appeals and assignments using the media and research are now more common.

The distinction between the triplets can, however, become blurred. It is possible, for example, for two Personal Writing pieces to be first person accounts of actual experience. Even when the first aims at a more imaginative style, and the second is more precisely informative, there is a narrowing of scope in personal writing if this is adopted.

Technical Accuracy in Writing/Assessment of AO3(iii)

There are still some folders which have few signs of the teacher's marking. Most had summative comments, and increasingly phrases from the assessment criteria to justify the mark awarded.

However, the general impression was that the subdivision of the writing mark was applied appropriately. Many centres ensured that marking was detailed, with teachers engaging with what the candidate had written and providing on-going working comments as well as pointing to errors in the writing.

Reading & Response to Texts

As far as Shakespeare was concerned the usual favourites reappeared. However, moderators commented that there was well focused work concerning villains in *The Merchant of Venice* and *Othello* and comedy in *The Tempest* and *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. The former worked well on the subject of the audience's differing viewpoints of Shylock; with the latter, Iago's villainous techniques in selected soliloquies lend themselves to close analysis. Tasks on *Macbeth* and *Romeo and Juliet* were as in former years. Unusual Shakespeare texts discovered by one moderator were *Measure for Measure* and *The Comedy of Errors*. Where a 'cross-over' piece on Shakespeare is used it was sometimes noticed that the study of language, required for the English specification, was not in evidence.

Prose texts were varied and not entirely dominated by short stories. There were successful responses to *Great Expectations* and *Oliver Twist* mainly concerned with the creating of setting and atmosphere. These titles, with *A Christmas Carol* and his short stories, seemed to indicate a revival in the reading of Dickens. *Pride and Prejudice*, *Jane Eyre*, *Far From the Madding Crowd* and *Frankenstein* were all popular as texts again. From the modern era, *To Kill a Mockingbird* entered the lists after some absence. As far as short stories were concerned, gothic imaginings of the Victorian era are as popular as ever and Dahl, the favourite of post-1914 literature. Centres are reminded that pre-1914 prose texts should be selected from the prescribed list of authors found in the specification and **five or six** short stories should be studied. An assignment would be expected to cover two or three short stories depending on the length and difficulty of the stories. Texts not seen previously included *The Color Purple* and *A Child in Time*.

Centres are reminded that creative writing based on texts is difficult to assess against the assessment criteria for Reading En2 and only the very best candidates can meet higher level reading criteria. Also, it is difficult for assignments on film versions of plays or novels to provide evidence of understanding, insight and analysis of the texts.

Oral Responses to En2

A number of centres submitted an oral response for En2 coursework and this generally proved to be very successful. Moderators were concerned that some centres did not submit written evidence from the candidate or it was perfunctory and not sufficiently detailed to explain what the candidate did. Likewise, why the teacher awarded the mark was not always evident. The teacher's notes were sometimes duplicated, the same for all candidates, and lacking in analytical detail. Centres should note that there should be close correspondence between the centre's justification of the awarded mark and the appropriate assessment criteria. This proved to be of concern to moderators especially where the mark awarded was often the highest of the folder.

Assessment of Folders

The general impression of moderators was that a sound system of internal standardisation was in place in almost all centres. Single teacher centres are encouraged to join a local mainstream centre for internal standardisation wherever possible and attend the annual Coursework Standardising Meeting

held at regional venues in the autumn term. Moderators felt that the standard of marking was generally within tolerance and there was understanding of how the assessment criteria was used in making judgements about work. Centres are reminded that the grade descriptors for Reading show a clear progression using the terms response, awareness, familiarity, understanding, insight and analytical skill.

Summary

In this first year of the specification there was a general impression that centres had responded well to the new demands. Centres and their candidates are to be congratulated on their professional approach and commitment to the course.

English (Mature) External (3703/X)

External Written Coursework – En2-3 (3703/XCR)

Most coursework folders met the new specification requirements with four appropriate assignments. As in 2004, in 2005, AQA will send to centres a revised Candidate Record/Authentication Form especially for external candidates on request. This will also be available to download from the AQA website: www.aqa.org.uk

Centres are reminded that the work of external candidates should not be annotated or marked. Also that one assignment – preferably one of the Personal Writing pieces – must be handwritten.

Many folders this year reached the examiner very late. The final folders should be with the examiner-moderator by **5 May**.

Personal Writing - explore, imagine, entertain

Whilst most candidates preferred to write a short story, the new triplet encouraged some candidates to write their own poetry (with a description of how and where it came to be written), others contributed successful diary entries, often using a character from fiction, and a few managed play scripts.

Personal Writing - inform, explain, describe

This triplet generally produced excellent responses from the more mature candidates. Biographical pieces of relatives, descriptions of places, an event which made a lasting impression – in fact, a great variety of interesting responses.

Shakespeare

Romeo and Juliet probably pushed *Macbeth* into second position this year. And it was pleasing to note that candidates focused their responses: the role of Friar Lawrence, the witches/supernatural in

Macbeth, etc. Malvolio's importance to the play was a very popular assignment. Many essays made use of film/televised versions of the text studied and to good effect.

Prose

As usual, there were a great variety of texts. Although some candidates studied short stories*, there were others who compared *Lord of the Flies* and *I'm The King Of The Castle*. *To Kill A Mockingbird* continues to be a favourite with external candidates, as is *The Color Purple*.

*A reminder: the new specification requires the study of at least **five or six** short stories, even if the candidate focuses on only two or three in her/his assignment.

Summary

It was very pleasing to see how well the new specification had been followed by centres and candidates.

There are two publications available to external candidates designed to assist candidates:

(1) **Entry Information for Private Candidates** – available from the Private Candidates (Entries) departments at AQA Guildford or Manchester. This document gives the entry codes for private candidates and will contain information about the arrangements for external oral assessments in 2005.

(2) **Support booklet for Private Candidates** – also available from the Private Candidates (Entries) departments and the GCSE English Department (AQA Manchester).

Both of these documents will be available to download from the AQA website www.aqa.org.uk in the autumn term.

English (3701)

General Comments

This was the first year of the new specification and the response from centres and candidates was positive and pleasing. The structured nature of the Media section, now presented entirely in the Pre-Release Booklet, resulted, generally, in well organised answers. The wholly unseen Non-fiction section allowed candidates to show their true, independent abilities in response to the texts, which seem to have been universally enjoyed. The responses to poetry were usually full and well considered, reflecting the reduction in questions on Paper Two.

The Writing sections, rationalised into the two triplets, allowed a better focus from candidates and more time for a considered, often well planned, response.

Generally, the new specification was well received and enjoyed an increase in candidate numbers. Comments specific to each tier follow.

Paper 1 Foundation Tier (3701/1F)

General

The examination paper was felt to be accessible, as it was last year, allowing the full range of Foundation Tier candidates to respond according to their abilities. The questions were straightforward and were generally tackled with enthusiasm. The unseen Non-fiction text about Laval the baboon was understood by even the weakest candidates, and seemed to have been read with enjoyment.

Section A: Reading

Question One – Media Texts

This was the first examination for the new specification. As was intended, the new style bullet-pointed questions worked to the candidates' advantage and elicited more tightly focused responses from them. Much less time was misplaced by candidates who presented irrelevant material in their answers this year in comparison with past years.

In the first bullet point, candidates were asked to write about how words were used to make the reader feel sympathy for the wildlife in *Wildlife toll mounts in Australian fires*. The most successful candidates focused on individual words and phrases in the text and offered some explanation of how they made the reader feel sympathy. For example, the “fragile koala” made the creature sound vulnerable and pathetic; the “furry marsupial” made the koala sound like a “cute cuddly toy”. Both phrases made the reader feel sorry for the helpless koalas. These better candidates offered several such examples. The majority of candidates selected appropriately from the text, described how the wildlife suffered, but failed to analyse specific words and phrases in the parts of the text selected. Some candidates offered a comment on the effect of the picture of the koala bear, which was not relevant since they were asked about words, not images.

Candidates' responses to the second bullet were less successful overall because many failed to address how effectively the information was presented in the *Burnt-out area of three Londons* section. The most successful candidates wrote economically and succinctly on, for example, the accessibility of the bullet points and their success in conveying factual information. Less successful candidates described the content of the section without commenting on its presentation. A significant number of candidates wrote about the presentation of the *Wildlife toll mounts in Australian fires* which was not asked for and for which they received no credit.

The third bullet elicited the most disappointing responses from candidates because many failed to focus on the effect of the picture of the boy fishing as Sydney Harbour is engulfed by smoke. Many candidates merely described the picture, and others were obviously aware they were being asked to explain the effect of the image, but found it difficult. Some were ingenious but wrong-headed ("the local fish shops would lose business because the smoke was killing the fish"), and very few mentioned the dramatic effect of the image. Better candidates did, however, comment on Sydney Harbour Bridge being a symbol of Australia, the vastness of the smoke cloud, and on the way the boy was just getting on with his fishing as the fire raged.

Question Two - Non-fiction Text

This year, the non-fiction text was unseen, whereas in previous years it was studied in the pre-release booklet. It was clear that candidates performed better without the annotation in their booklets to distract them. Responses were focused on the bullet points and candidates did not waste time writing irrelevantly as they have done in previous years. The text about the fishing baboon was accessible to all levels of ability. It was obviously enjoyed, and even the lowest scoring candidates had understood the basic story line.

The first bullet point asked candidates to explain what was surprising about the baboon's behaviour. The most successful candidates kept the key word "surprising" in focus and linked their comments on the baboon's behaviour to it. For example, it was surprising that the baboon had a complete personality change and even let the children scratch his back; it was surprising that he wore a sun-bonnet; it was surprising that he possessed such fishing skills. The most thoughtful candidates also used the final paragraph about the baboon being a special guest. Many candidates mentioned the keyword once, but implied it in their selection from the text. The weakest candidates failed to mention the keyword and merely described what the baboon did.

The second bullet point which focused on the writer's language was answered less successfully. The weakest candidates omitted this second bullet altogether, whilst others merely added more narrative, usually about the baboon's fishing skills. Better candidates selected the "triumphant HOO!" as lively language, and the best identified the phrase as onomatopoeic and made a comment on its vividness and liveliness. The best candidates selected more than one example and added comments on, for example, the baboon's frilly sun-bonnet, or quoted the lively verbs used to describe his actions.

Section B: Writing to Argue, Persuade, Advise

Question Three

A small number of candidates failed to respond to Question Three, either because of mis-timing, or because they failed to turn over the paper. AQA regrets that, after careful consideration, such cases cannot be granted special consideration, as candidates failed to follow the rubric of the examination paper.

Candidates were asked to write a speech for their class debate on the topic, “Human beings are the enemy of animals”. Candidates across the ability range had appropriate ideas on the topic, and most made it clear that they were writing a speech.

Generally, candidates’ speech-writing techniques were reasonably competent. The better candidates were aware of their audience: they addressed their audience at the beginning, end and during their speech; they used direct and rhetorical questions; they threw out provocative comments and questions. A significant number of candidates, however, wrote without any awareness of audience or purpose.

There were some heartfelt and rousing speeches, but generally the content of the speeches was rather disappointing. Many candidates wrote about cruelty to animals or vegetarianism without relating it to the topic at all, or only tenuously. The argument was often weak, for example “We are not their enemies because we eat them. They would do the same to us”, which failed to persuade or convince. The references and examples were generally narrow and confined to the existence of the RSPCA and zoos. Arguments for humans and animals working together, as with guide dogs, were disappointingly few.

Like last year, responses were technically flawed. The most detrimental technical error was, as always, in sentence division. The weakest answers were devoid of punctuation including the final full-stop and were difficult to follow as a consequence. In stronger answers, the comma was frequently used instead of a full-stop, or was used intrusively. The full-stop was frequently missing at the end of questions. Sentences were frequently over-long (ten lines or more) and control was partially or completely lost along the way. Apostrophes were generally missing and frequently inserted into plural nouns. Agreement between pronouns and nouns and their verb was often inaccurate. The usual errors with they’re/their; are/our; we’re/were; your/you’re were frequent, and texting spellings such as U for ‘you’ are increasingly prevalent.

Expression was often clumsy and unidiomatic and the choice of vocabulary was unambitious. Paragraphs were frequently missing altogether or they were ineffective with, for example, single sentences standing as a paragraph.

The mis-use of capital letters seemed to be more glaring this year. Weaker candidates fail to use them at the beginning of sentences, or for the personal pronoun ‘I’, and they are frequently used randomly throughout a piece of writing. Capital letters are also used in the middle of words, the result of poorly formed letters, or an apparent ignorance of the difference between upper and lower case letters.

Paper 1 Higher Tier (3701/1H)

General

Candidates found the paper accessible and in many cases enjoyable. The preparation for Section A, Question One, Media Texts was generally appropriate and helpful; Section A, Question Two, the unseen Non-fiction text engaged and interested candidates and the writing question, in Section B, facilitated responses from across the ability range. The vast majority of candidates clearly had ample time to respond to all three questions. Some examiners, however, report issues concerning time management and the approach to the questions. Section A, Question One is wholly prepared and a small minority of candidates were determined to write everything they had learned about the articles referred to in the question, irrespective of the focuses of the question. Such a strategy resulted in very long and partly irrelevant answers which took up time. The Reading paper was designed, through the use of bullet-point prompts, to guide candidates through the questions in an efficient way. The vast

majority of candidates followed the prompts appropriately and successfully completed the paper. As in previous years, examiners are still reporting that a small number of candidates entered for Higher Tier would be better suited to Foundation Tier.

Section A: Reading

Question One - Media Texts

The five bullet-point prompts, answered appropriately, constituted a full response to the question. Almost all candidates understood this. Responding to the prompts in order was the most efficient way to deal with the question. Most candidates understood that a succinct answer was all that was required for the first prompt. Writing a full appreciation of the whole of the Ahuja article did not advantage candidates. Detail sufficient to indicate that the topic had been understood was all that was required; the mark scheme for the highest mark band also suggested recognition of the irony that the fires, “could lead to renewed interest in prescribed burning”. Most candidates were able to give an account of the difference between facts and opinions presented by Ahuja, as required by Assessment Objective Two (ii). The prompt for the Roger Maynard article provided an opportunity for candidates to show their ability to interpret his choice of language. Many did, with recognition that the writer had used a number of well-crafted images of war and battle, together with the animal/beast motif. The most successful answers explained how the imagery would have impacted upon the reader; less successful responses simply stated that a given phrase was “dramatic” or “emotional”. In a similar way, the prompt to comment on the use of headlines allowed candidates briefly to explore the way the writers had used language for effect, again noting the use of imagery and the differences in approach evident in each of the headlines.

Comments on the effectiveness of the pictures varied from scant reference to what the pictures were showing, to some engaging analysis of the militaristic nature of the helicopter and the appropriateness of seeing prescribed burning in relation to the texts studied. Candidates should be reminded that the overarching requirement in responding to the Reading questions is to show understanding through insight and interpretation, as stated in Assessment Objective Two (i) in the specification. Candidates should understand that to gain marks in the higher bands, evaluation and analysis of the texts are required. The retrieval of reference and quotation, together with a comment which shows basic understanding only, cannot be highly rewarded. There were no widespread errors or misconceptions noted in response to this question. Section A, Question One was wholly prepared from the pre-release booklet and candidates were guided through the tasks set. They should not have needed to spend too long on this section, notwithstanding the need to make interpretative comments.

Question Two - Non-fiction Text

Examiners report their impression that candidates enjoyed the ‘unseen’ text by Peter Ackroyd. The responses from candidates were a refreshing development from previous years since examiners were able to make judgements, based on the criteria in the mark scheme, in the knowledge that the work was the candidate’s and the candidate’s alone. The question was successfully completed by the vast majority of candidates who generally understood the text well and were able to make interpretations and, in some cases, offer insight into meaning and effect. In the case of the first prompt, “explain” and the second prompt, “describe”, it was appropriate to comment on what was learned and some of the experiences of the people, not just list or summarise events and references from the text. Many candidates did so comment, selecting specific ideas and details, explaining the devastating extent of the fire and explaining the analogy with World War II. Similarly, there were numerous interpretations of the experiences of Pepys, Evelyn and others, extending comments as to how these people were differently affected, how people must have felt in the fear, panic, sadness, suddenness and heart-

breaking destruction which was wrought. The third prompt proved to be the discriminator. Here, more able candidates focused their response, selecting interesting and vivid words, phrases and images and offering thoughtful, original and sometimes sophisticated analyses of the text. Less able candidates made a brief response with the addendum that a given phrase was “dramatic”, caused “sympathy in the reader” or was “emotive”. This question was a true test of a candidate’s ability to select, interpret and evaluate language. The third bullet point in particular guided candidates to do this. The mark scheme specifically states that candidates need to explain the context and analyse the effect of a writer’s use of language in order to gain marks, not merely quote. Most candidates understood that this was required and were rewarded accordingly. There were no widespread errors or misconceptions noted on this question.

Section B: Writing to Argue, Persuade, Advise

Question Three

Most candidates wrote an article with an appropriate register, some reference to readership and a stated point of view which was then developed. Many candidates adopted a rather narrow focus, which was dependent upon anecdote, however viable, and sometimes rested heavily on the Reading material. More able candidates developed the ‘phoenix rising’ notion and pursued wider, more generally moral views. A good number of candidates had time to write at length, unfortunately not always sustaining interest. The best candidates interpreted the question in terms of the human condition and a philosophy of regeneration. The range of responses was wide. Most articles argued and persuaded to varying degrees and communicated ideas to varying degrees of success. Some examiners sensed a general improvement in the organisation of ideas, expression of concepts and general writing skills. Rhetorical devices were well embedded, usually appropriately and employed to some effect. Candidates should understand that writing which is original and develops extended ideas with clarity and a developing vocabulary will attain the highest marks. There was still a tendency, amongst a range of candidates, to write in columns. This should be discouraged. The most able candidates sometimes did not attempt a title, nor pay overt attention to audience. This is an aspect of showing awareness of readership (Assessment Objective Three (i)) and should be evident. There was perhaps more evidence this year that candidates were aware of the need to employ a variety of sentence forms and show some evidence of extended vocabulary. General errors in expression, punctuation and spelling remain, but there was little evidence that these were exacerbated by lack of time.

Paper 2 Foundation Tier (3701/2F)

General

Examiners and candidates welcomed having two questions rather than the three of previous years. For the first time, Poetry from Different Cultures and Traditions was included in the examination. Tackling poetry rather than prose did not seem to have presented candidates with any particular difficulties. All candidates had plenty to write about the topic in the Writing question and the responses were engaging.

Section A: Reading

Question One - Poetry from Different Cultures and Traditions

The unseen poem, *Sometimes When it Rains*, was accessible to all candidates and responses to the first bullet point showed that it was understood at some level by all candidates. It was extremely gratifying to read candidates' responses which were not clogged with pre-release booklet annotation as have been their responses to Other Cultures texts in the past. These were, in contrast, refreshingly original and thoughtful.

There were, however, two sources of error which lost candidates marks. The first was the inclusion of the pre-release poem, *Hungry Ghost*, in candidates' answers to the first two bullets. A significant number of candidates included quite lengthy accounts of *Hungry Ghost* in response to these first two bullets, which asked for references to the unseen poem only.

The second source of error was the rubric on the examination paper "You are reminded to comment on the cultural aspects of the poems". It was clear that many candidates thought they were being asked to comment on cultural aspects of the poems **in addition** to answering the bullet points. This caused them to write responses for which they were given no credit because it was not asked for. Although centres were told about this rubric in AQA teacher support and coursework standardising meetings and in the AQA Teachers' Guide, it is clear that the message had not reached candidates.

The first bullet point was answered by all candidates and their responses showed understanding of the poem. Many candidates produced full responses, detailing all the poet's thoughts with appropriate quotations, and commenting on her sympathy for others. The weakest candidates selected only one or two of the poet's thoughts, but nevertheless showed that they understood the general drift of the poem.

The second bullet point was more challenging as it asked candidates to explain how the writer uses language to convey her thoughts in the unseen poem. The most successful candidates picked out, for example, the metaphor and personification of "at the mercy of cold angry winds", and explained how the human quality of anger made the winds sound like some kind of monster. Many candidates cited examples of the poem's repetition, but fewer managed to make a valid comment on it by saying, for example, that the repetition reinforced the poem's title and the flow of the poet's thoughts. Candidates cited the lack of punctuation, and some identified enjambment. Again, the weakness was in commenting on its effect. The following comment was both thoughtful and valid: "The poem has no punctuation which makes it flow like rain. It has natural pauses which don't need punctuation." The majority of candidates, however, answered this bullet points in general terms and failed to cite features, examples **and** comment on their effectiveness. A common error was to refer to stanzas as 'paragraphs'.

In answering the third bullet point, candidates frequently did not go any further than stating that both poems were about childhood memories. The rest of these candidates' responses were taken up with description of the content of either or both poems unrelated to comparison, which could not be credited. Many candidates included a detailed analysis of *Hungry Ghost* without relating it in any way to a comparison with the unseen poem.

The better candidates, however, responded well and made thoughtful comparisons. For example, candidates selected the way that both poems conclude with a wish and compared the different wishes made by each poet. Others compared the viewpoints of the two grown-up women recalling different aspects and moods of their childhoods in different cultural settings. Others compared the rain and the visit to the bazaar as the triggers for the memories in each poem.

Section B: Writing to Analyse, Review, Comment

Question Two

Candidates seemed to have enjoyed this question.

Candidates were asked to write a letter in which they analysed what they thought would make a perfect world. The content of answers gave an insight into the minds of our society's sixteen year olds, and it was heartening to read their views. Above all, they wanted peace and the end to all wars. They wanted a world without prejudice, discrimination, bullying, violence or crime, where the environment is respected and where it is safe to walk on the streets. A very small number of candidates expressed anti-social views, such as denying entry to all immigrants, getting rid of gay people or executing paedophiles. These latter views were expressed by candidates with the weakest writing skills.

Generally, these answers were engaging, heartfelt and refreshing. Some candidates concluded their accounts effectively: one serious and thoughtful answer concluded with an effective, brief sentence: "Oh, and I'll be married to Beyoncé". Some candidates wrote about a Utopian world. The better candidates included some analysis in their answers, rather than just a list of ideas, some of them questioning the concept of perfection itself. For example, "If perfection is the best, and we have the best, then what is there to strive for?" The less successful candidates restricted their answers to a narrow range of improvements to their personal lives, without analysis, such as having more litter bins, somewhere to 'chill', or no exams.

Candidates were clearly asked to write a letter, but it was surprising how many failed to include any attempt at all at a letter format. Those who did attempt a letter format made many errors with the layout. It would be in candidates' interest to learn how to lay out a formal letter correctly, and to spell 'sincerely' and 'faithfully' correctly. Many candidates wrote "Dear Sir / Madam", when the question referred to the Editor as "him".

This particular topic required candidates to write in the conditional tense, as in the question. Better candidates did succeed in this, but many did not, or did not do so consistently. Perhaps because of the nature of the topic, there were many more non-sentences in candidates' writing. For example: "Not to have any exams. No speed cameras and high taxes. No drinking except after 16."

Otherwise, the technical errors which frequently reduced candidates' overall performance were the same as in Paper One Question Three above.

Paper 2 Higher Tier (3701/2H)

General

The paper was accessible and engaging and examiners report that candidates had sufficient time to make a full response to both sections. They also report, however, their continuing concern that a number of candidates would be better suited to responding to the less demanding texts offered at Foundation Tier. The tasks gave candidates ample opportunity to demonstrate their understanding and appreciation of poetry texts and to write an analysis in a coherent and convincing way.

Section A: Reading***Question One - Poetry from Different Cultures and Traditions***

The bullet-point prompts were there to guide candidates through the question. Those who followed the prompts were able to show understanding, interpretation and insight into the meaning of Tobacco Pickers and provide evidence that they were able to compare poetry texts. There was evidence that candidates understood the ‘unseen’ poem and that what was being described was the repetitious drudgery of the tobacco pickers’ burden, which could not be recompensed. A few candidates were confused by the idea that the people in the poem were addicted to smoking the tobacco and some were disproportionately concerned about the unfairness of their wages. Candidates, generally, were able to select appropriately from the text to support their understanding. The most able candidates focused on the themes of the poem, offered detail from appropriate selections from the poem and included interpretative comment. Many candidates assumed that the tobacco pickers were slaves. Whilst there is no overt reference to this in the poem, the interpretation was considered valid by examiners and rewarded. Most able candidates responded to the second prompt with detailed analysis and evaluation of words, rhythm and tone, thus providing evaluated evidence of the effect of the poem on the reader. They could explore the ambiguities of different emotions, for example between “rage” and “hope” and offer insight into personifications such as “tobacco drinks our pain”. Weaker candidates quoted from the text but did not offer analysis or evaluation beyond a reiteration of the fact that the tobacco pickers’ lives were hard or boring or repetitious. Generally, candidates were able to recognise the implicit and subtle rhythms of the poem and indicate that enjambment was a factor in this. The tone of the poem was discussed variously; weaker candidates noting that it was “sad”, the more able exploring how despair, anger and impotency were tonally expressed.

The obvious connections between the poems – of hard and repetitious work – were made by most candidates although perhaps too much was made of the “slavery” connection. Some valid, contrasting points were made which were rewarded, such as the reluctance of Grandma Mariana to reveal, “You won’t tell your story” and the desire of the tobacco pickers to make their plight known; “Now you know”.

The emphasis in the paper was deliberately put upon the ‘unseen’ poem. The prepared poem was used for purposes of comparison only. Those few candidates who wrote down everything they had learned about Grandma Mariana simply wasted time.

Section B: Writing to Analyse, Review, Comment***Question Two***

Candidates at all ability levels were able to make a cogent response to the topic. Weaker candidates were able to assemble lively and pertinent speeches, though they tended to be solely anecdotal and the least successful complained, if not ranted, rather than analysed. Generally, tone and register were appropriate and audience was referred to, if not in salutation, then implicitly. More able candidates widened the effects of stress to its moral, societal and future implications and offered solutions to it – counselling, yoga, an engaging hobby – or chocolate. Generally, exams and school pressure came in for a beating, but peer pressure and adolescence were also features dealt with in detail and with some feeling. There was a maturity of approach to the topic, which clearly engaged candidates as if they had been waiting for the opportunity to evaluate the issue for some time. Most candidates made some overt effort to balance their views, recognising the need to analyse and there was widespread evidence of analytical markers and connectives. The rhetorical question remained the most popular device, though more able candidates offered a good deal of appealing irony and humour. Although responses communicated with at least some success and many were convincing, ideas which were varied and

which were well expressed eluded many candidates. The organisation of writing into coherent parts and the employment of paragraphs seemed to be widespread. Recurrent technical problems were weak sentence structure and lack of clarity in expression. Although spelling remains problematic for some candidates, there was however evidence of a deliberate attempt to employ extended vocabulary.

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

English 3701

Foundation Tier (Targeted grades G-C)

Component	Maximum Mark (Raw)	Maximum Mark (Scaled)	Mean Mark (Scaled)	Standard Deviation (Scaled)
Paper 1 3701/1F	40	120	51.8	17.9
Paper 2 3701/2F	40	120	45.6	18.0
Oral Coursework 3701/CS	27	80	44.7	10.7
Written Coursework 3701/CR	27	80	40.7	10.9
Foundation tier overall	134	400	182.8	46.2

Component		Max. mark	C	D	E	F	G
Paper 1 3701/1F	raw	40	23	19	15	11	7
	scaled	120	69	57	45	33	21
Paper 2 3701/2F	raw	40	20	15	11	7	3
	scaled	120	60	45	33	21	9
Oral Coursework 3701/CS	raw	27	16	13	10	7	4
	scaled	80	47	39	30	21	12
Written Coursework 3701/CR	raw	27	16	13	10	7	4
	scaled	80	47	39	30	21	12
Foundation tier scaled boundary mark		400	209	171	133	95	57

Higher Tier (Targeted grades A*-E)

Component	Maximum Mark (Raw)	Maximum Mark (Scaled)	Mean Mark (Scaled)	Standard Deviation (Scaled)
Paper 1 3701/1H	54	120	60.6	18.0
Paper 2 3701/2H	54	120	66.6	19.4
Oral Coursework 3701/CS	27	80	61.3	8.8
Written Coursework 3701/CR	27	80	60.0	9.5
Higher tier overall	162	400	248.5	44.3

Component		Max. mark	A*	A	B	C	D	allowed E
Paper 1 3701/1H	raw	54	43	35	27	20	15	12
	scaled	120	96	78	60	44	33	27
Paper 2 3701/2H	raw	54	45	37	29	21	16	13
	scaled	120	100	82	64	47	36	29
Oral Coursework 3701/CS	raw	27	25	22	19	16	13	10
	scaled	80	74	65	56	47	39	30
Written Coursework 3701/CR	raw	27	25	22	19	16	13	10
	scaled	80	74	65	56	47	39	30
Higher tier scaled boundary mark		400	320	275	230	186	146	126

Provisional statistics for the award

3701

Foundation Tier (25775 candidates)

	C	D	E	F	G
Cumulative %	29.2	60.3	81.7	93.0	98.0

Higher tier (34180 candidates)

	A*	A	B	C	D	allowed E
Cumulative %	5.5	27.8	64.4	92.1	98.8	99.4

Overall (59955 candidates)

	A*	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
Cumulative %	3.1	15.8	36.7	65.0	82.2	91.8	96.6	98.8

Definitions

Boundary Mark: the minimum (scaled) mark required by a candidate to qualify for a given grade. Although component grade boundaries are provided, these are advisory. Candidates' final grades depend only on their total marks for the subject.

Mean Mark: is the sum of all candidates' marks divided by the number of candidates. In order to compare mean marks for different components, the mean mark (scaled) should be expressed as a percentage of the maximum mark (scaled).

Standard Deviation: a measure of the spread of candidates' marks. In most components, approximately two-thirds of all candidates lie in a range of plus or minus one standard deviation from the mean, and approximately 95% of all candidates lie in a range of plus or minus two standard deviations from the mean. In order to compare the standard deviations for different components, the standard deviation (scaled) should be expressed as a percentage of the maximum mark (scaled).

English Mature (3703)

General Comments

This new specification has been developed to cover the range of candidates who had previously sat either the SEG English (Mature) syllabus or the NEAB English (Post-16) syllabus. It is hoped that the specification carries with it the best traditions of its ancestors. The strengths of the new specification are: pre-release material targeted at a mature, 16+ candidature; single tasks for reading assessment obviating the potential for candidates to waste time in selecting a topic to write about; reading and writing tasks which reflect the interests and needs of candidates.

The candidature for the new specification is clearly established, with the bulk of entries coming from sixth form colleges and colleges of further education. As is appropriate for entries from such centres, there are more candidates on Foundation Tier than Higher, with an approximately equal entry from male and female candidates. However, there are more male candidates in Foundation Tier, more female candidates in Higher Tier. Unfortunately, there were still some examples of candidates being entered for Higher Tier papers, who would have benefited more from the Foundation Tier, and centres need to be reminded of the need to use the two tier entry appropriately.

Because this examination is aimed at older candidates, the texts used for reading assessment have been selected to meet their needs and interests. For Paper One Foundation and Higher, the pre-release booklet provided Media texts from a range of sources, which focused on money and wealth. Non-fiction texts for both papers also looked at the impact of poverty on people's lives. In general, questions relating to these texts (i.e. both Questions One and Two) were enthusiastically answered, the texts working very effectively to bring out the key reading skills targeted under the assessment objectives.

On Paper Two Foundation and Higher tiers, the poetry texts, again chosen to meet the needs and interests of older candidates, generated a wide range of answers. On Tier F, there was some difficulty with the question and candidates should be encouraged, through their centres, to look primarily at content, which would have the additional benefit of providing the skills to approach the unseen poem. Patterns of attendance in FE colleges and sixth form colleges may have an impact here, with some candidates struggling to write effectively about poetry. However, it was pleasing when candidates were able to comment at a general level on the issue of childhood experience. On Higher Tier, the general standard of response to the two poems was high. The vast majority were able to comment sensibly about content and meaning. Some candidates in this tier, not entirely confident with the meaning of the poems, resort to the identification and listing of poetic elements and devices, with little or no accompanying explanation. Such answers do not gain many marks. However, good answers were able to show how poetic devices underpinned meaning.

Writing is assessed through the Section B tasks. On Papers 1F/1H the writing addresses the *argue/persuade/advise* triplet in the specification, while Papers 2F/2H address the *analyse/review/comment* triplet. In all papers, the writing tasks attempted to draw upon the knowledge, interest and experience of an older candidature.

It should be noted that AO3(iii) which covers accuracy of writing is marked separately. This is a progressive move as it means that technical accuracy will not unduly weigh the assessment of writing achievement. Thus, even where accuracy is poor, candidates are able to receive marks for the coherence of writing and for organisation and structure.

Examiners were pleased with the ability of candidates on both F and H Tiers to write effectively and clearly to purpose. Many answers introduced relevant supporting material and were clearly structured. The use of discourse markers such as “therefore”, “however”, “on the other hand” and so on, enabled candidates to create a framework for their writing which led to more effective and pertinent responses.

There were, however, some serious concerns over accuracy. The use of the comma instead of the full stop in the demarcation of sentences is the single, most evident flaw in writing. In some cases, and particularly on the F Tier papers, it is so ingrained in the answer that the basic communication task is severely impaired. Centres would therefore be well advised to ensure that the teaching of technical writing skills is maintained throughout the academic year. This approach would also help candidates to produce a variety of sentence structure and sentence type. This being said, many candidates showed confidence in the use of punctuation at sentence level, using a more ambitious range including colons and semi-colons.

Sound grammar and syntax were also problematic for many candidates and the two most troublesome aspects were agreement of subject and verb, and appropriate use of tense. In elided verb forms such as “didn’t” or “can’t”, the omission or misplacement of the apostrophe was a concern, as was the use of the apostrophe in plurals as in “twenty thousand pound’s”. Again, skills work in the classroom would help here.

It was gratifying to note that most candidates were able to adopt an appropriate tone for the Section B tasks and when tone and mood were manipulated for effect, it was rewarded appropriately.

A key issue is candidates’ time management under exam conditions. In both 1H and 1F many candidates spent far too long answering Question One, which had knock-on effects for the rest of the paper. In a small minority of cases this led to serious disadvantage for candidates when they provided no response whatsoever in Section B. The maximum mark available to them is then effectively halved. This particular problem is not as evident on 2H and 2F, with one question in each section. It is important therefore that centres ensure candidates are well aware of the time requirements on the papers, particularly Papers 1H and 1F.

Overall, the new specification provided ample opportunity for candidates to display their reading and writing skills. Generally there was a high level of achievement on all papers and centres should be congratulated for the work they put in on behalf of their candidates.

Paper 1 Foundation Tier (3703/1F)

The first examination of any new specification has the potential to cause problems; thankfully, this paper appeared to offer suitable opportunities for candidates to display their abilities and the vast majority of those who sat it responded positively to its challenges.

Of course, since the time was limited to one hour and forty minutes, candidates had to work swiftly and efficiently, but most completed all three questions and included a considerable amount of detail. The three tasks were very different, but designed to target the assessment objectives, for which many candidates had been well prepared.

Section A: Reading

Question One – Media Texts

Candidates were asked to examine attitudes to wealth as presented in two items from the pre-release booklet - *The Perishers* cartoon and the BBC website article. They had to compare the texts and, specifically, write about points of view, the use of facts and opinions, presentation and layout and audience and purpose. The best candidates tended to work through the bullets, dealing with each in turn and relating the features to the stem question, which asked them to compare the attitudes to wealth.

Most answers were strongest on points of view. Almost all recognised the viewpoint of the Asians surveyed, and many were able to write about what was being said and suggested in the cartoon. Clearly, these matters had been dealt with when candidates were being prepared for the examination. However, some answers then went on to discuss language features, although that was not an explicit requirement of the task. Language should have been analysed when points of view were being discussed, and could have been a significant feature of the section on audience and purpose, but some candidates' comments lacked relevance, so they ended up writing about the texts in general, rather than answering the question.

Those who did focus on all the important bullets did not necessarily answer appropriately. In less successful responses, facts and opinions were identified, but candidates did not explain how these had been used; and comments on presentation and layout were often very limited and might have applied to any presentational device in any text ("This is to attract our attention."). The answers which gained higher marks showed how facts and opinions support the message or create impressions; or how the reader is influenced by particular details, with pictures proving a rich vein for analysis. Comparisons were made clearly, rather than relying on juxtaposition.

Comment on intended audience and purpose varied, but answers were most successful when judgments were based upon features of the texts, rather than simply being presented to the examiner with no supporting evidence or comment.

Overall, those centres in which teaching appeared to have been focused on the assessment objectives seemed to be most successful.

Question Two – Non-fiction Text

Although the candidates had to base their answers on a quite lengthy and previously unseen extract from *Angela's Ashes* by Frank McCourt, they coped well, and sometimes performed better than on Question One. Many seemed more comfortable dealing with story and situation than they had with facts, opinions and presentational devices. Also, they seemed liberated by not feeling they had to rely on pre-prepared analyses. On this question, the language points they made were usually relevant.

The sequence of bullet points in the question provided tasks of increasing difficulty. Almost all candidates were able to describe the mother's actions and words; explaining her motivation required more skills; and the better responses dealt with "how" the story is told.

Handling the first two bullets, most candidates showed understanding and compassion. They were able to identify the mother's motives and, importantly, explain them, often with precise reference to the text. Better answers worked through the text, looking at each stage and how she reacted, rather than simply summarising her general situation. Writing about how the story is told allowed candidates to analyse it from a number of angles: they could write about linguistic detail, narrative technique in a more general sense, or the structure of the extract. Because of pressures of time, this

final section was usually the briefest, but nevertheless produced some perceptive comments, though many restricted their comment to ‘point of view’, apparently lacking the skills to analyse in more depth.

Once again, those candidates who just wrote randomly about the text were less successful. In those cases, their focus was often upon the behaviour of the father, and they sometimes produced vitriolic outpourings about his behaviour; others turned to sociological reviews of society in general; whilst a few criticised mothers like Frank’s, who drive their husbands to drink. They would have been better advised to provide the information and comment required by the question.

Section B: Writing to Argue, Persuade, Advise

Question Three

The writing section of the paper required candidates to write a letter to a relative who has been left a large sum of money, offering advice on how to make the most of the windfall. They were asked to argue that the money should not be wasted and to persuade their relative to give some money to good causes.

The vast majority of responses were of an appropriate length – implying that most candidates had used the examination time effectively and appropriately – and fulfilled the requirements of the task.

However, many candidates failed to read the question properly, and wrote to a relative who had won the lottery. Fortunately for them, since the main task was to *advise/argue/persuade*, this was not considered a significant failing. It is possible, of course, that a similar failure to read the question could cause considerable problems on another occasion, so candidates should be encouraged to produce exactly what the question demands.

In terms of general content, examiners were presented with letters that offered a wide range of advice and suggestions. This was, clearly, a task to which candidates could respond in some depth. Relatives were advised to take holidays, invest in properties, consult financial advisers, and buy small luxuries; but to be aware of possible pitfalls. However, the shadow of future financial ruin loomed large in many letters. Nevertheless, charities looked set to benefit enormously from relatives’ new found wealth: from child-care groups to mosques and those working in the third world. Cancer Research was the most popular suggested recipient for spare funds. Responses argued that casinos, drug dealers, excessive alcohol and car salesmen should be avoided. There was sometimes a touch of appropriate humour as correspondents hinted they themselves could do with a few extra pounds.

Almost all candidates used the expected, serious tone and most used some detail. The majority wrote in paragraphs and there were even occasional colons and semi colons. Perhaps it is no surprise, in the modern world, that many candidates could produce the necessary content but were unsure about how to write a relatively informal letter. Often, the layout was designed for a formal letter, and letters concluded ‘Yours sincerely’ or ‘Yours faithfully’. Thankfully, though, few candidates relied upon language better suited to text messaging!

The fact that the marks are now awarded in two parts appeared to help many candidates. It was possible to get a good mark for AO3(i) and (ii), even when there were technical errors in the writing. This was particularly noticeable in the case of second language candidates. On the other hand, some who were short of time and, therefore, wrote less than they might have done otherwise, still managed to get credit for quality in AO3(iii).

As usual, though, there were few signs of planning by candidates, and in some cases this led to jumbled ideas and repetition. Few seemed to have checked their responses at the end: obvious errors could have been removed and marks would have been higher. Also, some candidates wrote far too much, which resulted in a deteriorating performance, carelessness and a general lack of control. Despite these failings, most candidates wrote in paragraphs; most were sensible and used the bullets as scaffolding for their ideas; and there were even occasional letters which used a full range of punctuation – even colons and semi-colons.

The best responses were often about one and a half sides in length, exhibited variety in ideas and expression and began and ended effectively.

Looking at the paper overall, candidates responded very well, but it was apparent that some centres appeared to have prepared their candidates more thoroughly and effectively than others. This was apparent, for example, in how the candidates divided up the time available, so that, for instance, the temptation to spend too long on the first question was avoided. Presumably, those candidates had more opportunity to practise for the examination. It was noted that some very able candidates spent too long on the reading questions and failed to complete the writing task, which obviously had serious implications for their marks. Whilst performances will always vary, it was also noticeable that some centres' candidates focused much more closely on exactly what was being asked, rather than writing about texts in more general terms. When it came to Question Three, those centres who seemed to have most benefited their candidates appeared to have stressed the need to focus on the precise demands of the question; and had pointed out the importance of effective paragraphing and punctuation, of ideas that are linked and developed and of vocabulary which is suitable and varied.

Paper 1 Higher Tier (3703/1H)

This paper in the new specification provides assessment of the reading of Media and Non-fiction (AO2) as well as writing to *argue, persuade, advise* (AO3).

Section A: Reading

Question One - Media Texts

The pre-release booklet contained a number of media texts, from a variety of sources, looking at issues related to money and wealth and had been targeted at a mature and post-16 candidature. Candidates were asked to comment on two of the texts: a newspaper story from the Daily Telegraph headlined *Mobile magnate found dead in bath* (sic) and the front page of the Daily Telegraph's family finance magazine *your money* (sic). The question asked for comments on how the texts presented differing content to readers, focusing on: purpose; structure and presentation; fact and opinion.

Most candidates answered this question soundly, with a clear understanding of the purpose and meaning of the texts and an appreciation of the mass media elements often deploying an impressive technical vocabulary. Many of the answers were very long, and heavily reliant on prepared material, to the possible detriment of achievement in other questions on this paper. This is a matter for centres to address when looking at the pre-release material. Where candidates felt the need to complete an exhaustive exploration of the material, overall achievement did not always mirror effort. The best answers provided a concise analysis of the content of the texts with focus on the purpose and meaning of the elements identified. A significant number of candidates provided detailed lists which amounted to little more than description and paraphrase of the material, without comment or analysis. In such

cases, simple identification of the various media elements would carry little credit, without additional supportive, interpretative commentary.

The best answers noted the move from financial to personal information in the *Mobile magnate...* text and commented on the language of the headline, which drew readers in to an engaging and intriguing story. Some candidates were able to find some significance in the fact that no close family members expressed opinions about Keith McCaw, and others detected a subversive message in the story of a vastly wealthy man who died alone at the age of forty nine. There were some interesting points made also about the differing patterns of lexis within the text; detailed and at times technical vocabulary alongside a terminology that would be more suitable to sensational newspaper stories. Comments about *your money* effectively referred to the values that were on display and the clever use of colour. The best answers were able to read a great deal into the positioning and style of the photograph depicting a young graduate posing proudly with her parents.

Question Two - Non-fiction Texts

It was very clear that most candidates enjoying reading the passage from George Orwell's *Down And Out In Paris And London* in which Orwell described Paddy, a character he met in his travels. Candidates warmed to Orwell's sympathetic portrayal of Paddy while good answers established the ways in which Paddy's quest for dignity and integrity were presented. Many candidates made more general and heartfelt points about the nature of homelessness in our world, clearly inspired by Orwell's passionate involvement with his subject. It was gratifying, too, to find many candidates claiming that they would go on to read the whole book at some point. Whilst the vast majority of candidates looked in some detail at the content, better answers also addressed Orwell's use of a simple and accessible prose that allowed the use of powerful imagery and epithet. Some answers took a slightly critical approach to Orwell's presentation of a defeated character and commented on the grim humour that seemed to emerge.

This question, in general, provided more spontaneous and distinctive answers, a reflection of the use of unseen stimulus material. It is also the case that answers were of an appropriate length, were clearly focused on the task and did not seek to provide an exhaustive, dull check-list of features.

Section B: Writing to Argue, Persuade, Advise

Question Three

Candidates were asked to write an article for a lifestyle magazine and its subject matter was deliberately linked to the pre-release material and to the previous questions in the paper. For this reason, many candidates were able to provide plenty of evidence to support their arguments. A negligible percentage of candidates took the opportunity to argue in support of a "spend, spend, spend" philosophy of life; the vast majority argued the case for financial prudence, saving and sound investment.

Good candidates were able to provide well selected details which contributed to an eloquent and sophisticated piece while the best answers were lively, balanced and clearly structured. Advice on financial matters ranged from the purchase of 'own-brand' eggs to the need to acquire a shares/property portfolio. A number of the most engaging answers looked at the spiritual aspect of spending and the ways in which the euphoria of a spending spree fade into insignificance in the face of family priorities or the unhappiness that comes with uncontrolled debt. Many candidates were able to use the technical lexis of financial advice to real effect incorporating an awareness of interest rates, ISAs, mortgages, investments and hire purchase arrangements.

One aspect of concern was the failure by some candidates to address the task of writing a magazine article. In a small minority of cases the task was cavalierly ignored as candidates wrote letters, information leaflets or traditional essays. The best candidates, though, were able to write an article with a clear family readership in mind, which generated an appropriate vocabulary, style and tone.

In terms of mechanical accuracy, AO3(iii), the achievement on the paper was very reassuring with a high level of accuracy in the majority of answers. Weaker answers displayed a lack of control with sentence demarcation, in particular the use of the comma to replace the full stop. Good candidates showed real control of the sentence and were able to deploy an ambitious and accurately spelt vocabulary. On the spelling front, although it was surprising to find so many candidates misspelling “debt” as “dept”, the majority of candidates made relatively few spelling errors.

Paper 2 Foundation Tier (3703/2F)

Section A: Reading

Question One - Poetry from Different Cultures and Traditions

The new specification demands that, for Question One, candidates deal with one poem from the pre-release material and one unseen poem. *Out, Out-* was chosen for Tier F as it was seen as a work whose strong and clear narrative was accessible to the most limited candidates whilst its use of language and tone gave the better candidates on the tier opportunities to show their skills. In general the examination developed in this way. Almost all candidates had an awareness of the details of the unfortunate incident. Many showed an understanding of the effect of the contrast of the peace and calm of the setting with the violence and tragic pathos of the incident. When dealing with language features the effects of personification produced the most volume of comment. The repetition of “snarled and rattled” and the image of the saw leaping for its supper featured in many responses towards the top of the range. It was also encouraging to find candidates with enough confidence to deal with the effects of individual words – “rueful” was a good example of this. The other stylistic feature which realised many comments from the better candidates was the use of hyphenisation towards the end of the poem to indicate the slow fade out of life. Although the poem was contextualised in the anthology many candidates showed an extended awareness of the social and historical context; they were not slow to couple this with vigorous personal response and empathy with the hardship of the boy’s life.

The Grace Nicholls poem was chosen as an obvious counterpoint in childhood experience to *Out, Out-*. In general it was dealt with far less successfully.

The central image of “kyatta-pilla” and butterfly was handled well but very few of the other opportunities to comment on the effects of the language of the poem were taken. Sometimes the use of “muscly mahogany face” and “rivulets of sweat” was identified but the effect passed without comment. In many cases there was significant misunderstanding particularly concerning the “wave” in church and the “poker face” of the father although the differing reactions of the parents did attract some comment.

Candidates did operate on firmer ground when they moved to the comparison of childhood experience. The place of the family, the affectionate remembrance of detail and the general comparison of happiness and relaxed ease with harshness and indifference all attracted comment, limited and simply expressed in most cases but with recurring examples of sophistication in better

candidates. It was this evidence of candidates being more at home with the broader impression of the poem, rather than an inclination to look at poetic detail, which prompted most comments from examiners.

Section B: Writing to Analyse, Review, Comment

Question Two

All examiners, without exception, reported that the writing task had been approached with enthusiasm and a general level of success. Although the bullet point format had assisted with organisation and paragraphing, the skills of selecting evidence to support a developed personal viewpoint and being able to conclude with a sense of value of achievements were much in evidence. Although they were presented in a straightforward way by more limited candidates they were more convincing and analytic in the work of many better candidates.

Spelling and the use of the conventions of sentence punctuation were a cause of concern but there was no evidence that examiners had used the separate mark for AO3(iii) punitively. Rather they sought to reward the clarity of expression and the appropriateness of communication.

In terms of the choice of candidates it was generally agreed that Nelson Mandela had scored a slight victory over David Beckham with Muhammed Ali and Michael Jackson in close attendance. Community leaders and family relatives did show up strongly but the national and international figures held sway. Candidates were not penalised if they inadvertently opted for a deceased nomination; there were a few Princess Dianas and Mother Therasas in the scripts. Of no doubt was the pleasure and acquisition of knowledge gained from the marking of Question Two.

Paper 2 Higher Tier (3703/2H)

General

This was the first year of the new specification. Overall, scripts showed that candidates had been well prepared for the requirements of the paper. The two-question format led to very few rubric infringements, and the great majority of the candidates provided complete responses in both sections.

Section A: Reading

Question One - Poetry from Different Cultures and Traditions

Not surprisingly, there were often more detailed responses to the pre-release poem, *Spiritual Song of the Aborigine*. However, most candidates showed very pleasing responses to both poems, commenting perceptively about similarities and differences. Especially gratifying was the ability to recognise mood/feelings and to specify these in the body of the poems. Many candidates showed awareness of the shift in tone in *The Flower-Fed Buffaloes*. There were many different and valid interpretations of parts of the latter poem, especially candidates who were perhaps unfamiliar with the reference to “locomotives”, yet linked the repetition of “wheels” to the way the land and the culture were changed by transport or industrialisation. The most perceptive candidates commented that the buffaloes were themselves a symbol of the demise of a way of life.

It was pleasing to see the degree to which candidates had demonstrated the ability to “collate material from different sources and make cross-references”. The best candidates offered interesting and original interpretations and comparisons of the poems, integrating supporting evidence into the body of the response. Weaker candidates were able to comment on the way the poets had used landscape, or nature and concentrated on a comparison of the situation in each poem.

Technical features of both poems were identified by a great many candidates. However, too often, this was a process of listing or identifying such devices as repetition, simile (very frequently misspelled), metaphor/personification. As well as providing examples of devices used by the poets, candidates need to link these to meaning or effects if they are to meet the requirements for the upper bands within the mark scheme where comments relating to the “effectiveness of the language and stylistic devices” or skills of “insight” and “analysis” occur. Indeed a candidate is likely to gain more marks by focusing on a few aspects of technique and dealing with these in detail, than by trying to ‘spot’ as many devices as they can. Centres may find it useful to focus on these aspects of response to poetry.

There were some instances where examiners read very similar comments from candidates within a centre, often giving background information on the pre-release poem. These, and repeating the information given as the introduction to either poem, seldom reflect individual reading skills. Hopefully, the changes to annotation of material in subsequent years will reduce such responses.

Section B: Writing to Analyse, Review, Comment

Question Two

Responses to Question Two provoked a robust response. Most candidates understood the requirements of the question; many expressed valid and objective reasons for concern and many – perhaps reassuringly – analysed why an ageing population might be a cause for celebration rather than concern. The best candidates were able to produce cogent and cohesive responses which analysed the issue from a societal and individual point of view, integrating their own personal comments, often building to a convincing conclusion. The vast majority of responses dealt with the issue in a very sensible way. The most prevalent “concerns” related to financial issues such as pensions, the tax burden, the over-stretched National Health Service and housing. Many candidates were able to use personal knowledge and experience to illustrate their comments. There were those, however, who saw the aged as almost another species, or that being old (sometimes 50 years old) meant automatic mental and/or physical incapacity! Candidates would benefit from writing practice which encourages them not to use sweeping generalisations.

It was noticeable, and very pleasing, that the great majority of responses in the writing section were well organised, with paragraphs indicating a change of topic, and discourse markers used as a candidate offered a change in attitude or approach.

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

English Mature (and *External*) 3703/X

Foundation Tier (Targeted grades G-C)

Component	Maximum Mark (Raw)	Maximum Mark (Scaled)	Mean Mark (Scaled)	Standard Deviation (Scaled)
Paper 1 3703/1F	40	120	72.6	16.2
Paper 2 3703/2F	40	120	65.8	19.6
Oral Coursework 3703/CS/(XCS)	27	80	49.9	8.6
Written Coursework 3703/CR/(XCR)	27	80	46.8	9.0
Foundation tier overall	134	400	235.2	38.6
Foundation tier overall external	134	400	235.3	41.5

Component		Max. mark	C	D	E	F	G
Paper 1 3703/1F	raw	40	25	20	15	11	7
	scaled	120	75	60	45	33	21
Paper 2 3703/2F	raw	40	23	18	14	10	6
	scaled	120	69	54	42	30	18
Oral Coursework 3703/CS/(XCS)	raw	27	16	13	10	7	4
	scaled	80	47	39	30	21	12
Written Coursework 3703/CR/(XCR)	raw	27	16	13	10	7	4
	scaled	80	47	39	30	21	12
Foundation tier scaled boundary mark		400	232	189	146	104	62

3703 Higher Tier (Targeted grades A*-E)

Component	Maximum Mark (Raw)	Maximum Mark (Scaled)	Mean Mark (Scaled)	Standard Deviation (Scaled)
Paper 1 3703/1H	54	120	65.5	18.4
Paper 2 3703/2H	54	120	67.0	21.2
Oral Coursework 3703/CS/(XCS)	27	80	58.5	9.2
Written Coursework 3703/CR/(XCR)	27	80	46.8	9.0
Higher tier overall	162	400	247.7	46.4
Higher tier overall external	162	400	268.6	45.5

Component		Max. mark	A*	A	B	C	D	allowed E
Paper 1 3703/1H	raw	54	44	38	32	27	22	19
	scaled	120	98	84	71	60	49	42
Paper 2 3703/2H	raw	54	44	38	32	27	22	19
	scaled	120	98	84	71	60	49	42
Oral Coursework 3703/CS/(XCS)	raw	27	25	22	19	16	13	10
	scaled	80	74	65	56	47	39	30
Written Coursework 3703/CR/(XCR)	raw	27	25	22	19	16	13	10
	scaled	80	74	65	56	47	39	30
Higher tier scaled boundary mark		400	319	284	249	215	175	155

Provisional statistics for the award

3703*Foundation tier (10547 candidates)*

	C	D	E	F	G
Cumulative %	54.0	83.4	93.3	96.5	98.8

Higher tier (6461 candidates)

	A*	A	B	C	D	allowed E
Cumulative %	6.1	21.3	44.9	70.7	90.0	93.6

Overall (17008 candidates)

	A*	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
Cumulative %	2.3	8.1	17.1	60.4	85.9	93.4	95.4	96.8

3703/X*Foundation tier (144 candidates)*

	C	D	E	F	G
Cumulative %	56.3	77.8	89.6	93.1	97.2

Higher tier (431 candidates)

	A*	A	B	C	D	allowed E
Cumulative %	10.4	37.8	62.9	82.1	93.5	94.4

Overall (575 candidates)

	A*	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
Cumulative %	7.8	28.3	47.1	75.7	89.6	93.2	94.1	95.1

Definitions

Boundary Mark: the minimum (scaled) mark required by a candidate to qualify for a given grade. Although component grade boundaries are provided, these are advisory. Candidates' final grades depend only on their total marks for the subject.

Mean Mark: is the sum of all candidates' marks divided by the number of candidates. In order to compare mean marks for different components, the mean mark (scaled) should be expressed as a percentage of the maximum mark (scaled).

Standard Deviation: a measure of the spread of candidates' marks. In most components, approximately two-thirds of all candidates lie in a range of plus or minus one standard deviation from the mean, and approximately 95% of all candidates lie in a range of plus or minus two standard deviations from the mean. In order to compare the standard deviations for different components, the standard deviation (scaled) should be expressed as a percentage of the maximum mark (scaled).

English Literature (3711)

Coursework (3711/C)

The general impression was one of committed centres drawing forth quality work from their candidates. Changes in the specification only affected the administrative procedures; the arrangements of texts remaining the same.

Centres are reminded to check their arithmetical calculations carefully. Multiplying the folder mark by three and adding the Quality of Written Communication (QWC) mark caused a problem for many centres. Likewise, after internal moderation, if on reflection a mark is changed, centres should be aware that it is not just a case of adding or subtracting marks to or from the original mark and the process will need to be repeated starting with the new folder mark. In large centres there was much evidence of dual folders as usual. Quite often, but not in every case, the Shakespeare and the prose assignments were the ‘carry-over’ pieces from the English ‘folder’.

Comments for Shakespeare and prose texts may be found in the report for English Specification B. There are few drama texts that are studied other than Shakespeare but some more adventurous centres have studied other plays including Alan Bennett’s *Talking Heads – Dramatic Monologues* and *Blood Brothers*.

As far as poetry was concerned, the war poets dominated this section of the specification. It is perhaps not surprising that candidates remain firmly engaged with Owen, Sassoon et al and produce insightful and detailed assignments. *Best Words* continues to be a popular anthology with sonnets in general and Sylvia Plath in particular also widely used. Moderators were encouraged to find a few centres (mainly female) also reading Duffy, Nichols and Clarke. Poetry is the area where most centres address the comparative element of the specification and moderators again have commented on the improved awareness that candidates have for comparing and contrasting texts. It was also pleasing to see more emphasis on responding to the content and mood of the poetry rather than a list of literary terms and description of the rhyming scheme.

Centres are reminded that carefully structured titles encourage candidates to meet the relevant Assessment Objectives. Some centres are skilled at writing these and their candidates benefit. Other centres set tasks such as “Ballads Essay” which is not helpful for candidates. Some candidates still meet AO4 Assessment Objective in an introductory paragraph rather than integrating this into the assignment. This means that it is possible to have an opening page explaining ‘The American Dream’ and unemployment in the mid-west states before any mention of Lennie and George. Likewise, James I’s interest in witchcraft may not be helpful as the introduction to “This Dead Butcher and his Fiend like Queen – Discuss”. Similarly, a title that clearly invites a study of the historical, social or cultural influence in order to meet that requirement might become almost a sociological study in itself rather than a literary assignment which acknowledges a particular influence. An assignment concerned with the role of women in Victorian society after studying of a selection of poems by Tennyson might produce such an essay. There is an impression that centres are more adept at setting tasks which address literary traditions.

A further problem associated with the choice of text concerns the use of a text which is prescribed for the examination. This often causes confusion for less able candidates in the examination when they often write about the coursework text simply because they remembered reading it.

Tasks where the wording encourages candidates to select and show analysis are to be encouraged. Too many candidates still respond in a narrative form and should not be rewarded with marks from higher levels of the Assessment Criteria.

Centres which used an oral response as a literature assignment or are thinking of adopting this method of assessment should read the comments regarding such an activity in the English Specification B report on coursework (pages 8-11).

Moderators again commented that some centres entered for English only, when the standard of their candidates suggested that the same standard could also be attained in Literature. It was also true that some less able candidates now entered for English only, could, with appropriate texts, follow a course in English Literature.

External Coursework (3711/XC)

Some candidates offered a combined English and Literature folder (using the same three literature texts for both subjects) but it was noticeable that this year there were more candidates who entered for Literature separately.

Again, for the 2005 examination, AQA will send to centres a revised Candidate Record/Authentication Form especially for external candidates on request. This will ask candidates to indicate which assignments meet the syllabus requirements – understanding of literary tradition, appreciating social, historical influences and cultural contexts, and comparison between texts. Once again, this year many candidates simply ignored these criteria and examiner-moderators had to see whether, indeed, these requirements were met in any of the submitted pieces.

Popular coursework texts in 2004 included: various Shakespeare plays (leaving a post-1914 play for the examination); pre-1914 poetry, particularly Browning, Marvell, sonnets and war poems; and pre-1914 prose texts, with Dickens, Jane Austen, Conan Doyle by far the most popular. This meant that candidates could then select post-1914 texts for the examination questions on poetry and prose.

English Literature (3711)

Foundation Tier (3711/F)

General

The first year of this new specification has been a good one, with many candidates being well prepared, having a sound knowledge of their chosen texts, and a clear ability to identify and focus on the key words of the questions. For the most part, candidates seem to have been entered for the correct tier, although some examiners did comment on a few who were clearly capable of attaining a grade B.

An Inspector Calls continues to be the most popular drama text, with candidates being well prepared and able to attempt the questions with confidence. A minority of candidates chose to write about *Romeo and Juliet* which seemed to be their coursework text, as so few in any one centre did this. Although there was no penalty for this, candidates penalised themselves by writing about a text they had not revised. Centres would help their candidates if they chose a Shakespeare text for coursework which was not also a set play. The requirement for candidates to address AO4 in this part of the examination did not present a problem to those who focused clearly on the key words of the question and used the bullet points carefully.

Best Words (both eras) continues to be a popular text as does *War Poems*. For the most part, candidates were aware of the content and structure of their chosen poems and could identify examples of poetic features, but few were able to write analytically within a comparative framework. Unfortunately, some candidates chose to write about poems from different eras, and even different anthologies, selecting, in some cases, two poems that were printed on the question paper. Again, there was no penalty for this kind of rubric infringement, but it was obviously self-penalising.

In the prose section, *Of Mice and Men* continues to be the most popular, with some writing about *Lord of the Flies* and *Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry* and hardly any tackling pre-1914 texts. Candidates were, in the main, able to respond to questions on character and plot, though these tended to be presented within a narrative framework.

Centres must remind candidates to complete the appropriate column on the front of the answer booklet with the numbers of the questions they have answered.

Section A: Drama

Pre-1914

The Merchant of Venice – William Shakespeare

Question One

Most of the candidates who attempted this question were able to present a basic character study of Portia, often within a narrative framework. Some wrote about Nerissa rather than Jessica and this limited what they could say about the position of women at the time. The best answers made several valid points of comparison, commenting on Portia's and Jessica's contrasting attitudes and different levels of respect for their fathers.

Question Two

Basic answers told the story of the bond with some comment on Shylock and his personality and attitudes. Better answers responded to the bullet points in the question. The best produced carefully supported judgements and kept the key words of the question clearly in focus.

Romeo & Juliet – William Shakespeare***Question Three***

Several candidates had obviously written essays on who was to blame for the death of Romeo and Juliet, and adapted these to the question. Some were very harsh in their condemnation of the Friar, but with unrealistic reasons, such as if they had just told their parents it would all have been fine.

Question Four

Some tackled “fate” very well and clearly had appropriate quotations ready. For others, though, it was clearly hard to decide just what fate meant. The best answers went beyond the bullet points and responded clearly to “how far”.

She Stoops To Conquer – Oliver Goldsmith***Questions Five & Six***

Because so few candidates answered on this text there was no discernible pattern of response.

The Importance of Being Earnest – Oscar Wilde***Question Seven***

Basic responses presented a character study of Lady Bracknell or produced a narrative account of her interrogation of Jack. Few candidates went beyond the given extract and many failed to express an opinion. The best answers commented on how far she could be taken seriously and considered her place within the structure of the play as well as judging her interrogation and attitudes.

Question Eight

Very few candidates attempted this question. Those who followed the bullet points and made straightforward comments in response to each one were able to be given credit.

Post-1914***Pygmalion – George Bernard Shaw******Question Nine***

Candidates were able to present a narrative account of what happens to Eliza, with some being able to comment on how she changes. The best focused on the key word “benefit”.

Question Ten

The weakest responses were little more than narrative accounts, but candidates were able to benefit from a clear focus on the bullet points.

An Inspector Calls – J B Priestley**Question 11**

Many candidates began by stating confidently that the Inspector was very successful in convincing the family of their responsibility and then had to backtrack when they began to write about Arthur and Sybil Birling. Some very good answers produced balanced judgements focusing in particular on Arthur and Sheila and including some exploration of the idea of social responsibility.

Question 12

Basic character studies were very common in response to this question. Candidates who responded to the bullet points produced solid answers while others went beyond the bullets and gave considered and supported judgements. Many failed to grasp what was meant by Birling's lack of understanding. The best answers responded critically and included consideration of his attitude to the lower classes. Many showed understanding of his reasons for wanting Sheila to marry Gerald Croft and included other evidence of his social climbing. Some also commented on the fact that Birling was typical of his generation and class and could not be condemned out of hand.

Hobson's Choice – Harold Brighouse**Question 13**

Some very harsh judgements of Hobson were often well supported. More balanced answers included consideration of society and its attitudes, picking up on Jim's remark at the beginning of the extract. Some candidates limited themselves to writing about Hobson's relationship with his daughters and failed to express an amount of blame.

Question 14

Many candidates responded to the word "interesting" in the question but not "conflicts". Brief responses to the bullet points earned candidates some credit even when they tended to be highly narrative. The very best showed an awareness of conflict creating drama and thus contributing to the success of the play.

Section B: Poetry**Pre-1914****The General Prologue – Geoffrey Chaucer****Questions 15 & 16**

Because so few candidates answered on this text there was no discernible pattern of response.

Poems from Other Centuries – edited Tissier**Question 17**

For the most part, candidates identified the key element of the question and chose poems such as *A Wife in London* and *Dirge of the Dead Sisters* with which to compare. Some unbalanced answers focused mainly on their own choice with only a passing reference to *War*. The most confident candidates produced quite a structured comparison, looking in particular at structure and rhyme. Many identified poetic devices such as alliteration and simile but did not always exemplify and analyse.

Question 18

Many candidates found it hard to discuss “simple language” and limited themselves to a brief summary of *The Battle of Blenheim* and their chosen poem. Most, however, did include some reference to “interesting”.

A Choice of Poets – edited Hewett/Edwards**Questions 19 & 20**

For the most part, candidates were able to make appropriate choices to compare with the named poems. Several answers moved beyond a superficial narrative outline and made some comment on language and structure.

War Poems – edited Martin**Question 21**

The Dirge of the Dead Sisters was a popular choice to compare with *War*. This enabled candidates to comment on the role of the medical profession within a narrative outline. There was some sensitive exploration of the mood of the poems.

Question 22

The majority of candidates who chose this question found it difficult to move beyond a narrative outline to make some reference to “interesting language”. Those who responded to the bullet points benefited.

Best Words – Pre-1914**Question 23**

Many candidates were able to focus on the key word “relationship” and selected an appropriate poem for the purpose of comparison. Some candidates knew the poem well but there was a level of misunderstanding about meaning that led to rather stilted answers. Some candidates wrote confidently about *Ballad* and clearly enjoyed being able to write about rhythm and rhyme.

Question 24

Very few candidates attempted this question. Those who did knew *Amen* quite well and were able to write about the message as well as structure and rhyme.

Post-1914***A Choice of Poets* – edited Hewett/Edwards****Questions 25 & 26**

Superficial narrative outlines of the named and chosen poems were improved where candidates were able to make some personal judgement and consider language to some degree.

War Poems* – edited Martin*Question 27**

This was a very popular question. Many candidates compared *Exposure* with *Dulce et decorum est*. This was clearly a good choice, but candidates gave themselves two very demanding poems to write about. Many gave superficial narrative outlines of one or both poems and were able to make some response to the key word “suffering”. Most candidates attempted to consider Owen’s language at some level, either by simply identifying similes and other poetic devices or by identifying and exemplifying. The best went on to comment/analyse on the imagery they had identified. Those who made thoughtful judgements and supported them with selective reference and included some attempt at analysis/comment were rewarded accordingly.

Question 28

Candidates were able to focus on the key word “bitter” and had little difficulty in finding an equally bitter poem as their own choice. Elements of comparison were more in evidence as candidates looked at the basic message and sarcastic tone. Unfortunately, few were able to go beyond superficial comment and analyse how language was used to convey this bitterness. Most candidates focused on content rather than language.

Axed Between the Ears* – edited Kitchen*Question 29**

Some candidates chose to write about *Geriatric Ward* but the general impression was that they had not studied it. Some chose to compare it with *Long Distance* and did make valid points about the picture presented of old age. Candidates tended to write about content and structure rather than language and imagery but most included a brief point of comparison.

Question 30

Very few candidates chose this question. Some candidates found it difficult to go beyond a narrative summary of some parts of the poem with only a passing reference to the key words of the question.

Best Words – Post-1914**Question 31**

This was a very popular question that gave many candidates the opportunity to write about both *Long Distance* and *My Grandmother*. There was clear evidence of knowledge of the two poems and some empathy with the poets. Several were able to produce quite well structured comparative essays and include comments on language and imagery, though this was not often analytical.

Question 32

Bedtime Story was often compared with *The Ballad of the Bread Man* but answers tended to be mainly narrative with only a passing reference to the “unusual view”, little analysis and some identification of poetic devices. There was, however, clear enjoyment of the poems.

Section C: Prose**Pre-1914*****Pride and Prejudice* – Jane Austen****Question 33**

Candidates were able to make a straightforward judgement in response to the question and present a character study of at least one of the men. Although some candidates presented their ideas within a highly narrative framework, there were those who clearly understood Austen’s characterisation and were quite definite in their opinions.

Question 34

The best candidates were able to make clear judgements of the Bennets as parents and support them with reference to appropriate events. Some, however, simply wrote character studies with little or no reference to the key words of the question.

Wuthering Heights* – Emily Brontë*Questions 35 & 36**

Because so few candidates chose to answer on this text there was no discernible pattern of response.

Far from the Madding Crowd* – Thomas Hardy*Question 37**

There were several reasonable studies of Bathsheba Everdene with some comment on her behaviour, particularly with regard to Farmer Boldwood.

Question 38

The bullet points clearly helped the few candidates who chose this question.

Post-1914***Lord of the Flies* – William Golding*****Question 39***

Candidates were able to give sound accounts of Piggy though not always ranging over the whole novel, and often not focusing clearly enough on why he was an outsider. The best answers concentrated on the comments in the last paragraph of the extract and presented evidence, with some commentary.

Question 40

Candidates who chose this question were generally well prepared with ideas about the significance of the island and were able to tackle the question confidently, particularly when they used the bullet points as a plan.

Of Mice and Men* – John Steinbeck**Question 41***

A few candidates did not seem to grasp that Crooks was the victim of prejudice and just found him surly. Others failed to move beyond the extract and simply presented a paraphrase. Generally, though, this was answered soundly.

Question 42

This was a very popular question which was answered well for the most part. The weakest simply gave brief accounts in response to the bullet points, and some had not picked up on Curley's wife's dream of being 'in the movies'. The best, however, moved beyond this to consider Crooks as well, and gave developed and focused answers.

Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry* – Mildred Taylor**Question 43***

Some candidates seemed to find this text quite confusing, and muddled episodes and characters, thus preventing themselves from achieving high marks. Attempts at narrative based answers, therefore, did not always work.

Question 44

Again, some candidates did not seem to have a very clear recall of TJ and this affected the quality of their answers. There were, though, some confident answers that made good use of the bullet points.

Higher Tier (3711/H)

General

A significant number of candidates focused clearly and positively on the questions in this year's paper, used the knowledge they had and incorporated apposite quotations. Few signs of prepared answers were noted, rather there were many indications of a majority of candidates having genuinely engaged with the texts on which they chose to answer. There were few rubric infringements and few signs of individual candidates having misunderstood any of the questions. One disappointment was the substantial number of candidates who failed to insert the question numbers answered in the grid on the front of the answer booklet. This omission was sometimes coupled with failure to write the number of the question being answered inside the booklet.

In Section B: Poetry a small number of candidates failed to answer on more than one poem and some failed to observe Assessment Objective Three. Examiners found two minor errors peculiar to this section:

- misspellings of the names of poetic devices
- failure to identify these devices accurately.

The most common of the problems with this section was answers which identified (often correctly) numbers of poetic devices without ever saying what purpose they served in relation to the poem in which they were found.

The best answers focused on the question, showed knowledge of the text and revealed their understanding through careful analysis. Candidates in this category focused accurately on the key words of the questions and maintained a high level of focus on them throughout their answers. Weaker answers were to some degree unfocused, or inconsistent in focus, or erratic in knowledge, or very general in presentation of the text, or assertive rather than analytical. These weaker answers sometimes made use of substantial textual reference but offered their material without positive focus. The weakest answers were uninformed or retold as much of the text as they were able in the time. Examiners were, however, disappointed to find many incorrect classifications of texts with plays occasionally described as novels and both poetry and novels frequently described as plays.

One issue was the reliance of weaker candidates on the 'props' offered in some questions. Where this took the form of following bullet points this was only damaging when the answer simply narrated/character sketched whatever was suggested. More damaging was the way in which extracts were sometimes used by weaker candidates who appeared to think that they were prohibited from going outside the immediate context of the speaker or even (more extreme still) the remark/extract itself. This limited answers severely, making, at the same time, that which was intended to support become a powerful barrier to success.

Timing did not seem to be an issue for many candidates: there were few unfinished answers and few short ones. Not all scripts were balanced: some answers ran to twice the length (or more) of others in the same script. Disproportionate length in answers is seldom the best way for a candidate to achieve their full potential across three answers.

Section A: Drama**Pre-1914**

Romeo and Juliet was the majority choice here with *The Merchant of Venice* a frequent choice and the other texts very much ones for the minority. Goldsmith and Wilde received no shortage of excellent answers.

The Merchant of Venice* – William Shakespeare**Question One***

The question required reference to the words of both Jessica and Shylock in dealing with their relationship and the Jewish-Christian conflict. Good answers dealt with the anti-Semitism they thought to be prevalent at the time of the play, gave detailed comment on the Jessica/Shylock conflict and considered Jessica's torment using close reference. A contrast was often made between the harsh judgement of Shylock at the time of the play and the approval of Jessica's actions with the current attitude of sympathy for Shylock and disapproval of Jessica's behaviour. Weaker answers considered only part of the foregoing or offered narrative without comment.

Question Two

Many candidates answered on the different forms of love presented in the play including Bassanio/Antonio and daughters/fathers, only the strongest answers considered marriage in equal detail. Such answers dealt with the interplay of factors such as money, faith, rank, parents, passion and sincerity insofar as they determined the prospect and success of both marriage and love. The best answers also distinguished the differing influences of Belmont and Venice and many went on to comment on the failed classical relationships referred to by Lorenzo and Jessica. Weaker answers were light on marriage or ignored it and the weakest were narrative without comment and inclusive of errors.

Romeo and Juliet* – William Shakespeare**Question Three***

The best answers commented critically on the irony of the audience's prior knowledge of events and to further dramatic irony in the play, finding cross-references to "star-crossed", "death-marked" love and to fate throughout the play and using these to show how apt an introduction the Prologue was to the play. Most chose to find it apt. Weaker answers ignored the request for close reference or showed little understanding of the content of the Prologue.

Question Four

The question required comment on the contribution of the named characters to the tragedy of the play with support from close reference to characters, language and events. Answers which focused thus and gave apposite support for the claimed motives of the two were often outstanding, noting that other factors such as the feud and fate were responsible. Weaker answers offered character summaries of the two with some focal comment usually in a sentence or two at the end of each character summary. The success of such answers depended on the relevance made of material such as the Nurse's bawdiness where few answers were able to point this at the question with the great majority happy to evidence her bawdiness without relating this to the question. Few character sketch answers were

without merit, however, and the majority made some focal comment with most blaming Friar Lawrence more than the Nurse. Only the weakest answers gave some degree of character depiction without any reference to the terms of the question.

She Stoops to Conquer – Oliver Goldsmith

Question Five

The best answers gave due weight to the key phrase “add to your interest in the play and family life”. Weaker answers offered character outlines, sometimes in narrative form.

Question Six

While the best answers saw a contribution and compared it weight for weight with that of the language and character interaction in other respects than appearance and reality, less sound answers tended to describe the elements in the bullets, sometimes without focal comment on the question.

The Importance of Being Earnest – Oscar Wilde

Question Seven

Good answers saw that marriage could be a lottery based on capturing a rich husband (or wife) and that social standing was important as well as showing how Wilde pokes fun at this sort of concept. Weaker answers concentrated on character delineations with more or less relevance to the terms of the question.

Question Eight

The best answers cast their net widely among the characters in showing the trivial and the serious in this play. Whether the verdict was for the serious or trivial treatment of honesty was less important than the aptness of the evidence used to support whichever case was made. Weaker answers tended to ignore “honesty” and to narrate episodes.

Post-1914

An Inspector Calls was very much the majority choice here with *Pygmalion* the least frequently chosen.

Pygmalion – George Bernard Shaw

Question Nine

The best answers identified a range of “expectations” for each character and considered how far they were fulfilled using a range of textual evidence to do so. Weaker answers wrote, often at length, about the obvious things that each expected with more or less evidence from the text. The weakest answers were narrative.

Question Ten

Most answers dealt separately with the way Eliza developed, illustrating this by reference to her treatment at the start of the play and to later episodes such as the tea party with the Eynsford Hills, and Doolittle showing a keen comprehension of the effects of money on Doolittle's life. The best answers illustrated speech from a wide range of characters and commented on social standing as required by the question. Weaker answers gave narrative accounts of the material in the bullets (usually in the same order) or of some of it and either offered brief, last paragraph, focus on the question or ignored it altogether.

An Inspector Calls – J B Priestley**Question 11**

A key phrase in this question was "attitudes of women of the time". This was quite often rendered as "attitudes to women...". When such answers took into account the reactions of the female characters and deduced their attitudes from this all was well, often very well. The best answers dealt with the question as set, showed the widening generation gap between mother and daughter reflecting future developments for the better and included the fight for class equality indicated by Eva's struggles. Weaker answers concentrated more on the male perspective and less sound answers wandered into attacks on sexism which were sometimes divorced from the play. The weakest answers focused tightly on the extract and offered only material from its immediate context with more or less accuracy.

Question 12

The best answers addressed the "how" of the question, dealing with the Inspector's methods, the reactions of the other characters, the effects of their actions on Eva Smith and the ways in which each character shows her/himself up just prior to their interrogation. Such answers gave due weight to these ironies and to the generation gap emerging as the play progresses. Less sound answers were often strong and detailed on the social criticisms without considering "how" and the weakest narrated episodes without reference to the question. A minority were wholly confused by capitalism and socialism, attributing the former to the Inspector and the latter to Gerald and the Birlings.

Hobson's Choice – Harold Brighouse**Question 13**

Perceptive answers were balanced and traced Hobson's changing relationships with all his daughters culminating in the last scene. Less successful responses focused on the exchanges proximate to the extract and went no further.

Question 14

Good answers traced the development of mutual affection with recognition of seemingly unpromising beginnings, recognising that Maggie's affection was not merely a business prospect. Such answers made use of the whole text, relishing, for example, Willie's enforced bedroom entry. Weaker answers made much less of the text tending to move from the early business arrangement to the ending and the refusal to abandon the brass ring.

Section B: Poetry**Pre-1914**

The majority choices here were *Best Words* and *War Poems* with *Poems from Other Centuries* and *A Choice of Poets* rarely chosen.

The General Prologue* – Geoffrey Chaucer*Question 15**

Good answers used the descriptions to select items which were revelatory about the women and showed that they were, for the great majority, more marked by their differences than their similarities. Similarities were mostly focused on their concerns for status and their interest in matters of the heart; the differences, according to the ways in which the evidence was used, were often based on the same items. Weaker answers narrated, showing knowledge and understanding and the weakest narrated much more simply.

Question 16

Good answers appreciated the thrust of “approves of yet mocks” and dealt with two or more characters. Perhaps the most popular choices were the Monk and the Friar. Weaker answers ignored the phrase and paraphrased the descriptions. Occasionally, answers offered a character who did not squarely qualify for inclusion like the Pardoner and the Summoner.

Poems from Other Centuries* – edited Tissier**Question 17***

Good answers focused on the key words “horror/more favourably” and were selective in the detail they used to advance their case. A wide variety of candidate choice was exercised validly in the poetry for comparison. Less sound answers were often paraphrases of the poems and the weakest were unclear as to meaning or offered no comparison.

Question 18

Good answers gave consideration to key words in the question: “particular/different”, held focus on these and used their selection of material from the poems to support whatever case they chose to advance. No poems proved unsuitable for this exercise. Less sound answers were often paraphrases of the poems and the weakest were unclear as to meaning or offered no comparison.

A Choice of Poets* – edited Hewett/Edwards**Question 19***

Good answers focused on “admiration/fear”, made full comparisons and were perceptive in interpretation. The choice of poems for comparison proved wide. Less sound answers were often paraphrases of the poems and the weakest were unclear as to meaning or offered no comparison.

Question 20

“The relationship of humans with nature” proved to be something candidates could find and justify in a wide variety of choices. Good answers concentrated on comparison and the key words. Less sound answers were often paraphrases of the poems and the weakest were unclear as to meaning or offered no comparison.

War Poems – edited Martin**Question 21**

The choices of *A Wife in London* and *Charge of the Light Brigade* were very popular although a range of other poems could have been used with equal pertinence. Good answers considered a different aspect of war and gave detailed and perceptive analyses of their chosen poem and *War*, with detailed comparison. Less sound answers were often paraphrases of the poems and the weakest were unclear as to meaning or offered no comparison.

Question 22

Good answers grasped and exploited their understanding of the irony of the children’s condemnation as opposed to Kaspar’s limited comprehension and treated their chosen poetry with similar perception in a detailed comparison. The choice of poems for comparison proved wide. Less sound answers were often paraphrases of the poems and the weakest were unclear as to meaning or offered no comparison.

Best Words – Pre-1914**Question 23**

To a Mouse, *To Autumn* and *The Fire of London* were popular choices here and, when aptly examined, sustained analysis and comparison on the basis of “invites you to reflect on life” in good answers. Less sound answers were often paraphrases of the poems and the weakest were unclear as to meaning or offered no comparison.

Question 24

First Love, *Porphyria’s Lover*, *To His Coy Mistress*, *My Last Duchess* and the Shakespeare sonnets were all popular choices for comparison. Given the key words “in some other way” all of these could be used comparatively, even *My Last Duchess* where such love as the Duke shows is not for humanity, let alone his Duchess. Good answers analysed their poetry discriminatingly and made full comparisons. Less sound answers were often paraphrases of the poems and the weakest were unclear as to meaning or offered no comparison.

Post-1914

The majority choices here were *Best Words* and *War Poems*.

A Choice of Poets* – edited Hewett/Edwards**Question 25***

Good answers held tight focus on the key words of the question while analysing the poetry sympathetically and offering detailed comparison. A wide range of poetry was chosen by candidates. Less sound answers were often paraphrases of the poems and the weakest were unclear as to meaning or offered no comparison.

Question 26

The key to this question was close and detailed examination of language and imagery. Good answers offered this with full comparison from a wide range of chosen poetry. Less sound answers were often paraphrases of the poems and the weakest were unclear as to meaning or offered no comparison.

War Poems* – edited Martin**Question 27***

Disabled and *God! How I hate you* were popular choices for comparison with *Does it Matter?* and, with focus on “anger” showing the sarcasm of Sassoon and the blunt and directly accusative language of Owen and West very successful ones. A wider range of choices was available and used. Good answers were precise about the tone of voice of their comparisons and the ‘message’ of the poetry conveying the “effects of war” and detailed in comparison. Less sound answers were often paraphrases of the poems and the weakest were unclear as to meaning or offered no comparison.

Question 28

The forceful expression in other Owen poems (*Spring Offensive* and *Dulce et Decorum est*) as well as in *Exposure* elicited vivid responses in good answers where the suffering graphically displayed in the poems was seized upon together with the language and poetic devices which provide the impact. In these answers the comparison was full and perceptive. Less sound answers were often paraphrases of the poems and the weakest were unclear as to meaning or offered no comparison.

Axed Between the Ears* – edited Kitchen**Question 29***

Good answers chose from an apt range of poems, compared their material in detail with critical analyses and focused on the terms of the question. Less sound answers were often paraphrases of the poems and the weakest were unclear as to meaning or offered no comparison.

Question 30

Good answers concentrated on comment on “alternative” from a range of possible choices for comparison and offered sensitive and critical analyses of their poetry. Less sound answers were often paraphrases of the poems and the weakest were unclear as to meaning or offered no comparison.

Best Words – Post-1914**Question 31**

The most popular choice for comparison was *My Grandmother* with *War Photographer* as the only other frequent choice (others were possible). Good answers saw the irony of the way in which Harrison suddenly admits to imitating his father’s earlier behaviour and showed, in the case of *My Grandmother*, the isolation and obsession of the grandmother along with the residual guilt of her granddaughter; in the case of *War Photographer*, the enormity of war-induced suffering compared with the trivia of the media. Such answers also made detailed comparison. Less sound answers were often paraphrases of the poems and the weakest were unclear as to meaning or offered no comparison.

Question 32

Good answers appreciated the use of humour in *Bedtime Story*. The most popular choice for comparison was *Ballad of the Bread Man* which gave scope (not demanded by the question) for comparison between two poems using humour for a serious purpose. Such answers recognised the mutated insects as morally superior and that the warning was about human failure to protect the environment with disastrous results. Candidates analysed the use of language in each poem and saw the “serious” purpose of their chosen poem. Less sound answers were often paraphrases of the poems and the weakest were unclear as to meaning or offered no comparison.

Section C: Prose**Pre-1914**

Each of the texts was popularly chosen.

Pride and Prejudice* – Jane Austen*Question 33**

Good answers provided a balanced appraisal of Elizabeth’s judgements, citing not only her change of heart later but also her treatment and opinion of others including Mr Collins, Charlotte and Lady Catherine as well as more obvious characters such as Wickham. Less sound answers focused their comment on Elizabeth’s opinion of, usually, just Darcy and Wickham. Weaker answers tended to concentrate only on material from the area of the novel surrounding the extract and the weakest offered narrative without comment on the question.

Question 34

Good answers referred to “at least two” episodes and found faults with both parents (predominantly with Mrs Bennet) while qualifying their inadequacies by suggesting that at least Jane and Elizabeth

turned out well. Answers which found Mrs Bennet less adequate than her husband were generally more satisfactory than those which went for the opposite side of the argument. Equally, those which found one or both of the parents entirely adequate were impossible to sustain. Weaker answers approached the question with simple, uninflected narrative.

Wuthering Heights – Emily Brontë

Question 35

Good answers thoroughly documented the manipulative powers of Heathcliff including the period after his return with evidence in his treatment of Hindley, Isabella, Linton, Hareton and the younger Catherine. Weaker answers tended to character sketches or narrative.

Question 36

Good answers recognized the significance of the moors and the contrasting atmospheres of the two houses, going on to some detailed specific setting such as Catherine's own room and making some analysis of the language used in describing each setting. Weaker answers related episodes set in one or other house or narrated parts of the novel without close reference to the question.

Far from the Madding Crowd – Thomas Hardy

Question 37

Better answers concentrated on several of the instances where fate (usually identified as pure chance) intervened to affect the course of events and the effects on the behaviour of the characters. Most saw Fanny as being at the centre of such events while the best answers saw the application of fate to a wide range of the characters. Weaker answers showed no understanding of Hardy's purpose in using fate to further the plot and offered much narration.

Question 38

Good answers analysed Bathsheba's qualities in detail: her beauty, determination, independence, wilfulness and lack of conformity were all examined. Less sound answers gave character sketches of Bathsheba and/or the three male protagonists which worked more or less well according to the level of selectivity in candidates' use of evidence. The weakest answers were narrative summaries of Bathsheba's encounters with Oak, Boldwood and Troy without regard for the question although a few instances where "fascinating" was confused with "fantastic" were seen.

Post-1914

While *Of Mice and Men* was marginally the most popular text here, all were chosen with frequency.

Lord of the Flies – William Golding

Question 39

Good answers noted Piggy's adult thinking at the start of the novel alone with Ralph and concentrated on his attachment to the symbolic conch from start to his finish, taking in the idea that he thinks and is sensible but needs Ralph to articulate his ideas in order to be heard. Such answers typically noted the

antipathy of Jack to Piggy throughout the novel, commented on his behaviour after the murder of Simon and focused on “order and sense”. Some answers distinguished between “order and sense”, usually to show that Piggy represented the latter more than the former. Weaker answers often showed detailed textual knowledge but recounted episodes without attention to the terms of the question.

Question 40

Good answers saw Simon as civilized, courageous, and prepared to put others before himself and a true visionary. Some compared him to Christ. His importance was generally seen in these terms in good answers. Weaker answers made little of “in the rest of the novel” and/or narrated without comment as much as they could of his actions and, sometimes, words.

Of Mice and Men – John Steinbeck

Question 41

Good answers detailed the very early signs of animal behaviour and the combination of innocence and strength, tracing the accumulation of evidence in detail which culminates in the killing of Curley’s wife. Weaker answers concentrated their comments solely on the killing of Curley’s wife as the inevitable cause of Lennie’s death.

Question 42

Good answers clearly contrasted the relationship of George and Lennie, considered Candy, Crooks and Curley’s wife and included descriptions of the various settings, seeing them as symbolic: particularly the clearing at the beginning and end, the bunkhouse, Crooks’s room and the barn. Such answers gave an explanation of the situation facing itinerant workers and commented on Soledad. Less sound answers tended to identify cases of loneliness (usually Candy, Crooks and Curley’s wife) without going further and the weakest answers offered narrative often with errors of detail.

Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry – Mildred Taylor

Question 43

Good answers saw the importance of Uncle Hammer as providing an example of what was possible for black people and gave consideration to elements such as his family values and aggressive tendencies as well as his humour and effect on the children. Weaker answers gave his character, sometimes in detail, without focus on the question. The weakest answers offered errors of fact.

Question 44

Good answers considered characters such as Mr Barrett, Mr Simms, the Wallaces, Granger, Uncle Hammer, Little Man and Mr Morrison as well as examining the intolerance of Cassie, Big Ma and Mama since the examples of intolerance were so wide that inevitably the attitudes of just three characters involved several more. A majority of answers examined how members of the black community refused to tolerate the intolerance of the whites. Weaker answers narrated episodes involving intolerance, leaving the events to speak for themselves.

Quality of Written Communication

The new criteria for this element of the examination worked in the candidates' favour, as very few scripts were so inaccurate and illegible that understanding was obstructed.

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

English Literature (and *External*) 3711/(X)

Foundation Tier (Targeted grades G-C)

Component	Maximum Mark (Raw)	Maximum Mark (Scaled)	Mean Mark (Scaled)	Standard Deviation (Scaled)
Foundation tier paper 3711/F	78	245	99.7	32.6
Written Coursework 3711/C/(XC)	84	105	51.5	15.5
Foundation tier overall	162	350	151.2	42.3
Foundation tier overall external	162	350	145.7	53.8

Component		Max. mark	C	D	E	F	G
Foundation tier paper 3711/F	raw	78	38	31	24	17	10
	scaled	245	119	97	75	53	31
Written Coursework 3711/C/(XC)	raw	84	48	38	28	19	10
	scaled	105	60	47	35	24	12
Foundation tier scaled boundary mark		350	175	142	109	77	45

Higher Tier (Targeted grades A*-E)

Component	Maximum Mark (Raw)	Maximum Mark (Scaled)	Mean Mark (Scaled)	Standard Deviation (Scaled)
Higher tier paper	78	245	159.9	37.6
Written Coursework 3711/C/(XC)	84	105	78.0	13.3
Higher tier overall	162	350	237.9	46.1
Higher tier overall external	162	350	227.2	52.9

Component		Max. mark	A*	A	B	C	D	allowed E
Higher tier paper 3711/H	raw	78	67	57	47	38	26	20
	scaled	245	210	179	148	119	82	63
Written Coursework 3711/C/(XC)	raw	84	80	69	58	48	38	33
	scaled	105	100	86	72	60	47	41
Higher tier scaled boundary mark		350	302	261	220	179	129	104

Provisional statistics for the award

3711

Foundation tier (15322 candidates)

	C	D	E	F	G
Cumulative %	30.3	59.4	80.9	92.5	97.6

Higher tier (33627 candidates)

	A*	A	B	C	D	allowed E
Cumulative %	9.6	32.4	65.6	90.1	98.9	99.5

Overall (48949 candidates)

	A*	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
Cumulative %	6.6	22.2	45.1	71.4	86.5	93.6	97.3	98.9

3711/X

Foundation tier (7 candidates)

	C	D	E	F	G
Cumulative %	14.3	42.9	71.4	71.4	85.7

Higher tier (96 candidates)

	A*	A	B	C	D	allowed E
Cumulative %	15.6	30.2	61.5	79.2	90.6	93.8

Overall (103 candidates)

	A*	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
Cumulative %	14.6	28.2	57.3	74.8	87.4	92.2	92.2	93.2

Definitions

Boundary Mark: the minimum (scaled) mark required by a candidate to qualify for a given grade. Although component grade boundaries are provided, these are advisory. Candidates' final grades depend only on their total marks for the subject.

Mean Mark: is the sum of all candidates' marks divided by the number of candidates. In order to compare mean marks for different components, the mean mark (scaled) should be expressed as a percentage of the maximum mark (scaled).

Standard Deviation: a measure of the spread of candidates' marks. In most components, approximately two-thirds of all candidates lie in a range of plus or minus one standard deviation from the mean, and approximately 95% of all candidates lie in a range of plus or minus two standard deviations from the mean. In order to compare the standard deviations for different components, the standard deviation (scaled) should be expressed as a percentage of the maximum mark (scaled).